



## Lesson 15

# Human Security & National Security

### Learning Objectives:

- Distinguish between the characteristics of national security and human security
- Identify components of three broad elements of comprehensive human security
- Identify principles of human security

This lesson provides a description and definition of national interests, national security and human security. This lesson compares and contrasts human security and national security. Civil society-military-police coordination on national security is often challenging because of different perceptions and analysis of the causes of conflict. Civil society-military-police coordination on human security is possible when all stakeholders share an analysis of security threats and participate in constructing solutions to improve human security.

### 1. Contrasting National Security & Human Security

Many states are moving toward a human security approach. While national security and human security approaches sometimes overlap, they are often not the same. In some countries, there is very little attention to human security and an exclusive commitment to national security with an emphasis on elite economic or geopolitical interests. In these cases, there is a tension between civil society's interest in human security and state's national

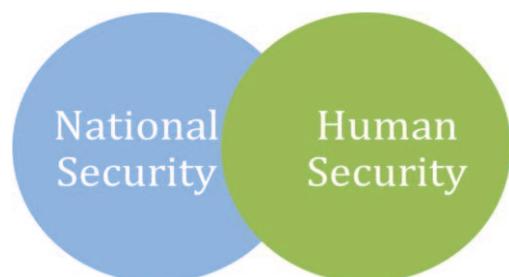


Figure 38: National Security Overlaps with Human Security

security interests. A dialogue between security policymakers, security forces, and civil society can help identify common ground in national security and human security perspectives and also appreciate the areas where their approaches are different. This can allow cooperation in overlapping areas while appreciating the need for independence in areas that do not overlap.

The chart below contrasts national security and human security.

	National Security-----	Human Security
<b>Goal</b>	Focus on state interests	Focus on safety of individuals and communities
<b>Actors</b>	Primarily military and police	Many different stakeholders, including civilian government agencies, military, police and civil society
<b>Analysis</b>	Focus on specific individuals and groups as threats	Focus on wider political, economic, social structures that give rise to violence

An example illustrates the two approaches. An armed opposition movement is threatening to throw over a government, which is widely known to endanger civilian lives through violations of human rights. A national security strategy may understand the underlying security challenge as the state lacking a monopoly of force. As a consequence, the national security actor may ask the international community for more weapons and to provide training in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism to security forces. In contrast, a human security strategy will understand the challenge as the state lacking public legitimacy. A human security strategy might therefore focus on empowering civil society to hold their government to account for the grievances that drive support for insurgents.

## 2. Human Security

Human security refers to the security of individuals and communities. Individuals and communities measure their human security in different ways, depending on their context. Threats to human security include violence caused by both state and non-state armed groups, poverty, economic inequality, discrimination, environmental degradation and health and other factors that undermine individual and community wellbeing. Comprehensive human security includes three components: freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity. To address these problems, human security emphasises the need for “whole of society” efforts including security forces but also government, civil society, business, academic, religious, media and other stakeholders.

## 3. National Security and National Interests

National security refers to security of the national interests of the state. States define their national interests in different ways. In most states, these include one or more of the following:

- Protection of territory
- Protection of citizens
- A legal order
- Economic interests
- Geopolitical interests based on how they view and relate to other countries
- Ideological values such as democracy, human rights, peace, religious values protection of civilians in other countries, or ideas such as racial segregation

For many states, protection of territory and citizens takes priority over other interests. Some governments identify national interests in dialogue with their own citizens. Other governments reflect the interests of elite groups rather than citizens, tending to ignore the interests of minority groups. The less the gap between government’s and civil society’s identification of national interests, the more likely civil society-military-police coordination to pursue national interests is possible.

Different countries base their national security strategies on different theories of change about what will protect their interests. When devising their national security strategy, one, several or all of these theories of change may influence countries. These different strategies rely on different theories of change (ToC) or “strategic narratives” as described in Lesson 14.

A “theory of change” (ToC) is a statement – a **strategic narrative** - about how to address a particular challenge. Every organisation has an implicit or explicit theory of change that articulates how some type of strategy or intervention will address the challenges they identify.

- A “cooperative security” approach is based on a TOC assumption that countries that cooperate militarily are stronger than those that rely only on their own state’s military capability.
- A “balance of power” approach is based on the belief that states should maintain a military capability equal to other countries, to neither pose a threat to other states nor be an easy target for other states.
- A “force dominance” ToC approach is based on the belief that a state must have superior military force to other states in order to achieve its interests.
- An “all elements of national power” ToC is based on the belief that diplomatic, economic, information, and military force are each forms of power useful for achieving national interests.
- A “conflict prevention and peacebuilding” ToC is based on the belief that threats to human security can be prevented by addressing root causes driving violence and instability.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4. The emergence of a human security concept

A number of international trends gave birth to the concept of human security. At the end of the cold war, the UN approach to human security emerged to articulate the need to focus on threats to individuals and communities and not just states. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan wrote that “we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.”<sup>65</sup> The UN’s Millennial Development Goals set out expectations that some of the sources of human insecurity – such as poverty, lack of education and healthcare – could be addressed through concerted effort. The mass atrocities in Rwanda and Srebrenica brought attention to the lack of political will to respond to mass violence against civilians. The concept of human security began as a strategic narrative that to link human development, human dignity, state-society relations, governance, and peace and security issues. The human security agenda began to highlight several principles:

- The protection of individuals and communities is critical to national and global security.
- Many security threats, such as government corruption, cheap access to weapons, religiously motivated violence, and climate change, do not have military solutions.
- The security of individual and communities depends on political, economic and social factors and not just military approaches.

There are various approaches to human security. Some approaches emphasise immediate threats and an operational approach to the protection of civilians (Module 8 details Civil-Military-Police Coordination on the Protection of Civilians). The UN approach to human security is broader, representing a more comprehensive approach to interdependent threats that endanger humans.

#### 5. UN Approach to Human Security

The UN’s Human Security Unit defines human security as “protecting fundamental freedoms—freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.”<sup>66</sup> Comprehensive human security includes three components: freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity.



Figure 39: Components of Human Security

The UN Human Security Unit emphasises that human security requires both *protection* of civilians and *empowerment* of civil society. Neither of these can be dealt with in isolation as they are mutually reinforcing. Protection refers to national and international norms, processes and institutions that shield people from critical and pervasive threats and that address insecurities in ways that are systematic not makeshift, comprehensive not compartmentalised, preventive not reactive. The concept of “protection of civilians” has tended to emphasise a “top-down” approach, with states having the primary responsibility. The concept of “empowerment” emphasises people as actors and participants in defining and implementing their vital freedoms. It implies a “bottom-up” approach and it enables people to develop their potential and their resilience to difficult conditions. People who are empowered can become full participants in decision-making processes and demand respect for their dignity when it is violated. An empowered civil society complements government programmes to advance human

security as well as holds governments to account for responsive governance. Civil society can mobilise for the security of others by taking actions such as, publicising food shortages early, preventing famines or protesting human rights violations.

The UN Human Security Unit defines five principles of human security.

- a. Human security is *people-centred*, focusing on the safety and protection of individuals, communities, and their global environment. A human security approach empowers local people to assess vulnerabilities and threats and then identify and take part in strategies to build security rather than imposing outside definitions. Strategies to achieve human security are successful in as much as they protect the quantity and quality of life.
- b. Human security is *comprehensive*. In practice, human security strategies range from a limited operational “freedom from fear” to a more encompassing structural approach including “freedom from want” and “freedom to live in dignity.”
- c. Human security is *multi-sectoral*, addressing a range of interdependent global and local threats, insecurities and vulnerabilities in security, development and human rights.
- d. Human security is *context-specific*. Local dimensions of global threats are unique and require context-specific assessment and planning.
- e. Human security is *prevention-oriented*. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies aim for sustainable solutions to address

## 6. A European Union Approach to Human Security

The 2003 Barcelona Report on European Security Capabilities identified human security as the most appropriate conceptual framework for the EU security strategy to augment each EU member’s national security policies. This human security approach draws on and expands existing EU capacities in crisis management, civil-military cooperation, conflict prevention and reconstruction. The Madrid Report of the EU’s Human Security Study Group identified six principles of a human security approach<sup>67</sup>:

*The Primacy of Human Rights*: The first principle is to ensure respect for human rights: to secure the safety, dignity and welfare of individuals and the communities in which they live. Respect for human rights is the main challenge—not military victory or the temporary suppression of violence. This implies that civilian and military initiatives should prioritise the protection of civilians over the defeat of an enemy.

*Legitimate Political Authority*: A legitimate authority is trusted by the population and is responsible for law and order and respect of human rights. This principle means that any outside intervention must strive to create a legitimate political authority provided by a state, an international body or a local authority (a town or region).

*A Bottom-Up Approach*: Intensive consultation with local people is required, not only to ‘win hearts and minds’ and in order to gain better understanding of their needs, but to also enable vulnerable communities to create the conditions for peace and stability themselves. This means involving civil society, women and young people, and not only political leaders or those who wield guns. Outsiders cannot deliver human security; they can only help.

*Effective Multilateralism*: This relates to legitimacy and entails a commitment toward the international law, alongside other international and regional agencies, individual states and non-state actors. Effective multilateralism is one of the factors that distinguish a human security approach from neo-imperialism. It also means a better division of tasks and greater coherence, solving problems through rules and cooperation, and creating common policies and norms.

*An Integrated Regional Approach*: There is a tendency to focus on particular countries when dealing with crisis. Yet insecurity spills over borders through refugees, transnational criminal networks and so on. Regional dialogues and action in neighbouring countries should be systematically integrated into policies.

*Clear and Transparent Strategic Direction*: When the European Union intervenes externally; it must do so with clear legal authorisation, transparent mandates, and a coherent overall strategy. Where European security units are deployed there should be close linkage between policy makers and those on the ground, with former having ultimate control over operations. Civilians should lead all EU external engagements.

## 7. Human security sectors

A comprehensive approach to human security includes a variety of sectors.

- *Physical security* is often referred to as “citizen security” or “community security”
- *Economic security* refers to the need for people to have opportunities to earn and access a basic income. Research links high unemployment with crime and violence.
- *Food security* refers to people having physical and economic access to basic food. Research suggests the distribution of food and lack of income to purchase food are the core problems.
- *Health security* refers to a minimum access to health services, clean water and other basic necessities to prevent infectious diseases and lifestyle-related chronic diseases.
- *Environmental security* refers to threats from climate change such as drought, storms, floods, rising sea waters, and pollution that harm the health of humans and other life.

## 8. Citizen Security

Other groups use the term “citizen security.” For example, the World Bank’s 2011 World Development Report on *Conflict, Security, and Development* (WDR) emphasises “citizen security” as efforts that assist people to prevent and recover from violence. Citizen security requires that all members of a society experience both freedom from physical violence and freedom from fear of violence in their homes, workplaces and interactions with the state and society. The WDR calls for a paradigm shift in the development community’s work in fragile and conflict-affected settings. It argues that fragility and violence stem from the combination of exposure to economic, political or security stresses, and weak institutional capability for coping with these stresses. Where states, markets and institutions fail to provide basic social, justice and economic opportunities to citizens, and where they are unable to manage the resulting tensions, conflict and instability can escalate. Successful transitions out of violence require legitimate and effective institutions to provide ‘citizen security,’ ‘justice’ and ‘jobs’.

## 9. Democratic Security

The concept of “democratic security” reflects the idea that governments should consult with and listen to the security interests of its own citizens. Democratic security also relates to how foreign governments listen to the interests of civilians in other countries to define how foreign military forces relate to civilians. Democratic security requires an open, public debate and dialogue on national priorities, strategies to achieve those interests, and determining the roles, authorities and budgets of government agencies in pursuing those strategies.

Civil society groups in Guatemala worked with the security sector to find ways of “democratic security” as part of the UN peace plan. Civil society argued that if the country was moving from a dictatorship to a democracy and if security was a “public good” – then civil society should be involved in defining the role and focus of the security sector to improve protection of civilians.

Read more about the move toward “Democratic Security” in Guatemala in *Local Ownership in Security*, the companion report to this *Handbook*.

## REVIEW

This lesson defined concepts and strategies related to national security and human security. The distinction between national security and human security is important for this *Handbook*. A shared human security approach makes cooperation between military, police, civilian government, and civil society possible. Where there is a big gap between a national security approach and a human security approach, civil-military-police cooperation and even coordination becomes both more difficult and more critical, as it leads to greater tension and conflict between the state and society.

## Citations

<sup>64</sup> See the following resources for understanding peacebuilding as national security strategy:

- Christopher Holshek and Melanie Greenberg, “Toward a New Strategy of Peace” in *Socio-Cultural Analysis with the Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Intelligence Paradigm*, Dr. Charles Ehlschlaeger Editor,
- Volker C. Franke Robert H. Dorff Editors, *Conflict Management and Peacebuilding: Pillars of a New American Grand Strategy*, (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army War College, 2013).
- *Understand to Prevent: The military contribution to the prevention of violent conflict*, (Multinational Capability Development Campaign, 2015).

<sup>65</sup> *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all. Report of the Secretary General Kofi Annan*, UN doc. A/59/2005, (New York, New York: United Nations, 2005), 55.

<sup>66</sup> *Human Security in Theory and Practice: An Overview of the Human Security Concept and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*, (New York, New York: Human Security Unit, undated).

<sup>67</sup> *A European Way of Security: The Madrid Report of the Human Security Study Group*, (Madrid, Spain: Common Foreign and Security Policy and European Security and Defence Policy, 2008).

## Lesson 15

## Learning Exercises

### Anchor

10 minutes

Anchor the content in this lesson with an open question. Participants can share in groups of two or three people their response to this question:

- If you have \$500 million dollars to improve security in your own country, where would you invest this money? What organisation or programme would you most like to see improved?

### Add

20 minutes

Present the PowerPoint slides or ask participants to discuss the lesson readings in a small group.

### Apply

25 minutes

The goal of this exercise is to compare and contrast a national security and human security approach. Facilitators provide each scenario stakeholder team with ten items (a coin, a stick, or a piece of candy) that each represents \$500 million dollars and ten small sheets of paper.

Ask the group to create a security budget for their scenario in twenty minutes. How would the group invest funds to address the security threats in this environment? Each group should identify how they would allocate their budget. For example, how much would they give to police, military, to agriculture, education, employment generation or diplomatic activities? Use the items and the paper to label and illustrate how the group decides to divide up the security budget for the country.

Allow each team to display their budgets for other teams on their table. Allow time for participants to walk around the room to see how other teams allocated their budgets.

Debrief in the large group. What was challenging in the small group discussions? What was surprising in the exercise? What did you learn from other groups?

See the “Scenario-based Learning” section in the [Handbook on Human Security: A Civil-Military-Police Curriculum](#) for explanation of the scenarios and teams.

### Away

5 minutes

To end the lesson, the trainer can ask participants to divide into groups of 2 or 3 people. Participants can share with each other their reflections on this lesson.

This Lesson is part of the *Handbook on Human Security* found at [www.humansecuritycoordination.org](http://www.humansecuritycoordination.org)

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