

SUPPORT PROGRAMS IN ARMED CONFLICT

*An in-depth analysis on how the ICRC can approach the changing
dynamic of conflicts that support programs bring about*



ICRC

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Executive Summary

Warfare strategies in the twenty-first century can be described as remote, meaning that states increasingly resort to other means than boots on the ground in conflict situations. One method of remote warfare is deploying a support program in another state. Seeing that the trend of support programs is a trend that is set to remain for years to come, it is relevant to understand how an organisation such as the International Committee of the Red Cross can engage with and approach such programs. This policy paper analyses how the ICRC can approach the changing dynamic of conflict situations that support programs bring about. The aim is to present a set of policy recommendations for the ICRC that can contribute to this approach. To provide advice on this topic, this piece will analyse the conflicts in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR), where the European Union launched a training mission to help stabilize the situation in the countries. To provide a substantive analysis on this topic, an extensive literature review has been conducted. Next to that, to get a better understanding of how support programs affect the work of the ICRC, an interview with an ICRC delegate in the CAR has been conducted.

MAIN FINDINGS

The European Union Training Missions (EUTM) in Mali and the CAR have a mandate to train, advise and assist the local forces. The analysis shows that, as promising as this approach might seem, support programs can have flaws.

The idea of a support program sounds promising in theory. Troops improve in quality and are well-prepared for their tasks. However, in practice, some weaknesses can be identified. These weaknesses include difficulties in formulating repercussions of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) violations, a poor state of local armed forces, insufficient and short training and a

lack of evaluation and monitoring after the training period ends. These weaknesses have an impact on the level of compliance with IHL in a conflict situation.

Seeing the fact that support programs can influence the compliance with IHL in a conflict, it is important for the ICRC to consider how to go about the involvement of support programs in conflict situations.

The mandate of the ICRC allows for the organisation to speak to all parties in a conflict (i.e. all state and non-state actors taking part in hostilities). This definition points out that a mission such as the EUTM cannot be considered as a party to a conflict, as these missions do not actively take part

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in hostilities themselves. This means that there is a *gap* between what the ICRC is legally allowed to do, and the actions they might actually want to undertake (i.e. engage in a dialogue with the EUTM). In other words, there is a *gap* in IHL when it comes to engaging in a dialogue with support programs in conflicts.

In order to still talk to supporting states, the ICRC can present some strategic arguments that support an informal dialogue. These include improving the relationship between civilians and the army, including normative training to prevent an increase in the level of violence and providing assistance (for example through lessons on accountability or setting up controlling mechanisms).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This policy paper aimed to set forth a couple of recommendations for the ICRC on how to approach the changing dynamics of conflict situations that support programs bring about. To that end, the following recommendations are presented:

(1) Obtain information on and influence support programs through local forces.

Stay in close contact with local soldiers to obtain information on their training and how they will apply this into practice.

(2) Rethink and reconsider the definition of party to a conflict.

Considering indirect military involvement in conflict situations as a *party to a conflict* would allow a dialogue to take place.

(3) Support programs are more successful when effectively integrating IHL.

Training on IHL should be embedded throughout the entire mission.

(4) Support programs make soldiers more lethal, without making them more ethical.

Normative and ethical education should be integrated into the training missions.

(5) Create a research report about the impact of malfunctioning of support programs on the stabilization of a conflict.

Provide examples of IHL violations that undermine the success of training missions.

(6) Improve external accountability of local forces.

Install a military ombudsman where IHL violations can be reported.

(7) Improve internal accountability of local forces.

Integrate legal advisors into the local armies and integrate training about accountability into the mission.

(8) Monitor and evaluate the functioning of the trained armed forces.

Establish monitoring mechanisms to monitor soldiers outside of the training facilities.

1. Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the most common form of military engagement by Western states can be described as remote warfare. Instead of deploying one's troops, states resort to other means to be involved in conflict situations, aiming to counter security threats with a minimal cost of Western lives and money (Knowles & Matissek, 2019; Watson & McKay, 2021). Another change in the dynamic of warfare is that contemporary conflicts mostly take shape as intrastate conflicts (Biddle et al., 2018), thus conflicts that are taking place within the borders of a specific state. Such conflicts still bring about many consequences, of which most materialise in humanitarian issues. Such issues are relevant for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as their mandate involves aiming to help people who are affected by conflict (ICRC, n.d.).

Remote warfare can take many forms, one of which being support programs (Knowles & Matissek, 2019; Wiltenburg, 2019). In such programs, states send their troops to train, advise and assist local forces. Support programs can, for example, take shape as a training mission. For the ICRC, the increasing deployment of support programs is a relevant topic to understand. Such

programs influence the dynamics of a conflict situation. Since the ICRC is an organisation that has contacts with all parties in a conflict situation, it is vital for the organisation to understand how to have a good dialogue with support programs.

Support programs are a phenomenon that has developed over the last few decades. This policy paper analyses how the ICRC can go about such support programs in armed conflict situations and, upon request by the ICRC, provides policy options on how the ICRC can actively engage with such programs. To do so, this policy paper aims to answer the following research question: *How can the ICRC approach the changing dynamic of conflict situations that support programs bring about?*

To answer this research question, this policy paper will analyse two conflict situations in which a support program is deployed, namely the conflict in Mali and the conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR). In these cases, the European Union launched a support program, which are the European Union Training Missions (EUTM). These training missions will be at the centre of this study.

To provide an answer to the research question, the main question has been split up into multiple sub-questions. This way, the topic has been reviewed from different

angles, in order to provide a broad analysis on the subject. For this research, an extensive literature review has been conducted. During this literature review, the *snowball-effect* has been used, meaning that relevant literature was found by looking at the references and bibliographies of articles that were already used. Besides reviewing the relevant literature, an interview has been conducted with a delegate of the ICRC, who is currently stationed in the CAR (Interview Notes, 2021).

This policy paper will first provide an overview of the wider context and the background of the research topic. Next, the paper will analyse how the ICRC could go about support programs in conflict situations. This will be done by looking into the effects of support programs on conflict situations, the legal basis for a dialogue with support programs, and strategic arguments that could be presented to support the dialogue. The paper will then draw together the findings in the conclusion and will end with a couple of concrete policy recommendations for the ICRC.

2. Context and Concepts

This section will provide a context of the topics that are studied in the paper and it will clarify some of the key concepts. This section will first explain the basics of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and how IHL is connected to the ICRC. Subsequently, an elaborate explanation of support programs is provided. Finally, this section provides a background on the cases that are studied in this paper, which are the cases of Mali and the CAR.

2.1. International Humanitarian Law

The objective of the ICRC is to promote compliance with IHL in conflict situations. Thus, a thorough understanding of what IHL entails is necessary. IHL is a set of rules and regulations that have been established within international law. More specifically, these laws have been laid down in the four Geneva Conventions (ICRC, 2004; ICRC, 1949). IHL is maintained through conventions and treaties, in which states bind themselves to uphold IHL whenever taking part in a conflict. Nearly all states in the world have bound themselves to IHL (ICRC, 2004).

IHL has two main aspects. The first aspect is protecting non-combatants and respecting human lives and dignity. Non-combatants are individuals who do not

engage in hostilities. To elaborate, IHL protects people that are not able to protect themselves, for example, civilians, medical personnel, or NGOs. Furthermore, IHL also protects people that are not taking part in conflict anymore, such as wounded people or prisoners of war (ICRC, 2004).

The second aspect of IHL is that it seeks to limit the effects of warfare and how war is waged. Examples of such limitations are the restrictions of using biochemical weapons, or the restriction of torture (ICRC, 2004). These limits on how war is waged are set for humanitarian reasons. IHL seeks to preserve the dignity of human lives, and therefore, war can only be waged according to humanitarian ways.

2.2. What are Support Programs?

One of the key concepts in this policy paper is *support programs*. This section will elaborate on the definition of support programs and what they entail.

Conflict can materialise in classical warfare, in which two or more states are waging war. However, in the contemporary world, there is a decrease in such interstate warfare (Skeppström et al., 2015; Krieg & Rickli, 2018). Alongside the decrease of interstate conflict, there is an increase in intrastate conflicts, meaning conflicts that occur within the borders of one state.

Western states have become more reluctant to deploy their forces to resolve such conflicts (Rogers & Goxho, 2021). Instead, out of risk aversion, states preferably adopt a so-called 'light operational footprint' approach (Gribble et al., 2015; Watts & Biegon, 2017).

However, intrastate conflicts can still pose multiple security challenges for Western states, such as a refugee crisis, but most importantly, an increase of insurgency or potential terrorism that spills over to European or other Western states (Matisek, 2020). The reluctance of Western states to use their forces, combined with the trend of the increase in intrastate warfare, has resulted in Western forces seeking other methods to tackle security issues in foreign states. One such method is the use of support programs (Biddle et al., 2018).

Support programs are set up to provide military training, education and advice to local forces in fragile states (Biddle et al., 2018). The states that provide support aim to develop the military of the particular state so that it can defend itself against its own security challenges (Biddle et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2020). One of the main goals of support programs is to make the local forces capable of fighting against the adversaries that are present in the country (Biddle, 2017; Matisek, 2020).

This could potentially decrease the influence of non-state actors, which will in turn help increase the grip of the government on its own country. The aim is to help the government regain its monopoly of violence and with that provide political stability to the country (Shurkin et al., 2017). This goal originates from the idea that Western states want to prevent security issues to arrive at their border, and therefore, they want to tackle the problem at its source (Biddle, 2017; Sullivan et al., 2020). This policy paper analyses two cases in which a support program has been deployed.

2.3. Cases

To provide an answer to the research question, this paper will analyse the conflicts in Mali and the Central African Republic. These cases are analysed for two reasons. First, both in Mali and the CAR, the European Union has launched a support program, which are the European Union Training Missions (EUTM) (Olsen, 2014; Zimmerman, 2020). Secondly, the ICRC is active in both states to help people and promote compliance with IHL (ICRC, n.d.; ICRC n.d.). Therefore, the conflicts of Mali and the CAR provide two good case studies to study the effects of support programs on conflict situations.

Case 1: Mali

Image 1 – Land Map Mali



Source – (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.)

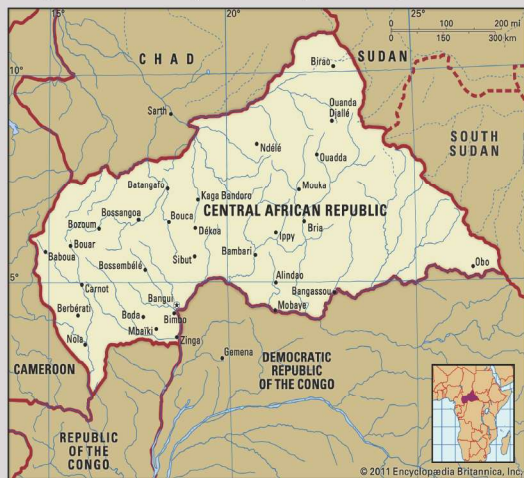
In the North-African country of Mali, there has been an intrastate conflict since 2012, when the Touareg Islamist rebel group aimed to create its free state (Bencherif et al., 2020). The rebel forces were too strong for the Malian Armed Forces (MAF), which resulted in the occupation of the North. In the South, the government remained in control, but with little power and resources (Boeke & de Valk, 2019). In the past years, multiple states have provided support to the Malian government. Also, more than seventy different projects assisting Mali's security sector have been implemented (Tull, 2020). However, despite this effort, the situation in Mali is still deteriorating (ICRC, 2021). Jihadist groups are continuously attacking civilians and the MAF. Moreover,

violence is spreading from the North to the centre of the country (Tull, 2019).

In order to help mitigate the consequences of the conflict, the European Union launched a training mission in the country (EUTM). The EUTM in Mali aims to consolidate peace and restore a stable government. In doing so, the EUTM provides training to Malian military units, advises all levels of the Malian forces, and contributes to the military education system (EUTM, n.d.; Olsen, 2014). It is important to note that the EUTM solely provides support and education, and does not actively take part in hostilities themselves. Despite this effort, the conflict remains unresolved, and there are still multiple reports of IHL violations by the Islamist rebels, as well as the MAF (ICRC, n.d.; Human Rights Watch, 2021). The ICRC is concerned about the violations of IHL by both the rebels and the MAF and they have denounced any violation of IHL (ICRC, n.d.).

Case 2: The Central African Republic

Image 2 – Land Map Central African Republic



Source – (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.)

The Central African Republic (CAR) has known a long history of instability and civil war. The situation in the CAR worsened when a Muslim armed group called Séléka instigated a coup (Mbow & Souaré, 2017). After a period of transition, Faustin-Archange Touadéra was elected as president, who aimed to resolve the conflict in the country and disarm the rebel groups. However, this was a difficult task seeing that, as a reaction to the coup, Christian armed forces, called the anti-Balaka, had taken up arms against the Séléka. This resulted in a civil war in the CAR (Knoope & Buchanan-Clarke, 2017). This resulted in the government losing its grip over the country. The Central African Armed Forces (FACA) could not effectively fight off the armed groups and stabilise the conflict situation. (Carayannis &

Fowlis, 2017; Zimmerman, 2020). In contemporary CAR, the situation remains unchanged with high tensions between the rivalling armed groups and multiple reports of violence (UNICEF, 2019; ICRC, 2021).

Just like in Mali, the EU launched a training mission (EUTM-RCA). The training mission aims to help the government to regain power and thereby stabilise the country, as well as providing military education and support to FACA. Similar to the case of Mali, the ICRC is involved in the CAR. However, their mission is being obstructed by attacks on humanitarian missions and atrocities to the CAR citizens (ICRC, 2021). There have been few recent reports about the violation of IHL by local forces, however many incidents of IHL violations by the FACA and non-state actors have occurred in the past (International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), The Central African Observatory for Human Rights (OCDH) & The Central African League for Human Rights (LCDH), 2014). Also, during the interview it has become clear that violations of IHL by local forces might still occur. However, due to obstructions, it is difficult to properly investigate these violations (Interview Notes, 2021, p. 6).

3. Analysis

To analyse how the ICRC should go about the changing conflict dynamics that support programs bring about, this section will first identify and analyse the positive and negative effects of the EUTMs. The emphasis primarily lies on the negative effects of the EUTMs. After, the legal basis for the ICRC to engage in a dialogue with support programs is analysed. The final part analyses what the ICRC ultimately can do to engage in dialogue with support programs, and what strategic arguments can be presented that support this dialogue.

3.1. European Union Training Missions and their (un)intended effects

Because the notion of *support programs* is fairly broad, the focus of support programs in this policy paper is on the European Union Training Missions in Mali and the CAR. In the past, research has been devoted to analysing the unintended negative side effects of support programs (Skeppström et al., 2015). To understand how the ICRC can approach support programs in a conflict, it is important to understand how support programs influence conflict situations. This policy paper is specifically focussing on compliance with IHL in conflict situations. In this part, first, positive effects of the EUTM in Mali and the CAR are analysed.

Second, the problematic aspects of EUTMs are analysed.

3.1.1. Positive aspects of European Union Training Missions

Fortunately, positive and promising effects of EUTMs can be identified. In general, troops receiving training from EUTMs or any other partners improve in quality. The troops are better prepared for their tasks than before they received training. This conception applies to both FACA and MAF. As indicated by local MAF soldiers, they acquired better tactical awareness, capacity to hold positions in battle and they became able to carry out offensive operations for example (Lebovich, 2018). Additionally, CAR Ministry of Defence officials have the opinion that EUTM-RCA training positively affected FACA's behaviour (Hickendorff & Acko, 2021). Furthermore, the EUTMs provide the opportunity for both the FACA and MAF to learn about IHL in ways they otherwise might never have learned.

It should be noted, however, that the impact of the improved skills of MAF soldiers on the overall security situation in Mali remains marginal (Lebovich, 2018). Moreover, the EUTM Mali has at least not proven to be able to prevent a rise in violence (Lebovich, 2018; Schmauder, 2020). The same applies to CAR (ICRC,

2021), where, to this day, not much progress has been made on FACA's transformation and capability to tackle internal security challenges (Hickendorff & Acko, 2021). As argued below, it must, however, be noted that transforming and training local forces is a complex and long-term process.

3.1.2. The problematic aspects of European Union Training Missions

In theory, the idea of support programs is promising. Instead of large-scale foreign intervention, local actors are trained and assisted to be able to manage and secure their own state (Biddle et al., 2018). As mentioned earlier, the EUTM does so by training the local armed forces. Capacity building of the security sector in ongoing conflicts is, however, a controversial aspect of support programs, as positive outcomes are not a given (Skeppström et al., 2015). Moreover, trained local armed forces might even use their new skills for unethical purposes, such as atrocities. In Mali and the CAR, several problematic aspects of EUTM can be identified. The recent coup in Mali is an illustration of the failure of capacity building in the Sahel (Schmauder, 2020).

Formulating repercussions for violating International Humanitarian Law

A first identified challenge of the EUTM in Mali and the CAR, which is also broadly applicable, is that it is difficult to formulate repercussions for IHL violations. While there is great emphasis on the importance of IHL training in the EU doctrine for support programs, this is no guarantee for non-violation of IHL (Rehrl, 2017). In the case of violation of IHL, it is not clear what the consequences should be for the violators. A withdrawal of support could worsen the conflict and lead to more atrocities (Hickendorff & Acko, 2021). Furthermore, kicking out soldiers would be a mere waste, since a lot of money, time and effort has been put into training them (Biddle et al., 2018).

The absence of repercussions identifies a risk regarding the protection of civilians (PoC). The absence of clear repercussions could mean that local forces feel less restrained regarding IHL-violations. This finding is demonstrated in the CAR, where the political influence of the EUTM-RCA is limited. The EU, nor the mission itself, provides its assistance on a conditional basis. Hence, it appears that in the CAR repercussions for IHL violations by the trained local forces are not present (Hickendorff & Acko, 2021).

Problematic state of local forces

EUTMs depend on the local forces they have to work with. In Mali and the CAR, the state of the armed forces appears to be very problematic (Lebovich, 2018; Schmauder, 2020; Skeppström et al., 2015). Reports of the poor state of the MAF range from 2014 to 2020. This indicates that, thus far, there has been no sufficient increase in the quality of the MAF, despite the efforts of the EUTM-Mali. In fact, the security situation in Mali can even be described as deteriorating linearly (Schmauder, 2020; Tull, 2020). The poor state of the MAF is, among other things, illustrated by their quick defeat in 2012, poor or not enough ammunition and equipment, and reports of desertion. Furthermore, before deployment in 2012, some soldiers even had never fired a bullet before (Craven-Matthews & Englebert, 2018; Schmauder, 2020; Skeppström et al., 2015; Tull, 2020). Poor human resource management and a gap in hierarchy and accountability troubles the Malian armed forces as well (Schmauder, 2020; Tull, 2020).

In the CAR, FACA soldiers, for example, get paid little to nothing, while working in poor living conditions. In return, they might turn to illegal activities to sustain themselves, as indicated by Knowles & Matissek (2019). Such illegal activities are,

for example, stealing or selling weaponry or robbing local people at checkpoints (Knowles & Matissek, 2019; Skeppström et al., 2015). The well-being and protection of civilians are harmed by such illegal activities. Furthermore, many FACA soldiers are former rebels, which might mean that those soldiers could still support (leaders of) rebel groups (Ebo et al., 2020; Knoope et al., 2020). Another element that troubles the quality of FACA is a lack of education and eagerness to learn (Interview Notes, 2021, p. 3). Consequently, there is a lack of French-speaking people, which in turn troubles education through foreign parties. Having to translate everything could lead to a loss of information. (Interview Notes, 2021, p. 3). The language barrier forms an obstacle in Mali as well (Lebovich, 2018). In the CAR, all these facts ultimately mean that the main security actor, FACA, is not capable of contributing sufficiently to peace and security in the country, despite EUTM-RCA's efforts.

As indicated by Hickendorff & Acko (2021), EUTM-RCA has no mandate to directly intervene in conflict or the protection of civilians. Yet, FACA is not capable of doing so themselves. Besides, EUTM-RCA officials illustrated that the reconstruction of FACA into a liable security actor is a long-term and complex process. Risks of serious IHL violations are

inherent to this process (Hickendorff & Acko, 2021).

While these findings stem from the EUTM-RCA case, they apply to similar conflict situations. A poor state of local forces thus means a poor implementation of IHL by those local forces, which is a main problematic effect of EUTMs. As the state of one state's armed forces is poor, it is not rational to expect that these armed forces properly comply with IHL.

Insufficient training and lack of evaluation and monitoring

All mentioned facts in the section above mean a changing conflict landscape, also affecting ICRC operations. Poor implementation of IHL in Mali and the CAR corresponds with multiple factors, such as short, insufficient and ineffective training periods of EUTMs. The absence of evaluation and monitoring outside of training facilities can also be perceived as a problem (Hickendorff & Acko, 2021; Lebovich, 2018; Skeppström et al., 2015; Venturi & Toure, 2020).

Until 2015, training periods in Mali were too short (Skeppström et al., 2015; Tull, 2020). Besides, in such a short period, it is not possible to sufficiently teach local forces about complying with IHL. Furthermore, a widely heard criticism is that the EUTM training is too technical.

Therefore, it lacks sufficient attention to other aspects, such as IHL (Shurkin et al., 2017). In 2015, the notion of retraining military units appeared, which ultimately did not bring any significant progress (Tull, 2020). Additionally, once soldiers leave the EUTM training grounds, there is no way for the EUTM to monitor the conduct of trained soldiers and to evaluate the impact on MAF and FACA performance (Lebovich, 2018; Tull, 2020). This is because the EUTM is a non-executive mission, meaning that it is only responsible for the troops during training (Hickendorff & Acko, 2021; Venturi & Toure, 2020). As pointed out by Hickendorff & Acko (2021), once trainees finish training, EUTM-RCA's contact with the trainees ends.

Ultimately, it can be said that the EUTMs in Mali and the CAR have multiple negative side effects regarding IHL. Issues such as a lack of evaluation and monitoring and insufficient training quality are the main causes of risks to IHL violations and PoC. These issues change the dynamics of conflicts. This makes it important that main actors in conflict situations, such as the ICRC, are aware and adapt to these issues and changes.

3.2. Mandates and the legal basis in International Humanitarian Law

The previous analysis establishes that there are problems with the functioning of support programs such as the EUTM. This malfunctioning has an impact on the level of compliance with IHL in a conflict situation. Since the aim of the ICRC is to promote IHL and ensure that all parties in a conflict comply with these rules, the malfunctioning of support programs poses a problem to the development of conflicts. The ICRC should therefore consider how they should go about the involvement of support programs in conflict situations.

To analyse the extent to which IHL provides the ICRC with a legal basis to engage in a dialogue with support programs in conflict situations, this part will first introduce and explain the mandates of both the ICRC and the European Union Training Missions in both Mali and the Central African Republic. It will then assess what exactly can be considered as a *party to a conflict* and how that applies to the mandates of the ICRC and the EUTM.

3.2.1. Mandate of the International Committee of the Red Cross

The mandate of the ICRC is based on the 1949 Geneva Conventions (ICRC, n.d.). The ICRC is an impartial organization, which entails that it will engage with all

warring parties involved in armed conflict (ICRC, 2011). Within this mandate, a distinction is made between three types of conflict: (1) international armed conflict, (2) non-international armed conflict, and (3) events of internal disturbances, tensions and any other situation that warrants humanitarian action (ICRC, n.d.). As both the conflict in Mali and the CAR can be characterized as a non-international armed conflict (NIAC), this piece will focus on the mandate of the ICRC applicable to a NIAC only. Such conflicts can be characterized as internal armed conflicts occurring within the territory of a state (Kretzmer, 2009), where fighting takes place between state actors and non-state actors. In a NIAC, the mandate of the ICRC is based on Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions (1949). This article provides the ICRC with a right of humanitarian initiative, meaning they can offer their services to the warring parties involved in the conflict.

3.2.2. Mandate of the European Union Training Missions in Mali and the CAR

The EUTM-Mali and the EUTM-RCA were both invited by heads of state to deploy a consulting military mission in the countries, consecutively in 2013 and 2015 (European Union, n.d.; European Union, 2020). Both missions are mandated to assist the local armed forces (the MAF and the FACA) in restoring and improving their

military capacity. Both missions adhere to three distinct means to do so: providing strategic advice to the Ministry of Defence, education to non-commissioned officers, and operational training to military units (European Union, 2020; European Union, 2021). An important element to take into consideration is that both mandates do not allow for the missions to be involved in combat operations.

3.2.3. Gap in International Humanitarian Law

As pointed out before, the ICRC is an impartial organisation and should therefore meet, negotiate and deal with all warring parties involved in a conflict situation (ICRC, 2011). For that reason, it is important to define who or what exactly can be considered as a *party to a conflict* and how that applies to the mandate and the work of the ICRC. Parties to a conflict can be described as all state and non-state actors taking part in hostilities (Doctors Without Borders, n.d.). This already indicates that a mission such as the EUTM cannot be considered a party to an armed conflict, as these missions are not involved in combat operations.

Taking into consideration both the mandate of the ICRC and the definition of a *party to a conflict* as has been described above, it can be perceived that there is a *gap* between

what the ICRC is legally allowed to do, and what they might actually want to do (i.e., engage in a dialogue with the EUTM). In other words, there is a *gap* in IHL when it comes to engaging with support programs in conflict situations. In order to close this gap, a policy option could be to change some clauses in the Geneva Conventions and thus change IHL (Duteweert, 2021), to expand the mandate of the ICRC and make it possible for the organization to engage in a dialogue. However, seeing the fact that the policy recommendations should be realistic and achievable, this will not be explored further, as an organisation as the ICRC might not have the power to change these Conventions. Instead, the following section will provide alternative policy options on how the ICRC could approach a dialogue with support programs.

3.3. Policy Options

Seeing the fact that IHL does not provide a solid basis for the ICRC to formally engage in a dialogue with support programs, other options to do so will be analysed. This section will explore multiple policy options. These options include engaging in a dialogue with the local forces and rethinking the definition of what is considered a party to a conflict. This section will also present a couple of strategic arguments which could support the dialogue with support programs. Lastly, it

will look at how the ICRC can provide advice to support programs.

3.3.1. Engage in a dialogue with the local forces

Because the mandate of the ICRC does not formally allow for the organization to speak to parties that are indirectly involved in a conflict, the ICRC should try to look for alternative ways to obtain information on and influence the *modus operandi* of, for example, the European Union Training Missions. Within the duration of such missions, the ICRC should stay in close contact with the military that is being trained (Louissen, 2021).

The ICRC needs to stay in close contact with the forces that are being trained. It is important that the ICRC monitors what these recruits learned from the EUTM and how they will apply that knowledge into practice. During such conversations, the ICRC should also once again stress the importance of complying with the rules of IHL during a conflict.

For example, in the CAR, many former rebels are now part of the national armed forces, who have not yet been held accountable for human rights violations they have committed in the past (*Prioritizing and Sequencing Peacekeeping Mandates: The Case of MINUSCA*, 2018)

Stressing the importance of IHL compliance is especially important for those former rebels that now take up a spot in the national army. This shift from a rebel group to a state army also means a shift in responsibility. As has been laid down in the Geneva Conventions, state parties are obliged to comply with IHL (1949), whereas rebel groups can only be compelled to do so. The ICRC should therefore make sure to engage in dialogues with the local forces, to make sure that all recruits within this army take their training and IHL seriously.

3.3.2. Rethink the definition and criteria of *party to a conflict*

Considering the definition of *party to a conflict*, it can be stated that training missions such as the EUTM-RCA and EUTM-Mali do not qualify as parties to a conflict. This also applies when using the current definition that is used by the ICRC. This definition only covers military intervention that affects the applicability of IHL in conflict situations (Ferraro, 2015). However, the term *intervention* is already problematic, as an intervention implies that this is done unsolicited (Bellamy & Dunne, 2016), whereas missions such as the EUTM-RCA and the EUTM-Mali were entered into force upon request of the local government.

Furthermore, looking at the criteria for when a party can be considered a party to an armed conflict, it becomes difficult to place the EUTM in such a definition. One of the four criteria to consider a foreign intervention as a party to a conflict, is if the supporting or intervening power undertakes actions related to the conduct of hostilities (Ferraro, 2015). Seeing that these missions are not allowed to participate in combat operations, it is therefore hard, or perhaps even impossible, to place support programs or military training missions within these definitions and criteria.

The trend of deploying support programs in conflict situations makes that the ICRC should rethink this definition and the criteria of when a foreign intervention can be considered a party to a conflict. Even though such missions might not be directly involved in the hostilities in a conflict, they do in fact affect the applicability of IHL in a conflict situation.

On the one hand, missions such as the EUTM-RCA and EUTM-Mali contribute to the knowledge of IHL within an army, by providing training on the basics of such laws. However, on the other hand, training soldiers also means that such a training mission might make the soldiers more lethal. For example, training missions are already criticized for focusing too much on

the technical aspect (Shurkin et al., 2017). Another potential risk of IHL violations is the fact that the EUTM-RCA's mandate will be extended, allowing the mission to also provide weapons to the soldiers (Hickendorff & Acko, 2021). Such equipment could potentially make soldiers prone to IHL violations. As has also come forward during the interview, soldiers tend to be interested in support in terms of weaponry, rather than in terms of knowledge (Interview Notes, 2021, p.8).

The fact that such training missions can make soldiers more lethal, and therefore prone to IHL violations, makes that such missions should be considered as parties affecting the applicability of IHL in a conflict situation. The trend of support programs in conflict situations, as well as other forms of indirect involvement of foreign powers, is a trend that might last for years to come. It is therefore important that the ICRC reconsiders its criteria for considering foreign involvement as a party to a conflict, allowing for training missions to also fall under this definition.

3.3.3. Informal dialogue with supporting states

Since the ICRC cannot formally engage with support programs according to their mandate, the ICRC has to find a way to promote informal dialogues with supporting states. For dialogues to occur,

the ICRC has to convince the supporting states that a dialogue is also valuable for them. To convince supporting states the ICRC has to present arguments that explain why the training of IHL in training missions can have strategic value to supporting states. This has to be in line with the objective of support programs, which is to establish a monopoly of violence for the local government and stabilise the conflict situation by reducing the violence from rebel groups (Karlin, 2018). The ICRC could use several arguments to convince supporting states that collaboration with the ICRC is advantageous for support programs. This analysis will explore three such arguments and assess their potency.

Trust between citizens and the local army

A relationship of trust between the citizens and local forces is essential if the state wants to establish a monopoly of violence (Knowles & Matissek, 2019; Skeppström et al., 2015). Without a good relationship between the civilians and the military, the army will not be trusted to protect the country and can more easily be challenged and overrun by non-state actors (Knowles & Matissek, 2019; Shurkin et al., 2017). Violations of IHL by local forces will not be beneficial for this relationship, since it can increase the grievances of the population (Paterson, 2016). This in turn

can provoke an increase in the level of violence committed by non-state actors and provide an incentive for civilians to join these non-state actors (Knowles & Matissek, 2019).

In both the cases of CAR and Mali violations of local forces have hurt the relationship with citizens, aggravating the conflict situation. In the case of CAR, there is a lack of trust between the FACA and the citizens (Zimmerman, 2020). One reason for this is that some of the soldiers that have a place in the FACA have committed violations of IHL in the past, especially during the conflict of 2013, and have not yet been held accountable for this (*Prioritizing and Sequencing Peacekeeping Mandates: The Case of MINUSCA*, 2018). If the FACA wants to rebuild a relationship of trust with its citizens, it should refrain from committing IHL violations in the future.

In the conflict of Mali, there is also a lack of trust between the MAF and citizens (Shurkin et al, 2017). In Mali, there is much tension between the army and the non-state actors, located in the north. The MAF has been rather hostile towards these rebel groups. There are a couple of accounts that show that the MAF has conducted human rights abuses and violations of IHL against civilians in the North (Shurkin et al, 2017; Knowles & Matissek, 2019). This hostile

behaviour has fuelled the grievances of northern civilians and non-state actors. It has created a large divide between the army and the Malian civilians, which has contributed to an increase in violence and insecurity (Jayasundara-Smits, 2018; Skeppström et al., 2015).

The analysis shows that IHL violations by local forces can hurt the trust between local forces and civilians, which can lead to an increase in violence and tensions in a conflict situation. Seeing that this would hurt the support programs' effort of stabilisation, it is valuable for support states to include education in IHL in their training. The training mission should aim to improve the relationship between civilians and the army. The ICRC could present this as a strategic argument to supporting states as to why they should include ethical and normative education, including IHL, in the training of local forces (Van der Plaat, 2021).

Risk of not including International Humanitarian Law

If the training mission only focuses on the technical training of soldiers, without also paying attention to the ethical and normative training, this could pose a risk to the conflict situation. The technical training is aimed at increasing the capacity of the soldiers, making them more effective in

military operations (Tull, 2020). This intrinsically makes them more lethal and dangerous. Seeing that, in the past, both the MAF and the FACA have committed violations of IHL, there is a danger that this violence will be used against civilians in the future (*Prioritizing and Sequencing Peacekeeping Mandates: The Case of MINUSCA*, 2018; Shurkin et al, 2017; FIDH, OCDH & LCDH, 2014). If the training mission does not also take into account ethical and normative training, they risk training soldiers that will use their technical training against civilians (Knowles & Matissek, 2019; Allen, 2018). In this way, the training mission may potentially worsen the conflict situation and increase the level of violence from both the local forces and the rebel groups in response (Paterson, 2016).

At the moment, support programs have been critiqued for focussing too much on technical training and for not properly teaching human rights and IHL in the training (Jayasundara-Smits, 2018; Shurkin et al, 2017; Zimmerman, 2020). Therefore, it could be valuable for the supporting states to accept the collaboration with the ICRC to prevent this risk from manifesting. The ICRC could present the strategic argument that the support programs risk increasing the level of violence in the conflict situation, if they only focus on technical

training and making local forces more lethal. This argument could potentially convince supporting states to collaborate with the ICRC.

The mindset of African armies

It is difficult for African armies to create a good relationship with citizens. During the colonial era, the African armies were created with the intention of protecting the government from its citizens rather than offering protection for its citizens (Ouédraogo, 2014; Salihu, 2021). The armies were seen as a means to gain power over the country and to prevent coups from occurring. These dynamics cause a large distrust between the population and the army, in which civilians do not feel protected by their armies (Ouédraogo, 2014; Salihu, 2021). This dynamic is also seen in the case of CAR (Hickendorff & Acko, 2021). Seeing that the focus of these armies is to fight rebel groups, the chances may become higher that the army violates IHL (Salihu, 2021; Day et al., 2020), which will further destabilise the conflict situation.

Therefore, it can be valuable for the training mission to try and tackle this mindset of the armies. If the training mission pays ample attention to training the soldiers to protect its citizens, rather than seeing them as a threat, this may foster the relationship

between the army and its citizens. This requires a large effort to change the mentality of local forces, however, it will increase the chances of stabilisation and therefore the success of the training missions.

This argument could be valuable, however, it may not be as fruitful in convincing supporting states. The European States that have set-up the training missions have an objective that goes against the previous argument. The underlying objective of EU training missions is to reduce the risks to the security of Europe, such as terrorism and migration (Matisek, 2020; Palm & Crum, 2019). Therefore, the missions are inherently steered towards training the local forces to fight against non-state actors and insurgencies. It may be to the advantage of EU states to change the mentality of the local forces to protect its citizens, since it improves stabilisation. However, EU states might not view it as valuable to achieve their own objectives. Thus, this policy option may not be the most effective for the ICRC to convince supporting states to collaborate with them and invest in the compliance of IHL.

Providing advice to support programs

In the subsection ‘European Union Training Missions and Their (Un)Intended effects’, the analysis shows that the current

composition of support programs increases the risk of IHL violations by local forces. It would be beneficial for the support programs to find a solution to these pitfalls, since that increases the likelihood that proper state authority is established and that the conflict stabilises. EU states have also expressed the objective for the training missions that compliance to IHL should improve (Rehrl, 2017). Thus, the ICRC could help the training missions to improve these defects and collaborate with support programs to find a solution by offering their expertise. There are three different problems with which the ICRC can help support programs, by providing advice and offering collaboration.

First of all, the ICRC could help the support program improve the accountability of soldiers. One way of doing this is by installing a military ombudsman. This would have to be an independent organ that is not connected to the military. The ombudsman could be a place where citizens and soldiers can report IHL violations that are committed by local forces. The ombudsman could then set in motion a research committee and a process to hold the responsible soldiers accountable for their actions. This would help with the accountability of the soldiers that are trained by the training missions.

Second, as the ICRC could help with improving the accountability of the military externally, the ICRC could do so internally as well. As this analysis made clear, in both FACA and MAF there is a lack of internal accountability. In order to improve the internal accountability of FACA and MAF, legal advisers need to be integrated into the structures of the armed forces. The ICRC could assist the support programs with such a project, as they could educate such legal advisors. Furthermore, because of the close ties between the ICRC and local armed forces, the ICRC could use its influence to integrate those legal advisors into the armed forces. Additionally, the ICRC could assist the support programs in providing lessons in accountability during the training.

Another problematic aspect of EUTMs that the ICRC could help with is monitoring trained units outside of their EUTM training facilities. As mentioned previously, the EUTMs in Mali and CAR can only monitor the local forces on the training grounds. This prevents effective evaluation of the performance of trained units outside the training facilities. This also means that the conduct of trained units in the field is not monitored. This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. The ICRC can provide their expertise to tackle this issue. This can be done in two ways. First, the ICRC could monitor the

performance and conduct of trained units in the field themselves. Through a neutral observing and analysing role, ICRC personnel could write up, for example, reports for EUTMs. The provision of such reports makes the EUTMs less blind-sighted and more effective. Second, the ICRC could assist with establishing monitoring mechanisms, so no ICRC personnel will be monitoring trained units actively. The ICRC is an influential actor in conflict situations, since the ICRC has a lot of contacts in different layers of the society they operate in. Think of the government, jurisdiction, but also on a more local level. Plus, the ICRC of course has a lot of experience in IHL. Hence, the ICRC is an excellent partner in helping with setting up such controlling mechanisms.

4. Conclusion

This policy paper aimed to analyse how the ICRC can approach the changing dynamic of conflict situations that support programs bring about. These support programs have been constructed to improve the capacity of local forces. In many conflict situations, local forces are weak and have been tormented by insurgencies and non-state actors. Likewise, this issue has also troubled the states of Mali and the Central African Republic. Both governments have struggled with a weakened military that was unable to fight off rebel groups and establish proper state authority.

In an attempt to stabilise the conflict situation, EU states arranged an EU training mission to help increase the capacity of the local forces in Mali and the CAR. What is distinctive about this approach is that the EU states refrain from sending in their troops or contributing by any means to the actual hostilities. The aim of support programs seems to be benevolent and promising, however, from the analysis, it appears that support programs seem to be flawed, which causes disadvantages to the conflict situation. This is because the local forces that support programs are meant to train, commit IHL violations towards local populations.

Research shows that when armies violate IHL towards their own population, this can increase the anger and grievances that exist in a country. Citizens do not trust the military and are not convinced that they will be protected by them. Consequently, the level of violence by non-state actors and the instability in the country can exacerbate. Therefore, it is problematic that local forces commit such violations of IHL.

Since the goal of support programs is to increase the state authority and stabilise conflict situations, one would expect that support programs pay ample attention to the lack of adherence to IHL by local forces. However, the analysis shows that support programs have failed to effectively tackle this problem. The current composition of support programs has multiple weaknesses that allow IHL violations by local forces to occur. Therefore, this makes it difficult for support programs to establish accountability in the local forces.

Support programs could have a more constructive effect on conflict situations if they improve upon these weaknesses that allow violations of IHL. Since the goal of the ICRC is to promote IHL in conflict situations, the malfunctioning of support programs is a problem that the ICRC could help to tackle. The strategy of the ICRC is to have dialogues with all the parties to a

conflict. However, the ICRC does not have a legal basis to engage in dialogue with the support programs, seeing the fact that the nature of support programs does not make them a party to a conflict.

The ICRC could approach this issue in three manners. Firstly, they could try to tackle some of the issues that support programs cause by engaging in dialogue with the local forces that are trained. Secondly, the ICRC could consider rethinking the definition of when they consider foreign involvement a party to a conflict. Lastly, the ICRC could informally engage with support programs and try to convince them that it is beneficial for support programs to integrate education of IHL into the entirety of their training. The concrete policy recommendations will be discussed more elaborately in the section *policy recommendations*.

5. Policy Recommendations Criteria

The next chapter of this paper will introduce several policy recommendations on how the ICRC can go about the deployment of support programs in conflict situations. In order to assess these policy recommendations and to determine whether these can actually be implemented, a couple of criteria have been formulated to assess the effectiveness of the recommendations.

Firstly, the action space of the ICRC has been determined by their mandate. Keeping this mandate in mind, the recommendations should be both realistic and achievable for the ICRC. Secondly, the recommendations themselves should be in line with the rules of IHL. This adds to the goal of the ICRC to promote IHL in conflict situations. Lastly, the recommendations should be applicable in general. As this policy paper focuses specifically on the conflicts in Mali and the CAR, and thereby the EUTM in those countries, the recommendations should not be tailored specifically to these conflicts. Rather, they should apply to all types of support programs and all types of conflict in which the ICRC is involved.

6. Policy Recommendations

1 - Obtain information on and influence support programs through local forces

The mandate of the ICRC does not formally allow for the organization to speak to parties that are indirectly involved in a conflict, such as support programs. The ICRC should therefore stay in close contact with forces that receive training, in order to influence and obtain information about the

support program. The ICRC should monitor what these forces are trained and how they will apply that knowledge into practice. In these conversations, the ICRC could also stress the importance of IHL once more (Louissen, 2021).

2 – Rethink and reconsider the definition of *party to a conflict*

The current definition and criteria that are being used by the ICRC are only applicable to direct military involvement in a conflict. However, as current warfare strategies increasingly entail that states are indirectly involved in conflict situations, the ICRC should rethink this definition and the

criteria of *party to a conflict*. This would allow for the ICRC to consider indirect military involvement, that influences the applicability of IHL in a conflict situation, as a party to a conflict. Consequently, this would allow for the ICRC to engage in a dialogue with such parties as well.

3 – Support programs are more successful when effectively integrating IHL

Violations of IHL committed by local forces can increase the anger of marginalised groups, which will exacerbate the violence of the conflict. It will hurt the relationship between civilians and the army, which can make it even more difficult for the army to gain authority and establish a stable situation in the country. This goes against the entire objective of the

training mission. Therefore, the support programs would do well paying ample attention to the training of IHL throughout the entire mission. It will facilitate the restoration of a monopoly of violence and with that a successful support program (Van der Plaat, 2021).

4 – Support programs make soldiers more lethal, without making them more ethical

The supporting states should integrate normative and ethical education in the training missions, besides the capacity and technical training. Otherwise, the support programs may risk making local forces more dangerous and lethal towards their own population. This can increase the tension and the level of violence in the

conflict situation because it can potentially enrage the population and rebel groups. The training mission would thus work counterproductively towards its objectives. This strategic argument could convince the supporting states to collaborate with the ICRC.

5 – Create a research report about the impact of the malfunctioning of support programs on the stabilization of a conflict

To back up the previous two recommendations, the ICRC could try to find more evidence by creating a research report. This research report could provide more examples in which the violation of IHL by local forces undermines the success

of training missions and finds quantitative evidence for it. This will strengthen the argument, and can be more convincing for supporting states, since this policy paper might not be sufficient enough for that (Van der Plaat, 2021).

6 – Improve external accountability of local forces

The ICRC could help the support program improve the accountability of soldiers. This could be fulfilled by installing a military ombudsman. This would have to be an independent organ that is not connected to the military. The ombudsman could be a

place where citizens and soldiers can report IHL violations that are committed by local forces. The ombudsman could then set in motion a research committee and a process to hold the responsible soldiers accountable for their actions.

7 – Improve internal accountability of local forces

The ICRC could provide support programs with advice on improving the internal accountability of the military. In order to improve the internal accountability of local armed forces, legal advisers need to be integrated into the structures of the armed forces. Because the ICRC has close ties

with the government and local forces, the ICRC could assist the support programs with such a project. Additionally, the ICRC could encourage the support programs to integrate education on accountability throughout the entire training to the local forces.

8 – Monitor and evaluate the functioning of the trained local forces

First, the ICRC could monitor the conduct and performance of trained units by support programs in the field. Consequently, the ICRC can report to support programs what happens with the trained units outside of the

training facilities. Second, the ICRC could assist with establishing permanent monitoring mechanisms, which could take over the monitoring tasks of the ICRC personnel.

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Appendix A – Transcript

Interview ICRC Medewerker

Geïnterviewde: Medewerker ICRC (I)

Interviewer: Jochem Duteweert (J) en Nadine Louissen (N)

Datum: 8 Maart 2021 om 12.00 uur

Locatie: MS Teams

(N): Voor het vak Integrated Project zijn wij bezig met een beleidsadvies voor de ICRC. We hebben een opdracht gekregen waar wij onderzoek naar moeten doen. Ons onderzoek richt zich op trainingsmissies die steeds vaker voorkomen in conflictsituaties en welke implicaties die hebben voor het werk van de ICRC. Daarbij kijken wij naar de trainingsmissies van de Europese Unie die op dit moment bezig zijn in de Centraal Afrikaanse Republiek en in Mali. Wij kijken naar hoe de ICRC kan omgaan met die partijen en hoe zij het contact aan kunnen gaan met die missies. Op basis van ons onderwerp zijn we met u in contact gekomen, omdat wij van uw collega begrepen dat u in de Centraal Afrikaanse Republiek in contact staat met de trainingsmissie van de EU. Op basis daarvan willen we u graag een aantal vragen stellen. Heeft u vooraf nog vragen over ons interview of ons onderzoek?

(I): Nee, het is allemaal duidelijk.

(N): Dan kunnen wij beginnen met onze vragen.

(J): We zijn benieuwd hoe u bij de ICRC terecht bent gekomen. Kunt u daar wat meer over vertellen?

(I): Na twintig jaar militair te zijn geweest, was ik op zoek naar iets anders. Ik heb een diploma in internationale betrekkingen en daar wilde ik ook iets mee doen. Ik heb een master gedaan in het leger zelf, maar daarnaast ook een civiel diploma. Ik wilde iets doen met dat civiel diploma. Ik was op zoek naar een baan die ook een link had met mijn oude functie als officier binnen het Belgische leger, en ik wilde de humanitaire wereld in. Deze baan was daar perfect voor. Ik ben in juli 2020 begonnen bij de ICRC. Ik ben nu een soort verbindingsofficier tussen het Rode Kruis en alle internationale troepenmachten, zoals EUTM, de troepenmacht van de EU, maar ook de VN-troepenmacht MINUSCA en het lokale leger. Met mijn kennis van het leger help ik de ICRC een beetje verder.

(J): Wat houden uw werkzaamheden in? U bent verbindingspersoon?

(I): Een soort verbindingsofficier, ja. Ik ben ook bezig met internationaal humanitair recht, het recht dat toepasbaar is op conflictsituaties en oorlogssituaties. Die lessen geef ik ook aan iedereen in dit conflict.

(J): Ok, dat werkt dan dus beide kanten op, moeten wij dat zo zien?

(I): Ja, dat klopt.

(J): Duidelijk. Ons onderzoek gaat over hoe de ICRC een dialoog kan faciliteren met een trainingsmissie. Als u het daar mee eens bent, willen we graag iets meer de diepte in over dit onderwerp. Ik zou graag willen vragen wat u van de verstandhouding vindt tussen bijvoorbeeld de ICRC en de EUTM. Hoe ervaart u dat?

(I): Hier in de Centraal Afrikaanse Republiek is die verstandhouding heel goed. Zij trainen het lokale leger en vragen onze bijdrage om de lessen te geven. Wij gaan zelf vanuit de ICRC de lessen geven aan het lokale leger. Deze lessen worden gefaciliteerd door de Europese trainingsmacht. Zij geven bijvoorbeeld de zaal, ze zorgen voor elektriciteit, een projector enzovoort. Zij zorgen dat we een bepaalde tijd hebben om de lessen te geven. Alles wordt door hen gefaciliteerd, dus die verstandhouding gaat heel goed. Verder krijgen ook de mensen zelf uitleg, want ze hebben mensen die de trainingen geven, maar ook raadgevers op alle niveaus. Geregeld ga ik op zaterdag ook uitleg geven aan die raadgevers, en andere onderwijzers die niks met de lessen in internationaal humanitair recht te maken hebben, maar die wel in hun dagelijkse leven in contact staan met het lokale leger. Om dezelfde boodschap te geven die ik geef aan het lokale leger, zorg ik dat zij diezelfde kennis hebben en dezelfde boodschap kunnen overbrengen. Dus eigenlijk gaat het met EUTM heel goed hier.

(J): Dat is goed en interessant om te horen. Wij waren eigenlijk ook benieuwd hoe jullie met elkaar omgaan. Is dat in veel overleg, of ook informeel?

(I): De EUTM vraagt vaak al onze input voordat zij hun lessenspakket voorstellen aan het lokale leger. Hoeveel uren hebben wij nodig, in welke fase van de opleiding willen jullie tussenkomen en in welke opleidingen. Vooraf is er al overleg, maar het is heel moeilijk om met het lokale leger iets te plannen. Dus vaak, zelfs al is dat overleg er, hebben wij al afgesproken wat wij willen geven. Soms zijn er een dag of twee van tevoren nog wijzigingen, wordt de opleiding integraal ingekort omdat er ergens een crisis is, dus plannings-gewijs is alles zeer moeilijk. Er is weinig structuur in het lokale leger. Zelfs als je een cursus geeft, specifiek gebaseerd op IHL, de mensen die die cursus volgen worden achteraf vliegeniers of gaan een hele andere richting op. Planning is moeilijk en daar alle partijen moeite mee, zowel de EUTM, als de ICRC als alle andere partijen die tussenkomen om te assisteren bij de vorming van het lokale leger. Ik heb ervaring in andere Afrikaanse landen, en het is hier veel moeilijker dan wat ik heb gezien elders.

(J): In welke andere landen heeft u dan bijvoorbeeld ook ervaring?

(I): Ik ben in Mali, Burkina-Faso, Niger, Gabon en vooral in Congo geweest. Maar dit was telkens als militair, de Centraal Afrikaanse Republiek is mijn eerste missie voor de ICRC.

(J): U geeft aan dat de verstandhouding heel goed is en dat u een deel van de trainingen voorziet. Klopt het dat u dan deze trainingen in internationaal humanitair recht verzorgt?

(I): Eigenlijk, de lessen die we via EUTM geven, zij zijn rechtstreeks in contact met FACA om dat vaste lessenspakket vast te stellen. Alle niveaus hebben vaste lessenspakketten. Dat is allemaal geregeld door EUTM zelf. De ICRC komt ertussen om de lessen te verzorgen. Als ik zelf iets wil organiseren voor het leger, ga ik rechtstreeks naar die partij toe en doe ik dat niet via EUTM. Ik kan ook tussenkomen in de opleiding of een informatiedag verzorgen aan EUTM-instructeurs en adviseurs. Het is op drie fronten, eigenlijk.

(J): Vindt u dat het leger, zoals de FACA, dat zij bereidwillig zijn die een trainingsmissie in samenwerking met de ICRC verstrekt? Ervaart u daar moeilijkheden?

(I): De grote moeilijkheid in dit land is het niveau van Frans, vaak wordt alles nog in Sangho vertaald, met verlies van informatie als gevolg. De tweede moeilijkheid is, vooral ook bij de rekruten, dat ze zo moe zijn door de slechte leefomstandigheden: slechte voeding et cetera. Ze zijn zo moe tijdens de lessen dat de informatie soms niet doordringt. Daarnaast zijn ze ook niet echt leergierig in dit land, maar dat is algemeen. De opleiding in dit land is zo laag, met het gevolg dat zowel hun Frans slecht is als dat ze niet leergierig zijn, vergeleken met wat ik elders gemerkt heb. In Congo zijn de mensen bijvoorbeeld heel leergierig en komen ze ook na de les nog naar je toe om vragen te stellen en extra dingen te leren. Als een vak mensen hier niet interesseert, dan gaat de informatie verloren. Dit land is achter op andere Afrikaanse landen in dit opzicht. Dat is deels te wijten aan de lage scholingsgraad hier. Veel kinderen gaan niet naar school en degenen die wel naar school gaan, hebben al veel achterstand. Bijvoorbeeld in 2013 en 2014 en nu met corona zijn de scholen gewoon gesloten. Kinderen hebben hierdoor zeer veel achterstand. Als er geen school is, lijken de kinderen hier blij dat ze niet naar school kunnen. De dorpen meer naar de westerse, Arabische kant en Zuid-Sudan hebben dat meer, maar in het centrale gebied is de leergierigheid heel laag. Militairen komen eigenlijk ook overal vandaan. In Bangui, de hoofdstad, is leergierigheid ook een groot probleem en dat is wel de plek waar de meeste militairen vandaan komen.

(J): Om daarop door te gaan, zouden wij ook graag iets over uw eigen ervaringen willen horen in de Centraal Afrikaanse Republiek. Een vraag die we dan hebben is hoe u het ervaart om de dialoog aan te gaan met een trainingsmissie?

(I): Zij [de trainingsmissie] blijven vooral gefocust op Bangui zelf plus een stad buiten de hoofdstad. Ze hebben maar twee uitvalspunten. Ze trainen, maar volgen de mensen niet in het terrein. Het is zeer beperkt tot enkele momenten dat ze met de FACA werken. Ze hebben weinig idee over hoe de FACA leven en werken in de rest van het land en welk materieel ze daar tot hun beschikking hebben enzoverder. De grondige kennis van de werkomstandigheden in de rest van het land ontbreekt. Daar probeer ik hun meer in te betrekken. Als ik ergens heen ga, wil ik mijn ervaringen delen met de troepen van de trainingsmissie.

[verbinding valt weg tijdens het gesprek]

(J): U was aan het vertellen dat u de dialoog probeert te voeren.

(I): Ja, dat komt vooral omdat de instructeur voor internationaal humanitair recht binnen de EUTM ook contact houdt met de mensen die een bijdrage leveren aan de cursus, bijvoorbeeld ook de VN. Het is eigenlijk heel persoonsgebonden. Het is niet dat ik met iedereen binnen de EUTM hetzelfde dialoog heb. Het is vooral met die ene instructeur waarmee de dialoog heel goed. Voor de rest, om de lessen te plannen, is het zeer formeel contact. Met die instructeur is het meer op persoonlijk vlak. Met andere mensen is het meer formeel, met iedereen rond de tafel. Dat wordt allemaal zeer formeel vastgelegd. Maar bijvoorbeeld het uitwisselen van ervaringen is zeer informeel.

(J): Dat klinkt goed. Wij hebben in ons onderzoek gevonden, wat vooral in Mali het geval was, dat er vaak niet echt sprake is van een dialoog tussen mensen die bij de ICRC werken en mensen die onderdeel zijn van de trainingsmissie.

(I): Ik denk dat dat met mijn achtergrond te maken heeft. Ik ken EUTM Mali aangezien ik voor de VN in Mali heb gewerkt. De EUTM had een Belgische baas en in 2017 was er hier ook een Belgische baas. Ik weet hoe de Belgen werken. Met mijn voorganger was er bijvoorbeeld minder nauw contact, dus ik denk dat dat echt door persoonlijke omstandigheden komt. Dat is veel minder organisatie-gebonden.

(J): Eigenlijk kunt u stellen dat u wellicht een speciale positie heeft omdat u een militaire achtergrond heeft?

(I): Ja, maar mijn collega in Mali heeft dezelfde achtergrond. Degenen die met de EU-troepenmacht, de VN-troepenmacht of met de lokale troepen werkt zijn bij de ICRC altijd ex-militairen. Ik heb het voordeel dat ik 100% in dit land werkt. Degene die in Mali werkt, werkt ook voor andere landen, waardoor zij wellicht minder tijd heeft om persoonlijke relaties met allerlei partijen te onderhouden. Ik werk altijd hier in dit land, en hoef niet naar een tweede of een derde missie om die te ondersteunen, dus dat is een groot voordeel voor mij.

(J): Dat kan ik me voorstellen. Hoewel dit interview vooral over uw ervaringen gaat ben ik dan wel benieuwd of uw collega in Mali dan met meerdere conflicten bezig is. Hoe moet ik dat voor me zien?

(I): Ik weet het niet zeker. Ik denk dat mijn collega in Mali nog met andere landen in de Sahel bezig is. Zij is pas sinds vorig jaar bezig en ik heb haar nog nooit ontmoet. Wij leven in onze bubbel in onze eigen delegaties. Ik heb enkel contact met Geneve, maar weinig met mijn collega's in andere landen, deels ook door corona. Normaal zijn er jaarlijkse meetings waarbij alle ex-militairen samenkomen, maar die heeft de afgelopen 2 jaar niet plaatsgevonden. Dat bemoeilijkt ook het contact met mensen die dezelfde functie doen in andere landen.

(J): Duidelijk, dank. Om een ander sub-onderwerp te behandelen, zou ik graag willen weten hoe u denkt over de ontwikkeling van het gebruik van trainingsmissies in conflictsituaties. Wat zijn uw gedachten daarover, dat dit een nieuwe trend is? Ik zou graag willen horen hoe u daar over denkt, vindt u dat een goede ontwikkeling?

(I): Als ik terugkijk naar mijn ervaring als militair, voor 2013, voordat hier de eerste grote oorlog was, waren er militaire raadgevers uit Frankrijk. We hadden hetzelfde in Congo, waar je militaire raadgevers had op elk niveau. Op elk niveau zat één raadgever. Ik denk dat dat systeem, van één raadgever uit een enkel land met een enkele visie die een enkele persoon moet begeleiden, dat dat een betere optie is dan een internationale troepenmacht en een VN-troepenmacht, en het ICRC, en de Fransen, en de Russen, en de Amerikanen en wie nog meer. Iedereen probeert dezelfde personen te spreken, maar iedereen heeft een andere visie en een andere achtergrond. We zijn met te veel mensen, dat is mijn indruk. Te veel die met dezelfde mensen proberen te werken. De visies zijn gelinkt aan elkaar, maar het is moeilijk.

(J): Dat maakt het een beetje een wazige situatie?

(I): Ja, vooral omdat er maar enkele mensen zijn die goed werken hier. Op het hoofdkwartier van FACA zijn er drie goede officieren waarmee alle internationale organisaties en ambassades samenwerken. Drie mensen gaan van de ene vergadering naar de andere en kunnen eigenlijk hun echte werk niet doen. In de CAR beslist één persoon alles, en die ene persoon zit dan ook nog 100% van zijn dag in vergaderingen, en ze werken hier maar halve dagen, dus na 13:00 uur vind je niemand meer. Tussen 08:00 en 13:00 zijn de bureaus open en daarna vind je niemand meer. Alles moet in die halve dag gepropt worden, en dat is een groot probleem als je met zoveel actoren met dezelfde mensen werkt. Die personen waarmee je iets kan doen, moeten alles via post doen. Mail en telefoon wordt niet gebruikt. Alles gebeurt op papier, of je moet ergens heen gaan. Als je ergens langs wilt, moet dat wel eerst bevestigd worden op papier, en dat duurt heel lang. Dat neemt minstens vier dagen in beslag voordat je iets kan verwezenlijken. Dat bemoeilijkt enorm de samenwerking. We zijn met zoveel die allemaal dezelfde mensen willen bespreken. Het feit dat we hier met zoveel zijn, dat de EUTM hier met een aantal raadgevers is, naast alle andere landen die met raadgevers zijn, maakt het onoverzichtelijk. In Mali denk ik dat de EUTM meer zijn plaats heeft en ook de ruimte heeft om naast het geven van instructie ook raadgeving te doen. In de CAR moeten ze vooral focussen op instructie. Het raadgevende gedeelte is lastig. De Russen zitten er ook meer tussen en die zijn ook veel belangrijker geworden dan de Fransen, terwijl zij in het verleden altijd raadgevers hebben geleverd. Er zijn nu teveel actoren maakt het lastig voor alle actoren, dus dat is niet specifiek alleen gelinkt aan de EU troepenmacht.

(J): Alle actoren hebben wel hun eigen agenda als ik het goed begrijp. Dat bemoeilijkt de samenwerking in zijn algemeen.

(I): Ja, klopt. En op een hoofdkwartier kan je met verschillende mensen werken, maar er zijn te weinig mensen in de hoofdkwartieren hier waar je effectief mee samen kan werken. Als je iemand invloedrijk wilt vinden, moet je gelijk naar de baas gaan. Alle lagere officieren geven

altijd aan dat je naar de baas moet gaan. Je kan opleiding geven en raadgeven aan die mensen, maar het is altijd de baas die de beslissing neemt.

(N): Ik heb daar dan wel een vraag over. Je geeft aan dat je naar de baas moet gaan als je een invloedrijk persoon moet spreken en dat je officieren wel kan opleiden, maar dat de baas de beslissingen maakt. Merk je tijdens trainingen ook dat het lastig is om dingen over te brengen aan deze officieren, omdat zij meer naar hun baas luisteren, of ligt dat in zulke situaties heel anders?

(I): Nee, uiteindelijk tijdens de lessen gaat alles zeer goed. Het raadgevende gedeelte is heel moeilijk. Het verstrekken van lessen is geen probleem en dat is ook goed afgebakend. De EUTM heeft het raadgevende gedeelte, het trainingsgedeelte en het vormingsgedeelte. Vorming is het gedeelte waar ik ook bij betrokken ben en training gaat vooral over het militair worden, dus de schietbaan op gaan, omgaan met wapens enzoverder. Vorming is vooral het intellectuele gedeelte. Raadgeving is vooral moeilijk.

(J): Kunt u dat raadgevende nog iets meer specificeren?

(I): Ze hebben raadgevers op het niveau van het ministerie van defensie en raadgevers die werken op het niveau van het hoofdkwartier van het leger. Ze hebben raadgevers op het vlak van human resources, material resources, budget and finance, operaties, logistiek, planning, mensenrechten, gender issues enzoverder. Maar al die raadgevers werken met dezelfde mensen, omdat er een tekort is van mensen die effectief iets te betekenen hebben in het hoofdkwartier en het ministerie van defensie.

(J): Duidelijk. Als ik in mag gaan op mensenrechten, dat is natuurlijk waar de ICRC nauw bij betrokken is, hoe ervaart u dat in het conflict? Wordt daar veel over gesproken, is het duidelijk bij de FACA? Hoe ervaart u dat?

(I): Dat hangt ervan af met wie je spreekt. Het probleem hier is dat er een inspecteur-generaal is, met wie we hierover spreken, die geblokkeerd is in Bangui. Ze hebben geen vervoerscapaciteit en zijn erg afhankelijk van de VN-vredesmacht. Informatieoverdracht gaat ook traag. Hij heeft geen mogelijkheid om een onderzoek te starten ter plaatse als er schendingen plaatsvinden. Hij luistert, maar is machteloos om er iets aan te doen, om een onderzoek grondig te doen. Hij krijgt lijsten van VN-troepen over wat er is gebeurd, maar staat machteloos om iets te doen. Als hij een aanvraag indient om ergens heen te gaan waar iets gebeurd is, duurt dat 2, 3 of 4 maanden voordat hij er heen kan. Ondertussen is de FACA die er zat al afgelost, dus het geeft bijna geen zin meer om een onderzoek te doen. Organisatorisch is het bijna onmogelijk om een onderzoek te doen en om actie te ondernemen. Als je bijvoorbeeld ook vraagt naar documenten over mensenrechten en internationaal humanitair recht zijn dat veelal stukken die geschreven zijn door de EUTM en ondertekend door de FACA, maar worden niet geïmplementeerd. Ze staan er niet volledig achter.

(J): Vindt u dan ook dat de EUTM daar meer aan kan doen of meer moeite steken in het feit dat er meer volgens IHL wordt gehandeld? Of denkt u dat dat niet haalbaar is?

(I): Ik denk dat dat onmogelijk is. De wil ontbreekt van FACA-leiderschap en het ministerie uit om er effectief iets aan te doen. Ze zeggen ook dat ze de steun nodig hebben van alle partners, maar ik heb eerder de indruk dat de wil om iets te verwezenlijken ontbreekt. Als de wil er echt is, kan het heel snel gaan. De rekrutering vorig jaar ging heel snel, omdat de wil er echt was. Maar om iets te verwezenlijken, de ontplooiing van FACA op het grondgebied, gaat zeer traag. Iedereen moet het maar ondersteunen, materieel beschikbaar stellen, kazernes bouwen et cetera, maar het gaat zeer traag. De mensen die dan wel ontplooid zijn, worden logistiek niet ondersteund of betaald, en daar kunnen wij niet meer helpen, dat is aan FACA zelf. Ondersteunen van de troepen die in het land zijn, is zeer slecht, met als gevolg dat zij gaan leven ten koste van de bevolking ter plaatse.

(J): Ten koste van de bevolking in welk opzicht?

(I): Ze vragen om voedsel van de bevolking, troggelen geld af van iedereen op een checkpoint. Als ze de mogelijkheid krijgen nemen ze waardevolle spullen in beslag. Moesten ze in betere omstandigheden leven, denk ik dat dit niet zou gebeuren. Het is niet zozeer dat ze dit uit slechte wil doen, het is meer een overlevingsmethode. Ze hebben wel morele waarden en normen, wel anders dan hoe wij die kennen, maar het is minder uit slechte wil en persoonlijke verrijking, maar meer een overlevingsdrang. Ik denk dat als wij met onze westerse kijk op hun vorming en hoe zij omgaan met soldaten, dat wij in onze situatie naar de rechter zouden stappen. Maar hier is dat de normaalste zaken van de wereld. Ik zie dat ook in de lagere scholen hier, kinderen worden daar ook nog met de lat op de vingers getikt. Het is niet alleen zo in het leger, maar algemeen aanvaard in de maatschappij dat het ok is om anderen zo te behandelen. Ze staan hier nog heel erg achter op hoe wij menswaardige omstandigheden zien. Dat is inherent aan het land. Mensen van EUTM komen hier ter plaatse, zijn hier zes maanden en gaan weer weg. Ik ga hier nu twee jaar werken. Omgang met soldaten is zeer anders en wat ik mensonwaardig vind, vinden mensen hier de normaalste zaak van de wereld. Dat is lastig om te veranderen.

(J): Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen van wat u heeft meegemaakt?

(I): Niet specifiek in de CAR, maar wel in Congo. Een soldaat die ik moest trainen had iets gedaan en heeft toen een week in cachot gezeten zonder eten en drinken. Voor hen is dat menswaardig. Ze behandelen hun eigen mensen slechter dan bijvoorbeeld gevangenen. Ik denk dat dat hier ook gebeurt. Als iemand niet komt opdagen voor zijn post, dronken is of een gevecht is gestart, straffen ze elkaar zeer hard. Een ander voorbeeld is dat een militair die tijdens een training niet netjes in het lijntje loopt of zijn hand niet hoog genoeg heeft, een klap op zijn hoofd kan krijgen met een stok. Ik denk zelf dat gewoon zeggen ook zou kunnen, maar zo werkt het hier niet. In Europa is zo iets allang verleden tijd.

(J): Denkt u dat een partij als de EUTM daarop ook kan ingrijpen?

(I): We [zowel ICRC als trainingsmissies] staan er niet altijd bij. En zelfs als we erbij zijn, is interveniëren moeilijk. Het lokale leger heeft de macht en de kracht om te zeggen: wij hebben jullie niet meer nodig, we staan jullie niet meer toe. Als we ons te veel bemoeien, laten ze geen EUTM meer toe in het land. Als we te veel doen, denk ik dat dat een averechts effect gaat hebben. Je moet een afweging maken tussen waar je wel en niet op reageert.

(J): Ze gebruiken dus wel middelen die worden geleverd en alles wat daarbij komt, maar als ze er genoeg van hebben kunnen zij zelf ook zeggen: het is goed zo, en we hebben jullie niet meer nodig?

(I): Ja, klopt. Het probleem dat de EUTM hier heeft is dat zij buiten kennis niks kunnen bieden. Dat gaat in de toekomst veranderen, ze gaan materiaal kunnen schenken, zelfs wapens en munitie inbegrepen. FACA is minder geïnteresseerd in kennis, maar meer geïnteresseerd in het materieel dat anderen kunnen bieden, geld en middelen. Als de EUTM te dicht op het leger gaat staan, denk ik dat de FACA gaat zeggen: we hebben jullie niet meer nodig, we kunnen het alleen.

(J): Denkt u dat een EUTM dan nog een relevante samenwerking is voor een leger? De interesse ligt eigenlijk alleen op het materialistische gebied, de kennis zijn ze minder ontvankelijk voor. Is de samenwerking dan nog relevant?

(I): Momenteel aanvaarden ze het nog. Maar het is ook een soort paraplu-systeem. Ze kunnen laten zien waar ze lessen in hebben gekregen. Daar hebben ze ons [ICRC en trainingsmissie] voor nodig en dat gaat zo blijven. Ze willen zich eigenlijk beter voor doen dan dat ze daadwerkelijk zijn, door te laten zien met wie ze samenwerken en wie ze toelaten.

(J): Terwijl daar dus niet altijd sprake van is. Ik heb nu eigenlijk wel antwoord op de meeste vragen. Nadine, heb jij nog een vraag die je wilt stellen?

(N): Ik ben wel benieuwd naar toekomstige plannen. Wat zijn jouw doelen en de doelen van de ICRC in het conflict in de CAR? Wat willen jullie nog bereiken in de periode dat jullie daar nog zitten?

(I): Voor mij persoonlijk is dat vooral om humanitair recht een belangrijke plaats te geven in de hiërarchie van de FACA. Bijvoorbeeld legal advisors opleiden en inbrengen in de structuur en onder-rechters specifiek voor IHL opleiden. Ze hebben enkele mensen die wel constant met de rekruten samen zijn, maar niet bezig zijn met humanitair recht. Dat zijn twee persoonlijke doelen.

Voor de ICRC in het algemeen, nu in deze crisistijden, zijn wij vooral bezig met het krijgen van toegang tot de bevolking. Bepaalde gebieden zijn nog altijd afgesloten en in bepaalde gebieden zijn weinig andere organisaties aanwezig. De sterkte van de ICRC is dat we zowel met FACA als de rebellen in contact staan. We spreken bijna dagelijks met de rebellenleiders.

Om toegang te krijgen tot zwakke bevolking is het voor ons gemakkelijker dan voor andere organisaties, omdat wij een veiligheidsgarantie kunnen krijgen van die leiders. Zeker in deze tijd zijn er bepaalde organisaties die zich teruggetrokken hebben en bepaalde projecten niet meer kunnen uitvoeren. Die heeft de ICRC nu deels overgenomen. Dat is ook deels ons motto: als eerste ter plaatse en als laatste weg uit een gebied. We hebben zeker nu bewezen dat dat zo is. Wij houden ons nu ook bezig met vluchtelingen, door bijvoorbeeld voedselpakketten uitdelen, brandstof voor watertoevoer, terwijl dat normaal gesproken bij andere organisaties zou liggen. We proberen nu ook zo snel mogelijk naar bepaalde gebieden te gaan om een analyse te doen van de behoeftes die daar zijn, bijvoorbeeld nood voor eten, zaden of het bouwen van huizen. We proberen een zicht te krijgen op welke gewonden en doden er zijn. We proberen een menswaardige begrafenis te geven aan iedereen. We brengen in kaart waar bepaalde mensen begraven zijn, zodat de familie ook de lichamen kan opeisen. Mensen worden nu ter plaatse in een gat begraven, niet op een kerkhof en niet teruggegeven aan een familie. Er zijn heel veel onbekende doden. Hetzelfde geldt voor mensen die tijdens het conflict hun familie zijn verloren. De ICRC probeert mensen te helpen hun familie terug te vinden. In de gebieden waar geen conflict meer is, zijn we al druk bezig. In de zones waar het conflict nog bezig is, wachten we nog op toestemming van onder andere MINUSCA om het gebied in te mogen. Tijdens het conflict zelf zijn we nu vooral bezig met het evacueren van gewonden, van alle partijen en alle kanten. Dat doen we voor beide zijden en zeker ook voor de burgers. We zijn met veel verschillende projecten bezig, maar we zitten ook met een grote delegatie en hebben veel plaatselijke bureaus, niet enkel in Bangui.

(J): Dat is duidelijk. Het is heel fijn om inzichten te krijgen van een ervaringsdeskundige. Dat helpt ons met de beeldvorming bij ons project. Het was erg leerzaam om uw ervaringen te horen.

(I): Het is voor mij ook nog redelijk recent dat ik in de schoolbanken zat, want ik ben pas tien jaar geleden weer gaan studeren, dus ik snap hoe jullie je nu voelen.

(J): Hoe ziet het er voor u nu verder uit? U blijft nog even in de CAR?

(I): Ja, in mijn positie is het gebruikelijk om ongeveer 2 tot 4 jaar in een land te zitten. Als militair deed ik vaak korte missies. Mijn werk nu geeft mij meer de kans om een kenniskring op te bouwen en meer informatie te vergaren. Als militair ken ik veel minder van het conflict en de situatie. De kennis die ik nu heb is veel breder dan in mijn ervaringen als militair. Binnen het Rode Kruis heb ik ook een veel bredere kijk, omdat ik ook in contact sta met de burgers en met alle partijen in een conflict.

(J): Ik kan me goed voorstellen dat dat voor u heel waardevol is.

(I): Ja, zeker. Ik wist al voordat ik hier kwam dat ze hier niet echt een systeem van legal advisors hebben, en daar wilde ik aan werken. Ik heb nu een periode van twee jaar om dat daadwerkelijk te verwezenlijken, of om dat op zijn minst te proberen. Militairen moeten hier dingen proberen in vier tot zes maanden, dat is erg lastig.

(N): Dank, ik denk dat dit zo voor ons heel duidelijk is. Heel fijn dat wij deze vragen hebben mogen stellen, heel erg bedankt voor uw tijd en moeite.

(I): Ik heb onlangs nog artikelen gelezen over de EUTM, ik zal deze nog naar jullie nasturen, wellicht kunnen jullie deze nog gebruiken.

(N): Dank, dat is heel handig.

(J): Fantastisch, heel veel dank. Dank voor uw tijd en moeite, ik denk dat we het interview kunnen afronden. Ik wil u namens ons beide en het groepje ontzettend bedanken en wil u veel succes wensen met uw werkzaamheden. Ik hoop dat het veel moois teweeg mag brengen.

(I): Graag gedaan en dank, fijne dag nog.

Appendix B – Informed Consent

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Jochem Duteweert and Nadine Louissen

j.j.g.duteweert@umail.leidenuniv.nl / n.louissen@umail.leidenuniv.nl

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This interview is part of a research conducted for the ICRC in the course Integrated Project II, Bachelor Security Studies year 3. In our research for the ICRC, we are specifically looking at the issues surrounding the implementation of International Humanitarian Law in conflicts involving military training missions to train, advice and assist local troops. We are looking at two cases in our research, one of which is the Central African Republic, where we are focusing on the EU Training Mission to the CAR armed forces. This interview will be focused on your experience working for the ICRC in the Central African Republic.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose. If you withdraw from the study, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

If you have questions at any time about this study, you may contact the principal investigator. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the principal investigator, please contact the tutor of Leiden University, Anneleen van der Meer (a.van.der.meer@fgga.leidenuniv.nl)

CONFIDENTIALITY

This interview will be recorded and used as input for a policy paper that will be presented to other students and the client. Please indicate to the principal investigator if you would like your responses to be kept entirely confidential. In this case, only the principal investigator and the tutor of Leiden University will know who you are and every effort will be made to preserve your confidentiality.



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INFORMED CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost.

I agree that this interview will be recorded.

I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

My participation needs to be [redacted] kept confidential.*

*cross out what does not apply.

Participant's signature [signature] Date 08/03/21

Investigator's signature [signature] Date 7 March 2021