

# Tackling Violent Conflict: The Case for a UK Civilian Peace Service

*Tim Wallis and Mareike Junge*



*Cover photo montage (from top left):* OSCE media training in Kosovo - photo: OSCE; PBI volunteers accompany a member of the OFP in Colombia - photo: J Menhini; Border monitoring in Georgia - photo: OSCE; Psycho-social work with children from Chechnya - photo: CPCD; Human rights training session in Burundi - photo: Norstaff; Election monitors in Kosovo - photo: OSCE; Supplying water to refugees in Armenia - photo: Norwegian Refugee Council.

## About the co-publishers

**Peaceworkers UK** was established in 2000 in order to raise public awareness about civilian approaches to the handling of conflict and to increase the availability of training and placement opportunities for people wanting to become involved in this kind of work. To this end, it is promoting the idea of a UK Civilian Peace Service and undertaking research into the feasibility of such a Service.

**Saferworld** is an independent think-tank working to identify, develop and publicise more effective approaches to preventing armed conflict. Saferworld has research programmes on Conflict Prevention and Arms and Security as well as regional programmes in the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Southern and Eastern Africa. Through a combination of research, capacity-building, policy facilitation and advocacy, Saferworld acts as a catalyst for change through a wide network of parliamentarians, civil servants, academics, journalists and NGOs.

**International Alert** is an independent non-governmental organisation which analyses the causes of conflict within countries, enables mediation and dialogue to take place, sets standards of conduct that avoid violence and helps to develop the skills necessary to resolve conflict non-violently. International Alert conducts policy oriented research and advocacy aimed at promoting sustainable peace.

**ERIS (Electoral Reform International Service)** is a leading European provider of electoral and democratisation assistance. Programmes are conducted to consolidate and monitor the electoral process, to strengthen democratic institutions and to promote civic awareness. ERIS manages a database of election monitors that are available for international assignments.

**RedR (Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief)** relieves suffering in disasters by selecting, training and providing competent and effective personnel to humanitarian aid agencies world-wide. Key activities include the running of a register of some 1600 carefully selected personnel, the provision of training to some 1,000 aid workers per annum and contributing to inter-agency activities devoted to improving the effectiveness with which humanitarian relief is provided. RedR is part of an international NGO group with offices in Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and Ottawa.

# summary

Tackling violent conflict is an urgent priority that requires serious investment of civilian as well as military resources. The EU, OSCE and UN are all calling for greater numbers of better qualified civilian personnel, but there is currently no coherent mechanism in the UK for recruiting these people, training them and making them available to these bodies, or to the hundreds of NGOs working in this field.

This briefing summarises the key findings of a much longer report into the civilian personnel needs of inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations working in areas of violent conflict. The full report examines the ways in which other European countries are attempting to meet these needs through the establishment of 'civilian peace services' and explores the relevance of setting up such a service in the UK. The full report is available from Peaceworkers UK, 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DD or from [www.peaceworkers.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.peaceworkers.fsnet.co.uk).

*“We know that force alone cannot create a stable society and functioning institutions. Yet the international community has lagged in deploying adequate civilian resources.”*

SPEECH BY FORMER FINNISH  
PRESIDENT, MARTTI AHTISAARI,  
BRUSSELS 4 APRIL 2001

## The case for a UK Civilian Peace Service:

- **The need to tackle violent conflict (page 2):** The UK is committed to the prevention and management of violent conflict. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and an influential member of many other international bodies, the UK is in a unique position to contribute to this goal and has already set up a cross-departmental pool to fund work in this area.
- **Military forces are not enough (page 3):** While the UK's military forces play an important role in managing violent conflict, military force alone cannot prevent or successfully resolve conflict. UK military personnel are increasingly used for humanitarian and other functions which are better handled by specialist civilian personnel.
- **What civilians can contribute (page 4-5):** Civilians provide training, advice and support to local efforts to tackle conflict. They engage with local populations and civilian authorities to open possibilities for dialogue and reconciliation. And their presence can, in some situations, offer more security to local people than the presence of military forces.
- **The international demand for civilians (page 6):** The EU has asked member states to provide civilian specialists in rule of law, civil protection and civilian administration. The OSCE and the UN are asking for civilian specialists in human rights, democratisation, elections and media development. The UK needs to develop better mechanisms for meeting such requirements.
- **European responses to the demand (page 7):** Other European countries are responding to the demand for civilian personnel by setting up rosters, training programmes and civilian peace services. The UK is in a good position to build on the strengths of these different models and create something appropriate to our circumstances here.
- **Tapping the resources of civil society (page 8):** The UK has a vibrant civil society from which to draw relevant civilian skills and expertise, including many experienced in dealing with the conflict in Northern Ireland. Young graduates, mid-career professionals and senior people could contribute to this work if suitable mechanisms were in place to enable them to do so.
- **The need for a UK civilian peace service (page 9):** UK-based NGOs involved in the recruitment, training and deployment of civilian personnel for working in conflict are already working together to develop standards and improve cooperation in this field. A UK Civilian Peace Service would consolidate these developments and enable the UK to provide a more effective, more professional and more coherent response to conflict situations.

# tackling violent conflict

*“Most wars now take place in the poorest countries. Most of their victims are poor people... A reduction in the incidence, duration and destructiveness of armed conflict is therefore an essential precondition for the achievement of the targets for sustainable development”*

CONFLICT REDUCTION AND  
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE,  
DFID, 2000

Tackling violent conflict is not just a moral imperative. It is a political and economic necessity. A failure to act when the warning signs approach may carry a heavy price at the end of the day – not only in lives lost and livelihoods destroyed, but also in purely financial terms.

The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict estimated that by 1999 the post-Cold War interventions of the 1990s had cost the international community over \$200 Billion. This was before Kosovo, East Timor or Afghanistan. And yet their conclusion was that concerted international efforts to prevent those same conflicts would have cost less than one-third that amount – as well as saving hundreds of thousands of lives and the homes of millions.

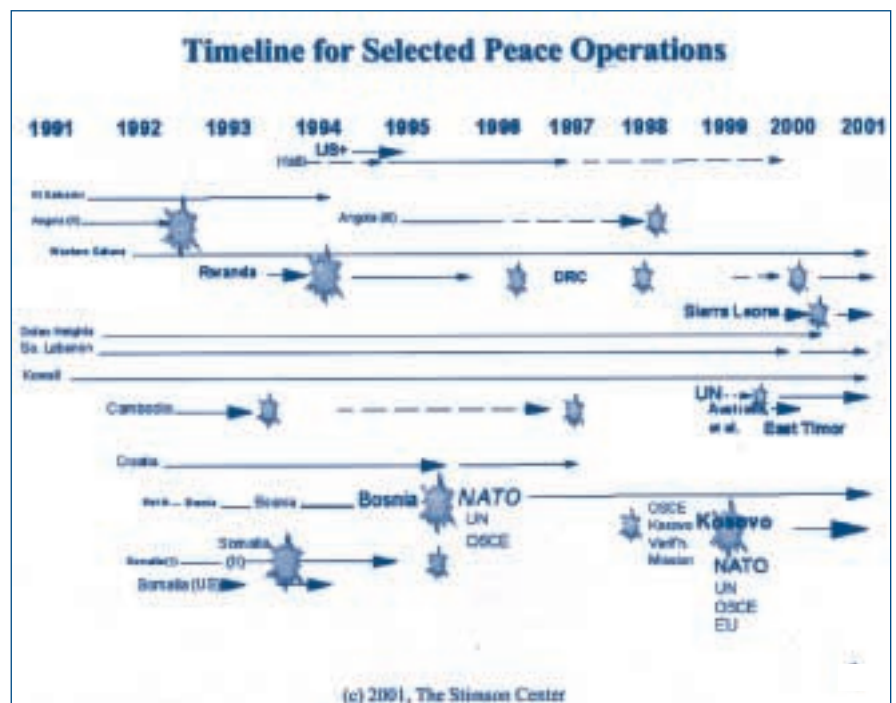
Early intervention to prevent the eruption of violent conflict has risen high onto the agendas of international bodies like the World Bank, the OECD, the G8, the UN Security Council, NATO, the EU, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the Commonwealth. The UK plays a leading role in these bodies and is in a unique position to argue for a more robust military response when this is deemed necessary, balanced by a stronger commitment to the early use of civilian instruments of conflict prevention wherever this is possible.

## Major conflicts of the 1990s and the international response

### Root Causes of Conflict:

- Imbalance of political, socio-economic or cultural opportunities among different ethnic groups
- Lack of democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of governance
- Absence of opportunities for the peaceful conciliation of group interests
- Lack of an active and organised civil society

EU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS,  
1998



# military forces are not enough

UK military forces are highly regarded around the world for their contribution to peacekeeping operations such as the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Some of the roles they are asked to perform, however, could be more effectively handled by police or by specialist civilian personnel.

Civilian police are better trained to handle crowds and criminal behaviour. Humanitarian agencies are better qualified for building of refugee camps and delivering aid, and long-term development projects like building schools and hospitals are best handled by appropriately trained and qualified civilian staff.

There are also many roles for civilians which are currently under-developed and under-appreciated. These include mediation and reconciliation work between the parties, human rights monitoring, capacity-building of civil society and support for elections and democratisation processes.

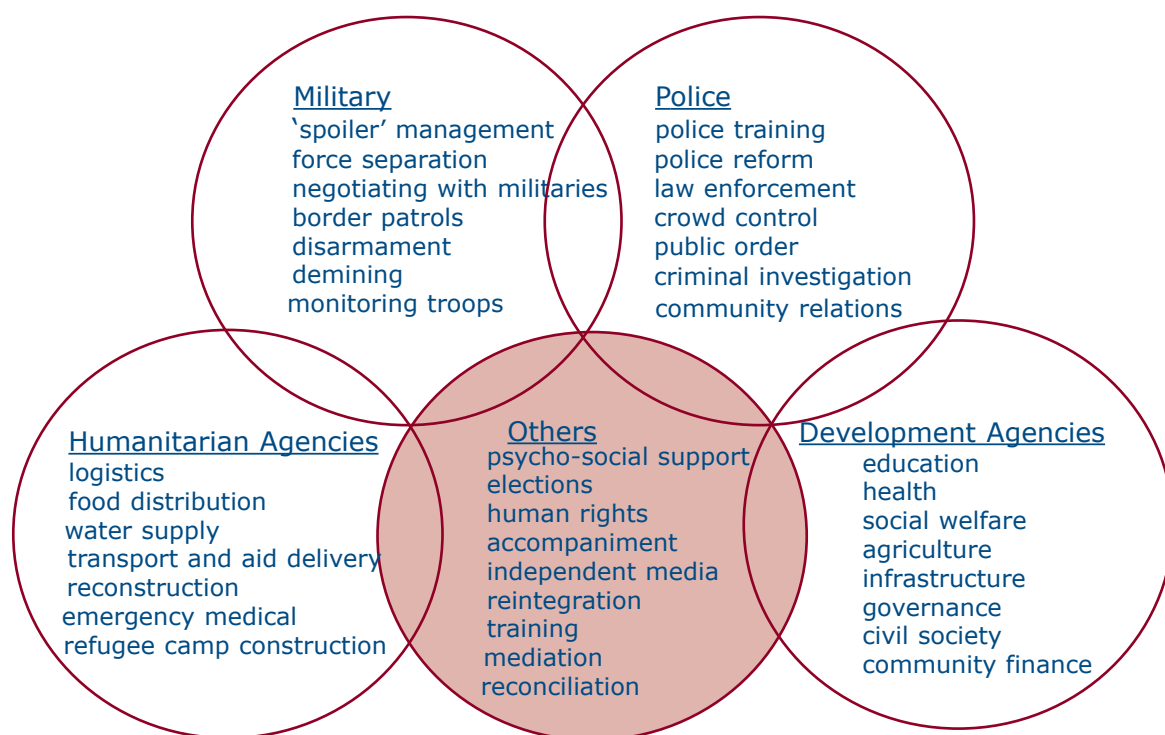
Training and deploying more civilians for these roles would free up military resources for the essential tasks that only the military can perform – such as dealing with the so-called ‘spoilers’ whose aim is to provoke and prolong a conflict, often in the face of an overwhelming desire for peace on all sides.

*“Troops cannot be expected to carry out civilian duties. That is why we need to focus on developing resources such as police, prosecutors, judges, legal experts, monitors, human rights experts, administrators and civil protection teams.”*

JAVIER SOLANA, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EU FOR COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY (CFSP), 2001

## Overlapping roles of organisations working in conflict:

Tackling violent conflict requires the involvement of many actors, including military forces, police, humanitarian and development agencies, as well as all the inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations working on the conflict. The activities of these different actors inevitably overlap somewhat with each other, but none can effectively do all that is needed by themselves.



# civilian contributions to the

The parties to a conflict and those most directly affected by it must be the ones who ultimately deal with that conflict. But there are many highly important roles which outside parties can play in support of the local people, including:

- Helping protect local people when it is too dangerous for them to engage in peace activities of their own,
- Acting as intermediaries when dialogue has broken down and direct negotiation is impossible,
- Offering material, technical and moral support to help build local capacities and empower local actors to deal with the conflict.

These are all essentially civilian tasks, even though they may be undertaken, at times, by military personnel. Ironically, it is the protection of local peace and human rights activists that can, in some cases, be the *least* appropriate activity for military personnel to undertake, since their presence may turn those they seek to protect into legitimate 'targets' for other parties to the conflict.



Media trainers meet with young Roma journalists at a training programme in Kosovo.

PHOTO: OSCE

## Independent Media

One of the tasks of the OSCE mission in Kosovo is independent media development. OSCE media experts provide training and assistance to local journalists, publishers and other media staff, organise cooperative inter-agency projects and assist with the recruitment of management and staff for public media.



OSCE monitors watch border area between Georgia and Chechnya.

PHOTO: OSCE

## Border Monitoring

Since summer 2000, around 40 OSCE monitors have been encamped in the mountain regions of northern Georgia. Their task is to report on any movement across the border with Chechnya.



A Norstaff human rights workshop in Kirundo, Burundi. PHOTO: K. Midttun

## Human Rights

Norwegian emergency personnel from

Norstaff run teacher training sessions on human rights as part of their efforts to strengthen local capacities for peace. Other capacity-building projects include business development advice, training and education.

## Protective Ac



PBI volunteers accompany rights defenders in Colombia 24 hours a day. PHOTO: J. M

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# The tackling of violent conflict

## Integration of Ex-combatants



Peacebuilding activities of Action Aid in Sierra Leone include efforts to engage ex-combatants in recreational activities which keep them busy as well as provide a venue for discussions on peace issues.

*Soldiers in Sierra Leone are brought together to play a football match by Action Aid.* PHOTO: Action Aid

## Psycho-Social Support



*Chechen children participating in workshop at refugee camp in Ingushetia.* PHOTO: CPCD

The Centre for Peace-making and Community Development uses local psychologists to work with war-affected children from Chechnya. They use art, music, dance, games and talking to help the children deal with aggression, build their confidence and better manage or overcome negative emotions affected by their traumatic experience.

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## Democratisation and Elections



*OSCE election monitors in Kosovo verify the elections as fair and proper.*

Many governmental and non-governmental organisations are involved in election monitoring and other activities to promote the democratisation process, especially in the aftermath of violent conflict such as in Kosovo. PHOTO: OSCE

## Training and Capacity-Building



*RedR training session in Nairobi, 2001.*

PHOTO: RedR

Training of local organisations is a vital part of the capacity-building needed to support local peace and human rights initiatives. RedR specialises in security training, while other NGOs and individual trainers provide training in a range of conflict-related techniques and practices.

## Protective Accompaniment



*Human rights activists in Colombia for up to 10 days.* PHOTO: RedR

Protective accompaniment is a technique pioneered by Peace Brigades International over 20 years ago in Central America. In Colombia, they currently have around 35 volunteers monitoring security of local human rights organisations and activists, maintaining a visible presence and using international pressure to successfully deter violent attacks.

# the demand for civilians

*“To date, the [UN] Secretariat has been unable to identify, recruit and deploy suitably qualified civilian personnel [for UN peacekeeping missions]”*

BRAHIMI REPORT ON UN  
PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS,  
AUGUST 2000

Nearly one-quarter of the people currently serving on UN peacekeeping missions are civilians. The Brahimi Report on UN Peacekeeping found that 50% of civilian field positions were still vacant six months to one year after the establishment of such missions. When the OSCE was mandated to set up a civilian monitoring mission in Kosovo in 1998, it took over six months to reach barely half the required strength of 2,000 monitors. Had this mission been at full strength from the start, perhaps the subsequent war could have been averted.

Both the UN and OSCE are now trying to remedy these shortfalls, but a growing emphasis on conflict prevention and on civilian approaches to handling conflict will mean a continuing rise in demand for the foreseeable future. The EU is preparing for future needs with its personnel targets for civilian crisis management, announced in June 2001.

## EU targets for civilian crisis management personnel (by 2003):

### Policing

- 5,000 police officers

### Rule of Law

- 200 public prosecutors, lawyers, judges and prison officers

### Civil Protection

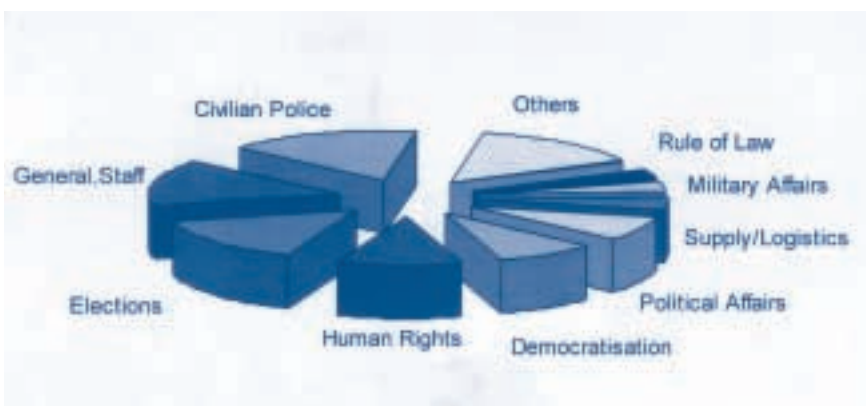
- 2-3 assessment teams dispatchable within 3-7 hours
- 2,000 emergency services personnel deployable at short notice

### Civil Administration

A 'pool of experts' to be available for:

- *General Administration*: civil registration, registration of property, elections, taxation, customs services.
- *Social Services*: education, social services, health and medical services.
- *Infrastructure*: water supply, energy, telecommunications, transport, waste management.

## OSCE deployments by category



The OSCE's "REACT" scheme was declared operational in April 2001. This enables personnel to be hired according to fixed categories and levels of responsibility using standards and online application forms across all 55 member states of the OSCE. Currently over 1,200 international civilian staff are seconded to OSCE missions in 22 countries.



# responding to the demand

Several European countries have created or are in the process of creating 'civilian peace services' in order to enhance their own capacities for recruiting, training and deploying civilian personnel. Others have focused on emergency rosters or training programmes. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses which the UK can learn from.

## Sweden Peace Team Forum (since 1994)

- Foreign Office study into effectiveness

## France Civilian Peace Service (since 1995)

- First CPS field worker sent to Kosovo in 2001

## Italy White Helmets (since 1999)

- Feasibility study being funded by Ministry of Defence

## Netherlands Civil Peace Teams (since 1995)

- Four-week training course for peace workers
- Military personnel and police seconded onto this course

## Austria Civil Peace Service (since 1993)

- An opportunity for young people to gain experience in conflict work
- Funded by the Austrian Home Office (no fixed budget)
- Managed and implemented by an association of NGOs
- Trains and deploys an average of 10 young volunteers annually to support partner organisations in conflict areas
- Specifically designed 4-week training course compulsory for all participants

## Norway Norstaff and Nordem (since 1991)

- Funded by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry (£146,000 in 2000)
- Managed and implemented by separate NGOs
- Stand-by rosters of approximately 400 civilians in 25 expert areas ranging from humanitarian aid to election assistance and human rights monitoring
- An average of 400 secondments to international peace missions and humanitarian operations
- Special training compulsory for each roster member

## Germany

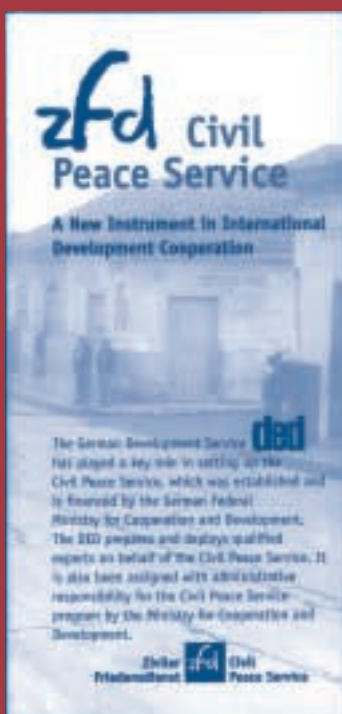
### Civil Peace Service (since 1999)

- ⊙ Founded 1999 as a government/NGO partnership
- ⊙ Seen as an important tool of German development policy
- ⊙ Funded by central government approximately £7m annually
- ⊙ Managed and implemented in co-operation with development services and peace organisations
- ⊙ Trains and deploys approximately 70 peace experts annually
- ⊙ Emphasis is on long-term peacebuilding projects in conflict areas where development agencies have a presence
- ⊙ Partner organisation have access to a specifically designed 4-month training course for CPS personnel

*"The Civil Peace Service is one of the most important instruments of German peace policy"*

HEIDEMARIE WIECZOREK-ZEUL,

MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT



# tapping resources of civil society

*“UK civil society is one of the most active and diverse in Europe. Partnership between government and civil society is therefore essential for achieving policy objectives in a field such as this.”*

FROM THE FULL REPORT,  
“ENHANCING UK CAPACITY FOR  
HANDLING CONFLICT”,  
2002

Within the UK are enormous resources for handling conflict which could be further developed and put at the disposal of the international community. In Northern Ireland alone there are over 130 NGOs active in the areas of community relations, human rights, policing issues, parades monitoring, mediation, work with ex-paramilitaries and other areas directly relevant to working in conflicts overseas.

Throughout the UK there are people with skills and experience to contribute to the handling of conflict. But there is a need for more practical training courses that prepare people specifically for working in conflict areas. And there is a need for a more generally recognised set of qualifications and standards against which to judge a person's competence in this field.

## Graduates and Young Professionals



Young people are graduating from courses in development studies, peace studies, conflict studies, war studies, human rights law, citizenship, media studies, politics, international relations, post-conflict reconstruction studies, reconciliation studies, and wanting to pursue a career path in one of these fields.

*MA students of Peace and Reconciliation Studies at Coventry University* PHOTO: A Rigby

## Mid-Career Professionals



Teachers, doctors, lawyers, social workers, local government officials, civil servants, therapists, counsellors, advisors, youth workers, probation officers, community development workers, soldiers, police officers, business people... Many of these people have day-to-day experience of dealing with violence or conflict but may need special training to adapt their skills to situations abroad.

*Humanitarian workers at a RedR training in Kenya*

PHOTO: RedR

## Senior and Retired People



People with time on their hands and a lifetime of experience: Many of these people volunteer their services locally as advisors, mentors, mediators, magistrates, community wardens. Others work overseas through NGOs like BESO or through the British Council, OSCE, or UN agencies.

*BESO volunteers in Tanzania*  
PHOTO: BESO

# a UK civilian peace service

More skilled and experienced civilians are needed for tackling violent conflict worldwide. The UK has a largely untapped reservoir of potential candidates for such work. What is missing is a comprehensive mechanism for recruiting, training and deploying these people.

A UK Civilian Peace Service could be a mechanism for enhancing civilian capacities in this area. Such a service would build on existing cooperation among NGOs – and between NGOs and government departments – so as to maximise the efficacy of the UK’s civilian contribution.

A UK Civilian Peace Service would increase the quality of civilian personnel sent abroad by setting high standards of professionalism across a broad field of work coming within its remit. It would increase the quantity of civilian personnel available by creating new opportunities for people to move into this kind of work and obtain the necessary training and experience.

Finally, a UK Civilian Peace Service would increase public understanding of – and recognition for – all the valuable work that civilians contribute to the prevention and reduction of violent conflict. This could change perceptions about how conflicts ‘ought’ to be handled in the future, emphasising the full range of instruments that are available for influencing its outcome.

*“This is an important issue which we should give serious consideration to and learn from many other European countries who are already developing civilian peace services”*

RT HON MO MOWLAM,  
FORMER SECRETARY FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND

## Key Recommendations:

A **Civilian Peace Service** should be established for the UK, which would include the following elements:

- A recognised **consortium** of NGOs working in the peace and conflict field which, in partnership with government departments, military and other relevant parties, will set standards in this field and determine priorities for deployment of civilian personnel from this country.
- A quality-controlled **roster** of people available for both emergency crisis management tasks as well as for longer-term conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. This roster should be made available to the EU, OSCE, UN and other inter-governmental agencies as well as to NGOs deploying civilian personnel to conflict areas.
- A comprehensive **training** programme for people going onto the roster or preparing for overseas deployment. This programme should consist of a professional development component as well as ‘add-on’ training for professionals needing to adapt their skills to a conflict environment.
- A **funding mechanism** for managing the roster and for subsidising the training and deployment of civilian personnel from the roster. The mechanism should be set up so as to ensure civilian deployments are based on need rather than on prevailing political or financial considerations in the UK.

### **Steering Group for a UK Civilian Peace Service**

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Cris Scott, Civil Affairs Group (British Army)  
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### **Further copies of this briefing and of the full report are available from:**

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