Is Stabilisation a Panacea for Violent Conflicts?
Explorations of the Cases of Programmes for Forced Displacement, SSR/Train and Equip, and Humanitarian and Development Aid

Stabilisation is currently regaining currency as a policy paradigm. Under its umbrella we find measures as diverse as SSR, train and equip programmes for policing, transfers of weapons and border surveillance systems, peacekeeping missions, and development and humanitarian aid programmes. These apply to different contexts of violent conflict such as in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe.

We invite you to a workshop hosted by the Global Migration Centre and BICC that aims to bring together practitioners and academics working on issues related to stabilisation in contexts of violent conflict and to reflect on risks and benefits of stabilisation measures in practice. Throughout the day, we plan to discuss four bundles of questions (Chatham House Rules):

- What is the practitioners’ and academics’ understanding of stabilisation? Can a distinction in meaning of stabilisation be discerned between, for example, stabilisation programming that donors and organizational headquarters apply versus how implementing practitioners (e.g. in the conflict context) enforce it?
- What have been incidences in the long-term work experience of practitioners where the implementation of stabilisation programming has restricted achieving the long-term aim of stability? How did these tensions manifest? What would have been needed to enable stabilisation?
- Does the recently fashionable policy catchword ‘stabilisation’ have any effect on the ground (in conflict contexts) in terms of qualitative or quantitative changes for implementation practice of stabilisation programmes? If yes, which effects are evident and how (chance or risk)? If no, and it is only a new label for measures that have always been applied in conflict contexts, what is the value of the concept?
- Does the ‘new’ label of stabilisation imply abandoning support for democracy and human rights, instead focusing on the establishment and maintenance of order (defined as the absence of open, direct violence and the presence of a monopoly of force of a central authority)?

The workshop will focus on the experiences of practitioners in the fields of forced displacement, arms transfers and proliferation, and humanitarian and development aid as well as those of academics who work on related questions.

As outcome of the workshop we envisage to

- gain a clearer understanding of what stabilisation encompasses as a concept and its means and practices
- discuss the short-term vs. long-term effects of measures related to stabilisation (incl. risks and benefits)
- exchange experiences from different policy fields and enable dialogue among practitioners and academics
- develop scenarios for future stabilization programmes in Syria.

We kindly request you to register your participation by email until 12th March 2018.
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9th April 2018

Tentative Programme

9:00-10:00 Introduction (coffee) Topic and participants (room S6)

10:00-12:00 Thematic breakout groups

  Group 1 – Forced Displacement (room S6)
  Group 2 – SSR/Train and Equip Programmes/peacekeeping missions (room 501)
  Group 3 – Humanitarian and Development Aid (room 503)

12:00-13:00 Lunch Break

13:00-15:30 Plenum: Reporting and discussion of results (incl. coffee and cake)

15:30-16:30 Lessons for the future? Stabilisation in Syria & concluding outlook

Venue:
Global Migration Centre
Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
Maison de la paix, Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2
1211 Geneva 1
Switzerland