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**Without data we are fighting blind:  
the need for human security data in  
defence sector responses to human trafficking**

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# **Without data we are fighting blind: the need for human security data in defence sector responses to human trafficking**

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## **Abstract**

The increasing recognition of human trafficking's connection to conflict and instability have led to a concerted drive to bring it further into the remit of defence actors. This article provides a discussion on how defence actors can use open data from the humanitarian sector to develop a holistic understanding of human security that can bolster their efforts to counter human trafficking and move from reactive to preventative responses. The article also discusses the recently developed 'Fusion Doctrine' within the UK and its implications for the meaningful inclusion of humanitarian perspectives in defence planning and analysis.

**Keywords:** *Human Trafficking, Human Security, Humanitarian Data, Fusion Doctrine*

## **1. Introduction**

Trafficking in human beings (THB), or human trafficking, is rarely seen as a 'military issue'. Rather, it has traditionally been seen as a concern of those working in human rights, criminal law, migration, gender and labour agencies.<sup>1</sup> In terms of government response, it is often perceived as a domestic issue of law enforcement or social services that belong to the remit of the Home Office (Ministry of Interior) or the Department of Justice, with the root causes left to development programmes, civil society and academia. Though the breadth of sectors activated by human trafficking indicates its cross-cutting complexity, it has historically been seen as outside the Ministry of Defence's remit and of limited significance to military strategy.

Yet, as will be shown in the first section of this article, this is changing. Acknowledging that militaries – our focus is on the UK and by extension NATO - are including human trafficking in aspects of the work, e.g., in trainings (indeed, the authors of this article have led

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<sup>1</sup> Muraszkievicz, J., *et al.* *Project Solebay: Considerations for a UK Military-based approach to Assessing the Risk of Modern Slavery*. Trilateral Research, 2019, p.13.

such trainings) and conducting terrain analysis, one must ask how they can engage with a crime that is always considered as ‘clandestine’. This article provides a discussion on how the military can cooperate with and learn from the humanitarian sector in order to develop a more holistic understanding of this challenge, improve their preventative responses and ensure that they are not contributing towards its proliferation. At the heart of this is data, and a nod to the fact that without data you cannot have true insight into an issue.

To assist the discussion, the article takes the following structure. Firstly, the authors inform the reader that human trafficking is not an unfamiliar topic for the military, and the role of data-driven approaches in the UK’s Fusion Doctrine. Then, we highlight the nexus between human trafficking and human security, the latter being an area where the use of data is starting to take root. Subsequently, this article outlines the ways in which this data is collected, used and shared on THB. The article then goes on to examine the practices, opportunities and limitations that arise in the process. In doing so, this article facilitates a discussion on how to do so effectively, and how to navigate the appropriate boundaries between humanitarian actors and military actors, recognising the value of open humanitarian data for honing military responses to human trafficking. Following this, it provides recommendations for data-driven analysis in the military context. The authors of this article conducted four of interviews with experts in the UN Office of Drugs and Crime working on human trafficking, the UK military and law enforcement as well as those engaged in collecting data on political violence, instability and wider human security from the organisations of PAX and ACLED. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a qualitative understanding of the current state of, and attitudes towards, the operationalisation of human security, the challenges faced or expected, and broad military opinion on how human security can be applied in a practical and meaningful manner in the planning and conduct of military operations.

## **2. Human trafficking and the military**

Undoubtedly, some may ask whether the military engages, or should engage, with the issue of human trafficking. The answer to this is rooted in law, policy and the experience of soldiers on the ground. On the legal side, there is a common trajectory beginning with the United Nation’s Palermo Protocol.<sup>2</sup> As a reminder, this Protocol places an obligation on states to prevent human trafficking. This responsibility, by logic, extends to their militaries, for they are the armed wing of the state.<sup>3</sup> But that is not all, military concern with human trafficking is also visible in real-world demands of the operational environment. The perpetration of human trafficking in conflict and crisis settings has a long legacy and continues within more recent practices. The exploitation of the minority Yazidi community in Iraq and Syria by the Islamic

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<sup>2</sup> UN General Assembly, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, 15 November 2000. Accessed 28 July 2020, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4720706c0.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Muraszkievicz, J., Fenton, T., Watson, H., Maio, G., and Hesketh, G. *Project Solebay: Considerations for a UK Military-based approach to Assessing the Risk of Modern Slavery*. Trilateral Research, 2019, p.14.

State (also referred to as ISIS or ISIL)<sup>4</sup> and the open advocacy of human trafficking and enslavement practices by Boko Haram<sup>5</sup> epitomise some of the more current examples – including its use as a weapon of war and grounding in ideology. Moreover, the use of child soldiers as demonstrated by ISIS (the so-called ‘cubs of the Caliphate’) as well as by armed groups across the globe demonstrate how the practice is explicitly linked to bolstering warfighting capabilities.<sup>6</sup> Beyond this, human trafficking is also acting to finance conflict itself, including through the use of forced labour to harvest natural resources in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>7</sup> Notably, these crimes are not limited to non-state armed groups nor the global south. The trade in trafficked women has been fuelled by UN and NATO personnel, exploiting those in vulnerable situations such as during the conflict in the Balkans.<sup>8</sup> Within these conflict contexts human trafficking takes on specific forms, allowing groups to advance their ideologies, boost their capabilities, decimate communities and create vulnerabilities that perpetrators seek to exploit; all of which effects the military.

In 2004, with this understanding in hand NATO elucidated their role in combatting THB through their zero-tolerance protocol.<sup>9</sup> At the time of writing this article, as publicised on social media, NATO is continuing to engage with the issue and exploring what else needs to be done.<sup>10</sup> A litany of UN Resolutions have also set out states’ obligations to combat THB in conflict settings.<sup>11</sup> Looking towards the UK military, within recent years combatting THB has been embedded within both strategy and doctrine. In 2016, the MOD’s Joint Doctrine Publication 06 – Shaping a Stable World: The Military Contribution, made specific reference to human trafficking, noting that military support to security sector reform programmes may include

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<sup>4</sup> “*They came to destroy*’: ISIS crimes against the Yazidis,” A/HRC/32/CRP.2, 2016..

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Watch, “*You Pray for Death*”: *Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria*, 2019. Accessed 28 July 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/08/27/you-pray-death/trafficking-women-and-girls-nigeria#>

<sup>6</sup> UNODC, *Countering Trafficking in Persons in Conflict Situations: Thematic Paper*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018, Vienna, p.16. Accessed on 28 July 2020, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2018/17-08776\\_ebookCountering\\_Trafficking\\_in\\_Persons\\_in\\_Conflict\\_Situations.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2018/17-08776_ebookCountering_Trafficking_in_Persons_in_Conflict_Situations.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Limanowska, B., and Helga K, *Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeastern Europe*, UNICEF, 2002. Accessed 28 July 2020, [https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/CEE\\_CIS\\_2000\\_Trafficking.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/CEE_CIS_2000_Trafficking.pdf) p.6

<sup>8</sup> Muraszkievicz, J., Fenton, T., & Watson, H. ‘*Human Trafficking in Conflict: Context, Causes and the Military*’. Springer Nature (2020), p.2.

<sup>9</sup> NATO, *NATO Policy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*, 2004. Accessed 28 July 2020, <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2004/06-istanbul/docu-traffic-app1.htm>

<sup>10</sup> NATO, *NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence @NSPCOE*, Accessed 13 December 2020 <https://twitter.com/NSPCOE/status/1326791105720016898>.

<sup>11</sup> Res 63/156 Trafficking in women and girls/ 2331 Maintenance of international peace and security/ 2195 Threats to international peace and security/ 2253 Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts/ 2379 Creation of Independent Team to Help in Holding ISIL (Da’esh) Accountable for Its Actions in Iraq/ 2388 Maintenance of international peace and security

‘countering human, weapon and drug trafficking’.<sup>12</sup> More clearly, in early 2019 the UK Ministry of Defence released the Joint Security Publication 1325: Human Security in Military Operations, which made particularly clear the connection between modern slavery/human trafficking, military operations, and human security. Placing THB as one of the central human security themes, they held that:

*“Military forces directly tasked with broader stabilisation responsibilities should be aware of the possibility of human trafficking and the supporting criminal networks and address these issues. This is an area where it is important for military forces to create the space in which the police and other Rule of Law organisations can operate.”*<sup>13</sup>

Military personnel interviewed within Project Solebay,<sup>14</sup> which focused on considerations for a UK military based approach to assessing the risk of human trafficking and on which the authors of this article worked, highlighted the inextricable link between human trafficking and peace, security and stability.<sup>15</sup> In identifying human trafficking as an immediate threat to military operations (for instance child soldier recruitment and conflict financing) and long-term stabilisation (for example as a result of conflict financing through trafficking and harm to targeted communities), the crime’s relationship with other domains of security become ultimately evident.<sup>16</sup> This in turn provided further argument as to why the military ought to value engaging with non-military actors, e.g., NGOs who are engaged with the variety of domains that may interact with the manifestations of human trafficking.

Moreover, it is key to recall that as per the Fusion Doctrine<sup>17</sup>, the military are recognised as part of a comprehensive and multisectoral solution, and ultimately strategy led policy requires collaboration in a cross-governmental manner. Namely, the military concerns itself with the

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<sup>12</sup> MOD, Joint Doctrine Publication 06 – Shaping a Stable World: The Military Contribution, 2016, p.93. Accessed on 28 July 2020 at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/516849/20160302- Stable\\_world\\_JDP\\_05.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/516849/20160302- Stable_world_JDP_05.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> MOD, Joint Doctrine Publication 1325: Human Security in Military Operations, 2019, p.42. Accessed on 28 July 2020 at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/770919/JSP\\_1325\\_Part\\_1\\_2019\\_O.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770919/JSP_1325_Part_1_2019_O.PDF).

<sup>14</sup> Project Solebay was a project developed by Trilateral Research in collaboration with the UK MOD. It sought to develop a proof-of-concept risk assessment methodology for the military to support a better understanding and assessment of human trafficking risks in conflict. Project Solebay received funding from the UK Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) under contract number [DSTLX1000127350]. For more information see: <https://www.trilateralresearch.com/project/project-solebay/>

<sup>15</sup> Muraszkievicz, J., *et al.* note 1, pp.18-19

<sup>16</sup> Fenton, T., *et al.* ‘Toward a Better Understanding of Human Security Risks: Developing a Risk Assessment Methodology for Human Trafficking at the onset, during and after conflict.’ *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 2020, 1–23. p.2.

<sup>17</sup> Put forward within the UK’s 2018 National Security and Capability Review (NSCR), the Fusion Doctrine builds on the lessons learned through counterinsurgency operations and embeds the recommendations of the Report of the Iraq Inquiry.

crime, because the government does. Within this approach, long-term strategy is placed at the heart of security planning, to ensure that the government's objectives are achieved in an efficient and effective manner. Furthermore, efforts are made to anticipate the responses of both adversaries and allies in order to prevent and mitigate negative second and third-order effects.<sup>18</sup> Whilst the military benefit from the Fusion Doctrine, they do not lead the fusion itself. Nevertheless, the Doctrine allows for a better quality of instructions to be provided to the military. The resultant responses seek to utilise the full toolkit available to the UK government across departments in addressing the root causes of insecurity. Fostering a concerted response across government and utilising the wealth of expertise and skills across domains, the Fusion Doctrine represents a significant opportunity within UK security to sensitise the military to the broad spectrum of issues active in an operational environment.

The Fusion Doctrine has explicitly recognised that data-driven approaches (relying on diverse sets of information from within and outside government) will be essential;<sup>19</sup> a key point for the remainder of this article. Within this framework, the third sector (which includes a number of humanitarian actors) is highlighted as housing capabilities that the government can draw on within their responses.<sup>20</sup> It is also important to note that human trafficking is outlined within the National Security Capability Review (NSCR) that articulated the Fusion Doctrine as a key concern for the UK. In this sense, we can appreciate the growing attention towards non-traditional threats and recalibration of the UK's security apparatus as a whole fusing the UK Home Office, and defence approaches as well as other such domains.

### ***3. Human trafficking as a human security issue***

Accepting human trafficking as something the military should concern itself with and as something it should engage with non-military stakeholders on, compliments the ongoing momentum for operationalising human security. Before unpacking the relationship between human trafficking and human security, readers of this article should recall that the work of the military extends beyond warfighting. The military execute a number of functions. Though warfighting might be one that is most obviously attributable to the organisation, they have notably engaged in other works, from managing checkpoints, providing assistance to domestic public services during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>21</sup> to humanitarian functions, such as food distribution and road construction (as demonstrated in Operation Trenton in South Sudan that will also have a bearing on issues such as human trafficking, by offering better physical

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<sup>18</sup> UK Cabinet Office, *National Security Capability Review*, 2018, p.10

<sup>19</sup> UK Cabinet Office, *ibid.* p.10.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> MOD, 'Guidance: COVID Support Force: the MOD's continued contribution to the coronavirus response', 30 October 2020. Accessed 14 December 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-support-force-the-mods-continued-contribution-to-the-coronavirus-response>.

security<sup>22</sup>). As with humanitarian actors, their activities to be effective and human rights focused, must be underlined by a respect for the local context and a desire to tackle the root causes of human insecurity. As has been demonstrated from conflicts such as NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011, this failure to appreciate and understand this context has contributed to organised crime, including human trafficking.<sup>23</sup> As such, this article should not be read as a call to increase military engagement on the issue of human trafficking – concerns certainly exist regarding the democratic accountability of militaries and their appropriateness as the responding agents.<sup>24</sup> Rather this article is concerned with increasing the understanding of human trafficking and how it frustrates the human security agenda in order to compliment NATO's and UK's evolution towards human security. In turn, this article advocates for the inclusion of open humanitarian data within existing planning and analysis processes (war-fighting and otherwise). This is ultimately an attempt to ground planning and analysis work in human security and avoid counter-productive responses, as demonstrated in the aforementioned Libyan context.

The argument put forward in this article rests on the existence of a clear connection between human trafficking and human security, the latter which is having a re-birth since its UN emergence in 2004. Traditionally security was a narrow construct focusing on borders and states. Similarly, traditionally human trafficking was seen as a form of organized crime that threatened state security by compromising states' control over their borders, promoting irregular migration and unauthorized access to territory. Today human trafficking is predominantly framed as a human rights violation, whilst human security marks a departure from traditional understandings of security which see security as the security of the state against physical threat. Instead, the human security approach places the human population as the referent object and the central beneficiary of security. Conceptually, this enables international, domestic, local and even personal issues to become securitised.<sup>25</sup> Recognising that insecurity thus arises from any domain that may impact human well-being, the UN General Assembly has outlined human security as an approach for 'identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity.' Which demands 'people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and

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<sup>22</sup> Sengupta, K., 'UK first country to put 'human security' at core of defence policy,' *The Independent*, 14 April 2019. Accessed 14 December 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/human-security-defence-policy-uk-army-military-mod-a8855556.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Reitano, T. & Shaw, M. 'Libya the politics of power, protection, identity and illicit trade.' *United Nations University Centre for Policy Research*, 2017, Accessed 14 December 2020, [https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6427/Libya\\_politics.pdf](https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6427/Libya_politics.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> e.g. Orford, A. 'Feminism, Imperialism and the Mission of International Law', *Nordic Journal of International Law*, Volume 71, Issue 2, 2002, Pages 275–296, p.275.

<sup>25</sup> Newman, E., 'Human Security: Reconciling Critical Aspirations With Political 'Realities'', *The British Journal of Criminology*, Volume 56, Issue 6, November 2016, Pages 1165–1183, p.1165.

prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people.<sup>26</sup> When discussing survival and dignity, human trafficking looms large.

Moreover, analysis of the human security environment creates an opportunity to study human trafficking in a holistic manner – firstly, by anticipating its emergence through the understanding of the conditions in which it proliferates, and secondly, by appreciating the ways in which the harms of THB manifest in first and second order effects. By viewing human trafficking through the lens of human security one can gain better insight into the expansive reach of its harms. The cross-cutting challenges that erupt from the human trafficking industry encroach on human rights, undermine societies as a whole, erode governmental integrity and perpetuate cultures of corruption.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the fostering of misogynistic and exploitative practices can permeate and dehumanise communities and have impacts beyond the immediate physical and emotional violence contained within human trafficking.<sup>28</sup> Human trafficking is recognised by the UK military as a central concern within their approach to human security.<sup>29</sup> In addressing their concerns regarding human trafficking, emphasis is placed on its manifestation in conflict and crisis as well as the cross-cutting effects which destabilise social cohesion and exacerbate vulnerability. The gendered impacts are also highlighted, as well as the fostering of violent and criminal cultures.<sup>30</sup> Within this prism, it possible to identify how the threats not captured by more traditional conceptions of security are no less relevant to well-being and stability – thereby demonstrating the value of approaching human trafficking as a human security issue. As a result of such dynamics, addressing human trafficking is an integral feature in bringing about and promoting human security.

#### ***4. Approaching human trafficking in conflict through a human security lens***

Resultantly, there are different ways to monitor THB in conflict settings. Perhaps quite obviously, one can view THB as indicated through its manifestation. Numbers of recorded instances of human trafficking, numbers of victims in safe houses or calls made to hot lines (where such measures are in place), monitoring income received from human trafficking, and the numbers of child soldiers are all such examples. Two distinct challenges emerge. As outlined in greater detail below, these figures can be very difficult to obtain, particularly within conflict zones. Even in non-conflict settings, stakeholders struggle with data on human trafficking. For instance, in the EU the precise number of victims of trafficking remains unknown, forcing

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<sup>26</sup> UN General Assembly. 2012. Follow-up to Paragraph 143 on Human Security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. A/RES/66/290, 25 October 2012, paragraph 3.

<sup>27</sup> Pati, R. Human trafficking: An issue of human and national security. *Nat'l Sec. & Armed Conflict L. Rev.*, 2013., 4, 29. p.34.

<sup>28</sup> Vale, G. 'Liberated, not free: Yazidi women after Islamic State captivit' *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 2020, 31(3), 511–539.

<sup>29</sup> MOD, *note 13*, p.40.

<sup>30</sup> MOD, *id.*



stakeholders to treat statistics with doubt due to poor or unavailable data. Moreover, as Kelly highlights, our knowledge of the magnitude of trafficking is limited by our “infant” research method; we still rely on overviews, commentaries and limited data from service providers, rather than mature sociological studies.<sup>31</sup> The other challenge is what to do with this information – addressing human trafficking as it has emerged will often be reactive, adopting law enforcement approaches or disrupting trafficking routes. As demonstrated in the Libyan context in which human trafficking is linked to the financing of vying factions and communities following the fracturing of the Gaddafi-era political ecosystem,<sup>32</sup> without addressing the underlying drivers, THB will continue to manifest in contexts where efforts to address the underlying drivers are lacking.<sup>33</sup>

A separate (but complimentary) approach is to consider THB as abstracted from its direct manifestation. In this sense, THB can be viewed through its causal drivers, the same drivers that underpin so many other elements of human insecurity. For instance, where displacement occurs as a result of conflict and migration increases, THB will likely be more prevalent.<sup>34</sup> People fleeing their homes or attempting to send family members out of conflict zones are at higher risk of falling victim to traffickers. Equally, we can expect that sexual exploitation, including child prostitution, may increase with the increase in demand from relatively well-off personnel such as peacekeepers or foreign militaries<sup>35</sup>, and increase in supply where local economies have been devastated and women do not have options for employment.<sup>36</sup> It is possible to also guess, based on historical analysis, that organ trafficking may increase as fighters seek to attend to their hurt combatants. Student researchers at UC Berkley uncovered Fatwas (a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority) bearing ISIS insignia which stated that ‘ISIS combatants harvesting organs from the bodies of the enemy-infidels or removing organs from living apostates, even if this might cause their death, was permissible.’<sup>37</sup> In this respect, militaries should be attuned to human trafficking as a form of harm that often accompanies and stems from the issues that militaries are tasked with addressing in the operational environment.

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<sup>31</sup> Kelly, E. *Journeys of Jeopardy: A Review of Research on Trafficking in Women and Children in Europe*. IOM Migration Research Series, no. 11. Geneva: International Organization for Migration. (2002), p.7

<sup>32</sup> Wieltchnig, P., & Muraszkievicz, J., *Human Trafficking as a Conflict Financing Measure. Decent Work and Economic Growth, 2020, 1–10*. p.5.

<sup>33</sup> Reitano, T, & Shaw, M., note 28, p.12. Accessed 28 July 2020, [https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6427/Libya\\_politics.pdf](https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6427/Libya_politics.pdf). Accessed 14 April 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Latham-Sprinkle, J., *et al.* Migrants and their Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Forced Labour. International Organization for Migration, 2019. 1-112.

<sup>35</sup> Allred, K. J. ‘Peacekeepers and prostitutes: How deployed forces fuel the demand for trafficked women and new hope for stopping it.’ *Armed Forces & Society*, 2006, 33(1), 5-23.

<sup>36</sup> Rehn, E., & Sirleaf, E. J., *Women, war and peace*. New York: UNIFEM, 2002.

<sup>37</sup> Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. “Neo-Cannibalism and ISIS: Organs and Tissue Trafficking During Times of Political Conflict and War.” 2012. *ELPAT Congress Proceedings*.

However, any form of prediction regarding where and how human trafficking occurs or may occur in conflict is easier said than done (particularly from the comfort of university offices). THB along with other insecurities, often emerge as the result of an array of interconnected and compounding drivers, with specific and localised contexts acting as the ultimate determinants. Fundamentally, there is no algebraic formula that allows for the calculation of conditions that will result in THB. As succinctly put by an interviewed member of military staff when asked how the military assesses which human security issues – of which as aforementioned THB is part of - are causing violence and instability, they stated: ‘we don’t do this in any scientific way. It is based on broad axioms that poverty and grievance *et cetera* lead to conflict. There is no empirical measure.’<sup>38</sup> Perhaps this latter challenge might demonstrate one of the benefits of data-driven approaches to understanding the human security environment. As one overlays information across a number of issues (for example, socio-economic conditions, social vulnerabilities and physical violence) it is possible to identify correlations and gain a more three-dimensional understanding of how human security threats interact. However, it also points to the need to compliment a data-driven approach with multidisciplinary analysis – utilising social sciences to appreciate the relationships between information and how it interacts with and determines THB practices.

### **5. *Developing a data-driven approach to analysis***

Data-driven approaches are understood in this article as the use of hard evidence to make strategic decisions based on data analysis and interpretation. That data can come in a number of forms (statistics, narratives, images, etc.) and from an array of sources. The routine use of data in trying to understand human security issues such as human trafficking, can radically alter, or even support the traditional methods of assumptions, experiential intuition, informal exchange of information amongst stakeholders and subjective opinions. It is also no longer a novel approach, with data analytics being used across the globe to better tackle human trafficking. The Polaris Project in the US for instances uses data for the purpose of identifying patterns, trends, correlates, and predictors. Data visualisation (bar charts, pie charts, thermodynamic charts, radar charts) is also used widely by stakeholders so as to intuitively illustrate the social phenomena varying with time and space behind data and help to find out the potential development pattern.

Militaries have been looking towards data-driven approaches to advance their efforts to appreciate the human security environment, including within the context of human trafficking.<sup>39</sup> This is unsurprising, as there is a global enthusiasm that data driven approaches can make

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<sup>38</sup> Interview conducted by authors with UK military personnel with expertise in human security, online, 24 January 2020.

<sup>39</sup> MOD, *JSP 1325: Human Security in Military Operations*. Ministry of Defence, 2019, p.42. Accessed 28 July 2020, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/770919/JSP\\_1325\\_Part\\_1\\_2019\\_O.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770919/JSP_1325_Part_1_2019_O.PDF)

policies or processes smarter, more holistic, refined and predictive.<sup>40</sup> In recognising that data-driven approaches can be developed to improve identification, planning and analysis of human trafficking in conflict, it is also necessary to confront the challenges that arise in the use of data.

Though the collection of data from confidential sources remains possible, this article is focused primarily on open data (data that is publicly available). As humanitarian open data platforms become increasingly prevalent, the information available across all domains of human security can be filtered into planning and analysis. Nevertheless, certain regulatory frameworks will regulate the use of data, such as the UK's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 which requires the military's collection and use of data and intelligence to be necessary, proportionate, and compatible with human rights. However, where datasets do not contain personal data, there will be less legal and ethical prohibitions on their use in military planning and analysis. Indeed, it is important to note that the number of sources that explicitly address human trafficking are few in number, therefore the article also looks to whether datasets on other human security domains can be used to support this analysis.

## **6. Challenges in the use of data**

Data has been viewed as an almost utopian solution to the world's ills. Imbued with herculean abilities, it is considered as the cure in-and-of-itself. The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN)<sup>41</sup>, however, provides an example of how recourse to data by itself will not result in better humanitarian responses. As explained by Kasaija, CEWARN was 'designed to cover both early warning and response, including: the promotion of information and collaboration among member states on early warning and response on the basis of timeliness, transparency, cooperation and free flow of information; gathering, verifying, processing and analysing information about conflicts in the region; and communicating all such information and analyses to decision-makers of IGAD policy organs and national governments of member states.'<sup>42</sup> While the system excelled at collecting data – producing vast databases – it did not have sufficient personnel to 'effectively analyse them or take meaningful early action.'<sup>43</sup> CEWARN can therefore act a cautionary tale that prior to engaging in such efforts, the technical and organisational requirements necessary for drawing actionable insights from data analysis must be considered. Recognising these challenges, it is necessary to ask 'what technical and organisational requirements are necessary when leveraging data for planning and analysis?'

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<sup>40</sup> Smith, G. J., *et al.* 'The challenges of doing criminology in the big data era: Towards a digital and data-driven approach.' *The British Journal of Criminology*, 2012, 57(2), 259-274.

<sup>41</sup> A co-operative initiative of the seven IGAD (Inter-governmental authority on development) member countries. For more information see: <https://www.cewarn.org/>

<sup>42</sup> Phillip Apuuli Kasaija, 'The Intergovernmental Authority on Development's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism', *African Security Review*, 2013, 22:2, 11-25, p.12

<sup>43</sup> Himelfarb, Sheldon. "Can Big Data Stop Wars Before They Happen?." *Foreign Policy* 25 (2014). Accessed 28 July 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/04/25/can-big-data-stop-wars-before-they-happen/>.

From our conversations with military personnel, data-driven human security analysis defence planners must: gather enough reliable data, at the right level of detail, relevance, and timeliness in order to assess what is important, and thereby delivering actionable insights to inform defence planning, including fostering a collaborative response with government and non-government partners. As will be reiterated throughout, this is an inherently difficult challenge.

### **i. Gathering enough data**

Various methods have been tested to address this challenge and fill the informational void on human trafficking data, such as the Multiple Systems Estimation.<sup>44</sup> However as already mentioned, it is impossible to measure human trafficking precisely.<sup>45</sup> Its illegality leads perpetrators to attempt to evade detection,<sup>46</sup> states' policies of deporting victims deter victims from coming forward,<sup>47</sup> victims do not always realise they are victims<sup>48</sup> and, especially in the context of a conflict, they may not live to tell their story. This presents a particular challenge for data gathering on THB, where the human trafficking's 'dark figure' (instances of human trafficking that have not been detected) remains impossible to capture.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, it is often easier to obtain information within the countries of destination as opposed to the areas where the original crime occurred or the transit zones.<sup>50</sup> This is partially due to the existence of special victim identification systems and stronger reporting practices within Europe for instance.<sup>51</sup>

The inherent difficulties in data collection have been somewhat recognised by the UK military, who seek information from their own domestic sources as an initial touchpoint.<sup>52</sup> The Home Office, as well as the National Crime Agency and National Counter Terrorism Security Office are among those consulted. Furthermore, the UK military views such agencies as having a

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<sup>44</sup> For more information see: Silverman B. (2014). *Modern Slavery: an application of Multiple Systems Estimation*. Accessed 28 July 2020, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/386841/Modern\\_Slavery\\_an\\_application\\_of\\_MSE\\_revised.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/386841/Modern_Slavery_an_application_of_MSE_revised.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Merry, S. E., *The seductions of quantification: Measuring human rights, gender violence, and sex trafficking*. University of Chicago Press, 2016, p.112.

<sup>46</sup> Van Dijk, J., *et al.* 'Multiple systems estimation for estimating the number of victims of human trafficking across the world', UNODC, 2016. p.3.

<sup>47</sup> United States Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report, 2020*, p.186. Accessed 28 July 2020, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-TIP-Report-Complete-062420-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Bradley, M, Human trafficking: Why do so many victims refuse help. *BBC News*, 2013, Accessed 28 July 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-24548143>.

<sup>49</sup> UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.IV.2). p.34.

<sup>50</sup> Van Dijk, J., *et al.*, *ibid*, note 46, p.8.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*. p.9

<sup>52</sup> Interview conducted by authors with UK military personnel with expertise in human security, online, 5 June 2020.

much more holistic understanding of THB, including the underlying theoretical frameworks and typologies used to navigate human trafficking.<sup>53</sup> Such actors track the issues, and share information at the national level, with the military only very recently tasked with the security aspect of THB. Indeed, within this process, the military also attempts to collect information on the push factors that fuel THB more typically related to conflict and violence. Within these activities, wider socio-economic conditions are considered alongside a gradient of how it affects regions, with much of this analysis stemming from general information on migration. Moreover, military interviewees reported the challenge of building up an informed picture where information sources are not stable – thereby impeding the ability to develop sustained analysis of the situation.

It is in this respect that analysis of the human security environment, reinforced with information from the humanitarian sector, can help to address this gap and provide a fuller understanding of the wider societal conditions that indicate or capture the impacts of human trafficking. A number of open-source information sources exist that can allow for actors to build up this understanding. For instance, ReliefWeb and the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) open platform are able to bring in information from actors operating in different capacities on a diverse range of issues – thereby allowing for a richer multi-sectoral understanding. The HDX platform, managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), was launched in 2014. The platform enables the sharing of open humanitarian data across organisations, ranging from UN agencies to civil society organisations. Within this platform it is possible to obtain information on issues ranging from geo-spatial data on medical facilities to disaggregated statistics on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) across the globe. Initiatives such as these allow for the use of big data to identify trends across issues and overlay information to build an appreciation of causality. As such information ranging from disaggregated statistics on a country or region to geographic data such as camp and population flows is available in a manner that is conducive to data visualisation.<sup>54</sup> Such data sharing activities are a new forefront for analysis of cross-cutting issues, however, a lack of standardisation across datasets limit the ability to create a common picture.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, gathering and organising this collected data to allow for its analysis, visualisation and communication to decision-makers is an intensive process in terms of time, money and energy. This is particularly true where the collected data is not obtained in a structured format.

Despite these benefits, reliance on this information is imperfect. As one attempts to gather this information, it quickly becomes apparent that information will often be gathered unevenly. This asymmetry can result from challenges in gathering information in the first

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<sup>53</sup> Interview conducted by authors with UK military personnel with expertise in human security, online, 5 June 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Zwijnenburg, W., *et al.* Solving the jigsaw of conflict-related environmental damage: Utilizing open-source analysis to improve research into environmental health risks. *Journal of Public Health*, 2019, p.4.

<sup>55</sup> Telford, S., ‘Opinion: Humanitarian world is full of data myths. Here are the most popular.’ Devex. 25 January 2018. Accessed 28 July 2020, <https://www.devex.com/news/opinion-humanitarian-world-is-full-of-data-myths-here-are-the-most-popular-91959/>.

place, for instance, where access to a region is difficult or the issue carries a stigma (such as SGBV), as well as a lack of prioritisation (and insufficient awareness) of certain issues, such as the effects of conflict on the environment. Additionally, the existence and availability of datasets and the insights that may arise from this information, often depend on whether the particular human security issue has come under the radar of decision-makers, civil society organisations, political leaders and others. For instance, the health risks arising from environmental harm in conflict remains a neglected area of study, with a lack of attention reflecting a low priority given to the issue.<sup>56</sup> The funding provided, creation of mandates, prioritisation or even knowledge that an issue is relevant to analysis are all dependent on such actors paying due attention to the issue. Importantly within the context of human security, a ‘bottom-up’ to human security is preferred, in the sense that it is for the population to determine the issues that impact their security<sup>57</sup> and even what it means to be ‘secure.’ A difficulty however arises: there is a practical over-dependence on data gathered by ‘non-local’ organisations, using questionnaires determined at a non-local level dependent on the organisation’s operational priorities. This may risk failing to capture the true human security threat perceptions, priorities and grievances of local populations, and appreciating the subjective opinions of the local population.

Engagement with humanitarian and human rights practitioners therefore offers an avenue to hone this more contextualised and grassroots knowledge. These relationships should be fostered with those practitioners with a knowledge of the local context beyond those with a more international focus. A better, more localised, contextualised and nuanced collection of data from diverse sources would allow for the development of a rich understanding of where human trafficking may arise in the operational environment. As such, by identifying the causal drivers it is more likely that militaries can take efforts to actively counter the root cause and reduce one of the strands of harm that cascade and contribute to human insecurity.

## **ii. Detail, relevance or timeliness**

Determining and obtaining the ‘right’ or appropriate level of detail necessary for the analysis of the human security environment at each strategic, operational and tactical level of planning and decision-making remains a concern. This resides as a balancing act between the oversimplification and excessive granularity of information. The former impedes the ability to identify the chains of causation, merely presenting high-level understandings that human trafficking is worsened by unemployment but providing no real information on how this is particularly manifesting. The latter risks presenting voluminous and complex information that is not easily understandable to decision-makers. In today’s information-driven environments, the latter point is especially important. When making the shift from manual research and analysis to

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<sup>56</sup> Zwijnenburg, W., et al. *ibid*, note 46, p.4 & 8.

<sup>57</sup> OCHA, *Human Security in Theory and Practice Application of the Human Security Concept and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*, 2009, p.11. Accessed 28 July 2020, <https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/HSU/Publications%20and%20Products/Human%20Security%20Tools/Human%20Security%20in%20Theory%20and%20Practice%20English.pdf>.

a more data-driven approach, special care will be needed to avoid the trap of false precision, which is to say that simply having ‘more information’ or ‘more data’ is unlikely to be sufficient by itself.

More complexity does not necessarily make for better decisions or better understanding. Balancing grappling with this complexity on the one hand, with the need to communicate clear and readily interpretable and actionable insights for decision support on the other hand, is key. Similarly, efforts to acquire and process increasingly large amounts of data, in combination with increasingly disaggregated and granular data at the local level, must be tempered by efforts to ensure the relevance of that data for human security analysis is maintained. The quality of relevant, valuable and actionable insights around human security will be as important as their quantity. In addition, the speed of data acquisition, processing, and delivery of insights must be timely enough to match the tempo of decision-making (e.g. according to the battle rhythm) and to ensure that the situational understanding of the human security environment is as reflective of the current reality as possible. Finally, an operational environment may consist of a diverse multitude of communities, each embodying a range of social, economic, ethnic, linguistic, physical and other characteristics that can shape the human security threat and vulnerability landscape at the individual or community level.<sup>58</sup> Targeted research at the highly local level may be necessary to develop this depth of understanding, although theoretically determining what information is necessary also remains a challenge for planners, analysts and personnel on the ground.

One of the difficulties that arise when using open humanitarian data, is that often the data sets that are accessible on platforms such as HDX will lag by a year or two. More ‘real-time’ datasets are available through on more ‘events-based’ information, such as the recording of attacks through ACLED.<sup>59</sup> However, information on structural dynamics will be less current and therefore might not be suitable for analysis of fast-paced changes or rapid deterioration in emergencies. Additionally, as is often the case, financial constraints appear to limit the extent of research and analysis. Often, data collection is only utilised for a discrete event, such as election monitoring, or funding is limited to a discrete time frame, for instance, a two to three-year research period.

Such restrictions may limit the ability to identify the second or third tier impacts of an issue, by focusing attention on a specific event, it places emphasis on issues as they have arisen as opposed to structural dynamics and long-term trends that have led to the event. With particular relevance to the collection of qualitative information, building trust within the community is essential for gathering a full set of information. As reported by members of PAX, social stigmas can hamper the ability to collect information on issues such as sexual violence, and researchers have been viewed as ‘spies’ on occasion. These considerations may act to impact the relevance

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<sup>58</sup> Chung & Hunt 2012 ‘Justice and Health Inequalities in Humanitarian Crises: Structured Health Vulnerabilities and Natural Disasters’ in Lenard, P. T. (2012). *Health Inequalities and Global Justice*. Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>59</sup> For more information, please see the following website: <https://acleddata.com/#/dashboard>

and detail of the data that humanitarians are able to obtain, and in this sense, awareness of these limitations must be recognised. However, it is of note that the request for actors to make their data available with regular periodic frequency is a lobbying point of actors such as the UNODC.<sup>60</sup> This will ideally result in an increasing recognition that a coordinated and timely reporting process will result in better analysis.

### **iii. Assessing issue importance**

Having gathered a wide range of relevant data and determined how much detail is needed, it may still be difficult to determine each human security issue's relative importance. There appear to be at least three readily identifiable, basic dimensions to determining the importance of human security issues in defence planning. The first would be something akin to an 'objective' assessment of human security threats—that is, the range of issues as they present themselves at face value. However, the nature of human security is highly contextual, so what constitutes "important" or "high priority" from a threat assessment perspective will depend very much on the particularities of the local context. Owing to the people-centric core of human security, the second dimension to assessing importance would be to understand what the local population itself considers to be the priority human security issues from its own perspective. The third dimension to assessing importance would involve determining the impact upon the mission plan and/or upon the ability to carry out the commander's intent.

At present, however, the level of institutional knowledge in the defence sector concerning how to understand and assess the impact of human security issues upon military operations appears to be at an early stage of development, leaving much of this kind of assessment down to pre-existing understandings of particular contexts and threat perceptions, to lessons gleaned from individual experiences, and to the issue-specific knowledge of individual planners, analysts and subject matter experts (SMEs). There is, therefore, the challenge that defence planners will miss the opportunity to 'see' the importance of particular human security issues and to factor them into mission planning. This concern was expressed during end user feedback, where a particular user explained that there is currently no scientific approach or set of empirical measures used to assess the extent to which human security issues are driving further conflict, violence and instability. Ultimately, according to this user, there is a general reliance on 'broad axioms' such as the understanding that poverty and grievances can foster conflict.

Another aspect of assessing importance is understanding the local population's vulnerability and/or resilience to human security threats. For example, where water resources become contaminated (i.e. the threat factor), a local population with the ability to access and purchase bottled water is likely to be affected less severely (i.e. higher resilience and lower vulnerability) than a poorer community with no such recourse. Fully understanding these vulnerabilities and resilience levels and incorporating them into a human security environment assessment will be a challenge in and of itself. Contextual differences, the difficulty in foreseeing how any particular community will respond, and the political and social differences regarding the

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<sup>60</sup> UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* 2012 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.IV.1), p.80.



ability to access policy levers or a governmental or quasi-governmental lack of desire or capacity to assist a marginalised or threatened community, will all be relevant factors.

#### **iv. Actionable insights to inform defence planning**

The next challenge is to ensure insights and situational understanding can be integrated within Defence planning cycles and communicated to decision-makers to update the mission plan accordingly. Of course, developing and communicating an understanding of the human security environment does not necessarily produce (nor is it intended to produce) ‘answers’ about courses of action. Once situational understanding is achieved within the decision-making cycle, what happens next is largely a question of the overarching mission objectives, priorities and the commander’s intent. Ultimately, from a human security analysis capability development perspective, a longer-term challenge is that an understanding of the human security environment would remain just that—an ‘understanding,’ which merely serves to ‘sensitise’ Defence personnel to human security issues, but which fails to deliver actionable insights and intelligence.

Several stakeholders told the authors that while the relevant theoretical understandings of human security, the structural drivers of conflict, social and political grievances, second-order and cross-cutting security cascades allow human security issues to be framed at the conceptual level, decision-makers want actionable insights for mission planning. This means that as defence actors integrate human security considerations more comprehensively within analysis, mission planning and decision-making processes, this will require developing an organisational, cultural, even intuitive understanding of what variations in the human security actually mean for the planning and conduct of operations. As one end user explained to the authors, an important way forward here is to ensure that Defence human security advisors and experts are always ‘in the room’ when mission planning takes place. In the longer-term, much in the same way as the theory and practice of terrorism, insurgency and irregular warfare have become part of the canon of modern military operations, so too would human security need to acquire this level of assimilation and fluency across Defence and within the minds of commanders and decision-makers. Where this is fused within the ‘commander’s intent—’ reportedly the reference point for military personnel in operational planning, a reliance on humanitarian data issues will be placed on a higher footing. This provides an opportunity to better integrate a respect for humanitarian issues, and thus specialists, across military hierarchies. Fostering a respect for open data gathered from human rights and humanitarian practitioners therefore better mainstreaming human security into military cultures, beyond a disproportionate focus on war-fighting issues.

#### **7. Relationships with humanitarian actors and civil society**

Going beyond the availability of open data, humanitarian actors and civil society actors have acted as a key source of information for militaries. Human security indeed recognises the need for multisectoral response to address human insecurity. This approach is also complimented

by the Comprehensive Approach Doctrine within NATO<sup>61</sup> and the UK strategic policy of the Fusion Doctrine.<sup>62</sup> In this respect, security and stability concerns can only be addressed when militaries operate in concert with non-military actors, including governmental and external actors. Interviewed military personnel reported however, that in practice the military does not cooperate well with others. Rather, the military often tries to take the lead in such activities and replicates, sub-optimally, the activities that other organisations do better.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, implied within the Comprehensive Approach Doctrine and Fusion Doctrine is the need to share information – though the contours of this relationship are not clearly defined.

Humanitarian actors and civil society organisations will largely be deeply engaged in human security or human security adjacent issues. For instance, ‘in Iraq, Yazidi religious leaders, working together with the UN and NGOs, have welcomed Yazidi women and girls who were abducted and forced into sexual slavery by ISIS back into their community.’<sup>64</sup> Another example is ‘Geneva Call, an NGO, is working directly with non-state armed actors around the world to encourage their respect for international humanitarian norms in armed conflict, in particular as it relates to preventing and ending child recruitment. The organisation regularly provides training to non-state armed actors.’<sup>65</sup> As such, they represent an invaluable source of information for militaries through their open publications and wider engagement, particularly where they are better able to liaise directly with communities and potentially armed groups.

There is no formal process for identifying the relevant organisations at present. Currently, the military conduct an analysis of the environment and research the organisations working within this area. In making the decision on whether to engage with such groups, and the extent of such engagement, there are three primary considerations, as stated by an interviewed member of military staff: 1) do the values of the military and the organisation align, 2) is there mutual trust between the organisations, 3) what do the organisations gain, and can requests for the transaction be satisfied (such as funding, facilities or resources). Where the military and other actors are sufficiently aligned across these factors then the military can make efforts to establish a relationship that may include the sharing of data and analysis. However, organisations’ neutrality policies may mean that they avoid data/analysis sharing with the military.

Indeed, the degree of interaction will also depend on the type of operation, and the operational demands required. For instance, within war fighting missions, recourse to NGOs will be lower down the list of priorities (though not necessarily excluded), due to considerations such as the need for confidentiality or limited time available. The concern here, however, is towards

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<sup>61</sup> NATO, Allied Command Operations Comprehensive Operations Planning Process (COPD), Interim V 2.0 (Draft, 4 October, 2014).

<sup>62</sup> UK Cabinet Office, National Security Capability Review, 2018, p.10.

<sup>63</sup> Interview conducted by authors with UK military personnel with expertise in human security, online, 5 June 2020.

<sup>64</sup> Oppermann, J. ‘Conflict and Humanitarian Settings’ Delta 8.7. Accessed 28 July 2020, <https://delta87.org/resources/policy-areas/conflict-humanitarian-settings/>

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

situations where analysis of the human security impacts, particularly those arising from the military's own actions, are less acknowledged. This has been a repeated mistake in military operations, where the lack of contextual knowledge and arguably imperialist arrogance resulted in considerable regional destabilisation and harm, including acting as a catalyst for human trafficking. War fighting activities are often those that create the human security issues that then lead to long term impacts such as THB. The exclusion or limiting of human security analysis from such operations is therefore a cause for concern.

The operational context will also have a bearing on the extent of information on the wider human security objectives and impacts of a mission. Interviewed military personnel highlighted that in war-fighting operations, though recourse to NGOs to gather information on underlying human security dynamics is not excluded, it is placed lower down the list of priorities. Certainly, issues such as confidentiality and limited available time influence this lower prioritisation. This presents an interesting dilemma. Though distinctly linked to international humanitarian law (the law of armed conflict), *jus ad bellum* (the law regulating the ability to enter war) and human rights law (amongst other such domains), human security is perhaps seen as 'best practice' - an extension of 'hearts and minds' policies as opposed to strict obligations. It therefore exists to the extent that it is valued by the military itself and enshrined within their policies and procedures. The challenge is therefore to foster a respect for human security analysis, embed human security specialists throughout organisational structures, and fuse human security analysis and procedures within military practices. Indeed, proactive engagement with the humanitarian sector should be valued within the military. This engagement can assist in building capacity to collaboratively address human trafficking through non-militaristic means, gathering open data on issues that may not otherwise be readily be available to military actors and can allow for the input of those with wider expertise of the humanitarian setting.

## **8. *Humanitarian data on human trafficking***

Within the context of human trafficking, it is possible that open humanitarian data can be utilised in a number of ways. Firstly, data on instances of human trafficking is notoriously difficult to obtain in a robust and stable manner, as stated above. Nevertheless, information gathered from the humanitarian sector can be used as a proxy for this more direct information. In this sense, data can be combined across issues that bear a connection to human trafficking. This can allow for risk analysis of the recognition of potential hotspots for human trafficking, for instance, through the filtering of known causal drivers, such as the lack of economic opportunity, localised violence and displacement amongst others.

Datasets that directly address human trafficking exist, including the newly published dataset entitled Contemporary Slavery in Armed Conflict (CSAT), produced at Nottingham University, which contains information on slavery and trafficking in 171 conflicts from 1989 to 2016. It offers robust information on the issue of human trafficking in a conflict setting. However, it is key to acknowledge other examples that better illustrate how datasets can be utilised to provide more general human security information that can subsequently inform work

and awareness on human trafficking. The environmental and food security data that is produced by the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, as well as the World Food Programme can provide a much richer understanding of vulnerability. These insights can cover a wide number of human security considerations, including economic vulnerability where communities may be more agrarian or pastoral, and areas that are likely to produce migration and displacement and as a result of drought, flooding or land degradation. Additionally, the datasets produced by ICF International's Demographic and Health Surveys Program contains a multitude of information that can be used to complement understandings of human trafficking environments, such as child labour, gender-based violence, education. The extortion of migrants and displaced persons mean the datasets provided by groups such as the Global Internal Displacement Data and UNHCR's datasets on Data on forcibly displaced populations and stateless persons can help to understand where vulnerability and a higher likelihood of human trafficking exists. These are just a few of the many datasets that can enrich human security and human trafficking insights. As the shift towards open humanitarian data platforms continues, the availability of information across the full spectrum of human security will increase and help to provide increasingly sophisticated and nuanced understandings of the operational environment.

Where these datasets are combined and analysed, there may also be some predictive value. Indeed, data analysts working on conflict and violence (ACLED) have stated that they have been able to utilise events-based data to make conflict prediction, though noted that this could only be done with shorter term predications (of approximately two weeks). Dutch based NGO PAX also stated that such predicative value was possible, particularly with regard to subjective information on the potential for conflict. Emphasising that perceptions of safety were innately intertwined with the likelihood of conflict. In this sense, quantitative data can be bolstered through the collection of answers to 'softer' questions on whether the respondent feels safe.

However, with regard to both of these considerations, the interviewed military personnel highlighted that in order to utilise this information in the context of human trafficking, they are reliant on theory to understand how an issue links to human trafficking. This is particularly complex with second order effects, where they need to develop a nuanced understanding of the causal mechanism to develop a detailed operational strategy to break the chain of events. Especially where a number of causal drivers are intertwined, the options for intervention are enlarged. Without a theoretical underpinning to inform responses, there is a limit to what they can do with gathered data. Here, criminological or sociological models and frameworks can help to guide their activities, or at the very least, their understanding.

Regardless of how advanced or exhaustive data collection activities have become, multidisciplinary analysis is necessary to transform the data into actionable understandings. This presents one of the ways in which collaboration between the humanitarian and military sector. Each sector will have access to different sets of information and individuals. For instance, while humanitarian actors may be better able to engage directly with local communities, military personnel will often be better able to engage with parliamentarians and governmental ministers.

Bringing together analysis from across these sectors can help to provide a fuller appreciation of the human security environment. Indeed, whilst confidentiality will need to be safeguarded, the sharing of analysis as opposed to the datasets themselves may help to keep the individual information as well as the sources confidential.

## **9. Recommendations**

Though militaries can undoubtedly improve their process for the immediate collection of information on and relevant to human trafficking, this article places an emphasis on the improvement of the wider awareness needed to pre-emptively understand human trafficking, including prior to its occurrence. Human security related data remains difficult to collect independently by the military. However, by utilising the information gathered by the humanitarian sector, and building on the ethos of the fusion doctrine, it is possible to fuse these considerations into military planning and analysis. This demonstrates why military personnel will need to go beyond their own sources and place real value on engagement with humanitarian actors. In this respect, a focus on the humanitarian concerns articulated within the concept of human security should continue to be fostered within the military. Several ways to achieve this are advocated within this article, namely, through the establishment of a wider respect for the concept of human security, its organisational entrenchment within the military through the establishment of human security units and dedicated personnel, the development of relationships with non-military actors (internal and external), and the development of a normative focus on the population-centric, bottom-up approach that is fostered through processes to collect this information.

Data can ultimately become one of the ways of instilling this value for human security within military planning and analysis. By harvesting this information and filtering it into map visualisations for instance, it brings information on wider socio-economic issues under their radar. Additionally, it may provide a greater awareness that a military response will not necessarily erase some of the underlying drivers, but rather exacerbate them. Further, the use of data can be used to identify trends in information that can be used for response prioritisation. This can be utilised in order to determine both objective conditions within the area of concern (i.e., mortality rates, socio-economic statistics) as well as qualitative information on the sentiments of the population. For instance, a rise in the newspaper coverage of a thematic issue can be used to identify how much an issue has attained status within media discourse. Within the context of the human trafficking this can act to capture issues such as increasing dehumanisation of a population or exacerbated vulnerability in a manner that places populations at increased risk of being trafficked. Identifying these threats pre-emptively or at an early stage can allow for the amelioration of aspects of human insecurity and prevent such issues from spilling over into other forms of insecurity, as outlined above.

The creation of a specific Human Security Cell, as currently developed within the UK military can help to improve the awareness, respect and capabilities on human security in the military context on several fronts. Firstly, by placing dedicated human security specialists within

the military context, this can highlight the need for human security analysis with institutional support and recognition. Moreover, the development of an imbedded knowledge base with dedicated activities including the collecting of human security data can help to address the need for information in war-fighting situations, by having the requisite information at hand. By developing an understanding of human security impacts in a given situation this can produce ‘in-house’ knowledge that can be filtered into military planning in a way that would be less time and resource intensive and would not compromise confidentiality, thereby allowing human security analysis in war-fighting planning without direct immediate recourse to NGOs (though NGO analysis of human security situations should still be collected where possible).

Moreover, by establishing a Human Security Cell, the military will be better able to foster stable relationships with the humanitarian and civil society sectors where appropriate. Indeed, the mandate of a Human Security Cell may point to a greater overlap of values, thereby facilitating an easier establishment of relationships and trust. As mentioned by interviewees in the humanitarian sector, concerns were relayed that relationships with the military have been difficult, in part due to a ‘closed-off’ and ‘defensive’ attitude towards concerns of their activities. Rather, an openness of dialogue was considered necessary, including a sharing of data needs that would allow those working in the humanitarian field to work to address these issues, such as gathering information on community perceptions and providing analysis of this information to the military. On the part of the military, the Human Security Cell can help to entrench a respect for engaging with the humanitarian sector in a meaningful manner. It can act to formally establish this in the institutional framework for human security in the military with structured responsibilities and positions that allow for these insights to move from more junior to senior levels of staff.

Another issue that was raised by the same organisation was that more reciprocal relationships would be conducive in this sector. The reciprocity here was related to the sharing of analysis, namely conclusions, measurements and contexts (as opposed to the individual datasets themselves, for confidentiality reasons). It was raised that militaries and humanitarian actors have different access to arenas, namely, that UN Peacekeeping missions are better able to liaise directly with parliamentarians and governmental ministers, whilst humanitarian actors are better able to engage directly with communities. The sharing of such analysis could therefore provide a more holistic and multisectoral understanding of conflict environments. Ultimately, where these reciprocal relationships are fostered, and the military’s dedication to human security demonstrated, greater trust will be a natural by-product. In turn, there will be new opportunities for data sharing and the exchange of insights and analysis. As stated by the head of the HDX platform, Sarah Telford, ‘trust, not technology, is at the heart of data sharing.’<sup>66</sup>

Human trafficking both influences and is influenced by a wide array of dynamics in the conflict environment. Attempts to address and prevent instances of THB should involve not only tackling the actual occurrences, but also addressing the structural drivers that exacerbate victim vulnerability and allow perpetrators to operate. As mentioned above, the concept of human

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<sup>66</sup> Telford, S., *ibid* note 55.

Without data we are fighting blind: the need for human security data in defence sector responses to human trafficking. Wieltchnig. Muraszkiewicz. Fenton.

security provides one such avenue for building such a nebulous and holistic understanding, though the expansive and perhaps vague nature of the concept can inhibit its effectiveness for actionable insights. It is here that the use of data can assist responsible actors in the humanitarian or military sectors. Not only can it be used to ground the general assumptions on causal drivers in more objective foundations, but its presence can act to highlight the importance of these issues in the decision-making process – helping to instill a paradigm shift towards the respect and protection of human security particularly within the military context.

Within this context, leveraging data across human security domains can help to achieve the following:

- Develop early warning for incidents of human trafficking<sup>67</sup>
- Identify areas of concern for human trafficking
- Help for military planning and analysis, in immediate, mid and long-term manner
- Foster multisectoral analysis
- Strengthen awareness of causal drivers

This article has looked towards the challenges and opportunities in achieving this, as well as current practices amongst a select number of organisations. What has been discovered is that coordination and relationship building with the humanitarian sector can help to inform military planning in a way that can help to ameliorate impacts on well-being that result from military activity and to focus on the root causes of harm in a preventative manner. In doing so, a data-driven approach to human trafficking responses in the defence sector can inculcate a new culture, which places a premium on human well-being and agency, as opposed to a current military focus on fighting in direct conflict with the values of humanitarian actors.<sup>68</sup>

The Fusion Doctrine presents an opportunity for the incorporation of this multisectoral approach necessary to truly address human trafficking in a meaningful manner. As strategy becomes inherently more multisectoral and long-term consequences built into planning, data-driven approaches to human security can help to hone the tools at militaries' disposal to address the complex array of factors that cause human trafficking in a complex world.

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<sup>67</sup> UNODC, *ibid* note 6, p.40.

<sup>68</sup> Watson, A., & Karlshøj-Pedersen, M. Fusion Doctrine in Five steps. *Oxford Research Group*, 2019, p.12.