



Conflict-Sensitive Assistance to Libya

CSA Quarterly Review #3 | Dec 2017 – Feb 2018

In this quarterly briefing:

Summary of activities and findings from the CSA process between December 2017 and February 2018: CSA forum of 18 January 2018 and Leadership Group Meeting of 8 December 2017.

NEW! One pager on the basics of conflict sensitivity. Help us raise awareness on the importance of conflict sensitivity.

CSA Forum, 18 January 2018

The last meeting of the Conflict-Sensitive Assistance to Libya (CSA) Forum was held in Tunis on 18 January 2018. More than 40 people from embassies, UN agencies, INGOs and others contributed to a joint update of the Libya context analysis and reflected on implications for the international community's assistance in Libya.

The updated contextual analysis can be found online on the OPSECA platform: <https://opseca.humanidev.tech/>.

Libya contextual analysis update

Political: rising uncertainty. During the week of 14 October, delegations from the HoR and the HSC met in Tunis under the auspices of the SRSG to discuss amendments to the LPA. Following the lack of progress in these talks, the SRSG has reportedly started to focus on the next step of his 'Action Plan', presented to the UNGA in September 2017, notably the organisation of a national conference of prominent Libyans to identify ways forward. Meanwhile, the HNEC has started registering voters and the HSC began preparing electoral legislation, despite not having formal authority to do so.

Security: continued insecurity and human rights violations in some places. On 15 January, Mitiga airport in Tripoli saw clashes between the 33rd Brigade, an armed group supposedly aligned to the PC, and RADA and other armed groups. The airport was closed for several days. In early January, PC-aligned forces attempted to capture the Ras Jedir border crossing into Tunisia from the control of Zuwara militia. In late November, CNN released a video showing a sale of migrants as slaves in Libya. This led to international condemnation, including from the UN Security Council and the International Criminal Court.

Economic: continued uncertainty and worsening currency crisis. The economy remained highly reliant on hydrocarbons and public finances remained in disarray due to the divisions within the Central Bank. There were several incidents around oil infrastructure. The currency crisis worsened and the humanitarian situation saw no improvement, driven by the problem around water supply to Tripoli. A nation-wide strike by teachers appeared to be at least temporarily resolved by mid-November.

Social: rising uncertainty regarding religious freedom. A new factor on religious freedom was added to the analysis. On 21 December, the Bayda Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Administration warned Libyans not to celebrate Christmas and New Year, saying that sharing such celebrations with non-Muslims is a sin. The same entity had previously condemned all Ibadi Muslims as apostates, which was seen as an attack against the many Amazigh who are Ibadis. The spread of Salafist control of mosques,

particularly in the East, raised concerns amongst participants about the role of extremist interpretation of religion in society. Participants also again pointed to the shrinking space for civil society in Libya.

Flagged issues for conflict sensitive assistance

Political

Although progress in the political process should be acknowledged, many uncertainties remain. Participants flagged the need for future CSA Forum meetings to discuss conflict sensitivity considerations around assistance to upcoming elections, as well developing a more robust understanding how a new constitution, and the array of political parties, may interact with conflict and peace factors in the country.

There was agreement on the value of trying to achieve consensus and consistency of messages by the international community regarding the strategy and sequencing of support for the electoral process.

Security

Organisations face dilemmas operating in the Libyan context of armed groups, for example around the use of private security, which is an unregulated sector in Libya. Further details below.

Economic

It is important to strengthen coordination between donors and organisations on financial procedures and risk-sharing. It is also important to look for “positive spill over effects” of economic programmes.

Social

Because there are many religious views, it is important to consider a broad set of religious stakeholders in project implementation. More generally, there is a need to find ways to engage with less represented local organisations, and build the capacity of the Civil Society Commission to facilitate this. It is also important to develop criteria or a common approach regarding the (non) payment of costs for companions for women participants in internationally-funded activities.

Thematic session: Assistance in the context of armed groups

A guest speaker facilitated a joint overview of key aspects of the context of armed groups in Libya. Participants discussed some of the dilemmas facing the international community when engaging armed groups: at a local level, it may be necessary to engage with them, but this may impact negatively on broader state-building and peacebuilding goals by conferring legitimacy.

There was agreement that a nuanced analysis is needed to recognise both the negative and the positive contributions of armed groups in Libya. Negative contributions were characterised as human rights violations, lack of accountability, involvement in criminality and economic activities, manipulation of political and peace processes, the longer term negative impact on stabilisation, and contribution to fragmentation. Positive contributions were characterised as filling a vacuum in providing local level security, examples of fighting crime and assisting the provision of basic services, and providing communities a sense of identity, control and agency. There was an emerging conclusion that a better understanding of the distinction between the negative and positive engagements of armed groups can help the international community better counter negative behaviours and promote positive behaviours.

In terms of framing a set of basic criteria for which armed groups the international community should engage with in the implementation of activities in Libya, participants highlighted: a) accountability; b) a clear chain of command to facilitate engagement; c) professionalization; d) the possibility of co-opting armed groups into society; and e) potential to engage in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR).

When providing their assistance, many participants undertake activities that correspond with micro-level SSR activities, even if they are not directly envisaged as SSR activities. Such activities may include discussing security issues with local civil interlocutors, negotiating access to certain areas, or promoting alternative economic activities. Given this, it is worthwhile for participants to consider how these activities might complement other, more direct SSR efforts by international and national actors.

A full report of the CSA Forum can be found on PCi's website: www.peacefulchange.org.

CSA Leadership Group Meeting, 8 December 2017

The 5th CSA Leadership Group Meeting took place in Tunis under the Chatham House Rule. Ambassadors and their representatives discussed key conflict sensitivity challenges and opportunities emanating from the CSA process. Discussions focused on some of the dilemmas of working on migration-related assistance in Libya, both in terms of programming and policy-making. The question for conflict sensitivity practice is what tools and methods can be used to inform such difficult decisions, and how to find alternative approaches. LGM members noted the importance of investigating questions around migration in Libya, not only from a humanitarian but also from a political economy perspective.

OPSECA Reminder

OPSECA is PCi's online platform for the international community working on Libya. It contains the conflict analysis that is updated on a bi-monthly basis in the CSA fora. In addition, the platform now has the functionality for users to develop a shared stakeholder mapping, an essential aspect of any conflict analysis. All international organisations working on Libya can request access to the OPSECA platform (one log-in per organisation). The OPSECA platform can be found at <https://opseca.humanidev.tech/>.

On the CSA process and PCi

The CSA Quarterly review summarises key findings and developments from the CSA process – a series of activities implemented by Peaceful Change initiative to strengthen conflict sensitivity approaches for international assistance to Libya. Findings are drawn from bi-monthly Conflict-Sensitive Assistance Forum meetings, training on conflict sensitive approaches, peer reviews to improve learning and the sharing of case studies, meeting of the Conflict Sensitivity Leadership Group, and case studies of applied conflict sensitivity described from on-the-ground experiences in Libya. The CSA process aims to promote and refine the three principles of conflict-sensitive assistance to Libya that have been developed and refined over three years:

Principle 1: Assistance should be delivered as inclusively as possible

Principle 2: Assistance should strengthen the ability of our partners to be equally accountable across communities and constituencies

Principle 3: Assistance should strengthen the connection between state institutions and communities across the country, by delivering tangible improvements

PCi works with communities in Libya to prevent and reduce violence that has been triggered by radical and divisive change. We aim to mitigate the effects of violence on people's lives, while laying the foundations for long-term peace and stability.

The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Peaceful Change initiative and do not necessarily reflect the views of our donors and partners.

Conflict sensitivity: What is it? Why does it matter in Libya? What does PCi do to help?

WHAT IT IS

Conflict sensitivity is...

- ...Understanding the interaction between interventions and the conflict-context, to make sure we minimise the risk of doing harm, and maximise positive peace building impacts.

Conflict sensitivity is *not*...

- ...The same as conflict resolution or peacebuilding projects. It is an approach for *all* interventions working in *all* contexts where there is conflict or tensions, not only for projects that work on conflict specifically.

HOW TO DO IT

Basic steps towards better conflict sensitivity:

1. Tracking the interaction between intervention and context...
 - ✓ ...by using a conflict analysis to break up the context into smaller elements (actors/drivers of conflict) ...
 - ✓ ...then breaking up the intervention into smaller elements (beneficiaries, location, timing, procurement, and personnel) ...
 - ✓ ...for a detailed analysis of the potential impact of the intervention on the context ...
2. ...To minimise the risk of doing harm, and maximise positive peace building impacts.

Looking to learn more? Contact us at anthony.foreman@peacefulchange.org

A CONFLICT SENSITIVITY CASE STUDY

Rehabilitation works inadvertently lead to heightened tensions in Obari

In 2017, an international agency began the process of rehabilitating key infrastructure in Obari. This process was based on a series of conflict and social peace assessments, as well as inclusive community consultations to set priorities. Care had been taken to ensure that infrastructure selected for rehabilitation would benefit the three tribal communities in Obari, Arab, Tuareg and Tebu, without privileging one group over the other or upsetting fragile security balances in the town. However, once actual rehabilitation works commenced, problems arose in the town.

In September 2017, a series of incidents occurred, in which angry youths attacked key engineering personnel and blocked works on the rehabilitation of a school building. Project partners discovered that the youth were Tebu and were influenced by the 'Youth Coalition', a group of fighters that fought in the 2014 conflict with Tuareg in Obari. There is a perception amongst them that most of the workers hired for the construction were Tuareg, and that Tebu youth had been excluded from the economic and job opportunities presented by the contracting process. Their actions blocked progress on the work sites and heightened tensions in the town for up to two months.

To resolve this issue, the implementing agencies worked with local leaders to hold extensive consultations with key stakeholders, including the youth group. The implementing agencies also invested additional time and energy in explaining contracting processes again to all stakeholder groups, so that those processes would seem more accessible. Conversations were also held with existing contractors to obtain guarantees that they would ensure inclusivity in their work force.

This example demonstrates the importance of integrating conflict sensitivity considerations at all stages of a project cycle – including implementation and contracting. It also demonstrates the value of adopting a conflict-sensitive approach to resolution of challenges when they arise. The conflict management capacity of local actors in Obari was, ultimately, strengthened by enabling them to lead consultations to resolve the blockade.

Do you have a case study or example of conflict sensitivity to that you would like to share? Contact us at anthony.foreman@peacefulchange.org

PCI'S ACTIVITIES UNDER THE CSA PROCESS

Bi-monthly CSA forum in Tunis: joint Libya context update | Quarterly bulletin for the international community | Training in conflict sensitivity | Learning and best practice: CSA principles | Quarterly Leadership Group Meeting at ambassador level | Additional support to the EU through the CSA on-call facility for EU implementing partners