



A group of Canadian police officers, Canadian Armed Forces members, National Police of Ukraine, and support staff participate in the Police and Peace Officer's National Memorial Day ceremony at the Canadian Embassy, 27 September 2020.

## An International Perspective: Canada's Commitment to Peace and Stabilization Operations in Ukraine

by Sean O'Brien and Grégory Gomez del Prado

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(This article was written in March 2022, shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.)

One mechanism the Government of Canada has at its disposal to increase peace and stability is the deployment of Canadian police officers to fragile, conflict-affected areas. In fact, Canadian police officers are currently deployed in conflict areas throughout the world as part of the Canadian Police Arrangement (CPA), a partnership between Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Public Safety Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). This partnership enables Canada to deploy police officers in peace and stabilization missions abroad.

Since 2014, the CPA has taken a two-pronged approach to peace and stabilization operations in Ukraine. The largest component of this strategy is the Canadian Police Mission in Ukraine (CPMU), a bilateral capacity-building operation that deploys Canadian police subject-matter experts to develop and deliver training to Ukrainian police. Training consists of various pillars designed to improve both policing competency and organizational professionalism. CPMU operations are currently suspended due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Canada's lesser-known effort towards policing reform and stabilization in Ukraine is its partnership with the European Union through the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement. Arguably the most practical tool in the EEAS's arsenal is the ability to force generate and deploy EU resources in the form of civilian and military missions in accordance with the EU's Common Security and Defence

Policy (CSDP). Since 2003, Canada has been a third-country contributor to CSDP missions, and it currently participates in the EU civilian missions for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS) and in Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine).

### The EUAM Ukraine Mandate

Prior to the beginning of Russia’s operations to invade Ukraine, EUAM Ukraine’s role was to provide strategic advice and practical support to Ukraine’s Civilian Security Sector, which comprises law enforcement agencies including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Police, the Patrol Police, the State Border Guard Service, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Security Service of Ukraine. It also includes rule of law agencies, such as the Ministry of Justice, the General Prosecutor’s Office, and local courts.

The EUAM Ukraine mandate has three pillars:

- strategic advice for the reform and development of legislation and strategic documents;
- support for reform implementation, providing training and equipment;
- cooperation and coordination, aligning reform efforts of local and international partners.

To implement its mandate, EUAM Ukraine focused its activities on five priorities:

- national and state security;
- organized and cross-border crime;
- criminal justice;
- community safety and police management;
- digital transformation and innovation.

However, reform of the civilian security sector is not possible without also integrating cross-cutting priorities, such as anti-corruption, good governance, and human rights and gender equality. These play a part in each of the EUAM’s five priorities and are relevant for all agencies of the civil security sector.

### Canada’s Contribution to the Civil Security Sector Reform Process in Ukraine

To understand the role Canadians fill within EUAM Ukraine, it is important to understand the Civil Security Sector Reform (CSSR) process from a strategic perspective. Following the Maidan revolution of 2013–14, the Ukrainian government requested the assistance of the EU to assist with reform through the signing of an Association Agreement with the European Union. In short, the Ukrainian people demanded comprehensive systematic reform in areas of anti-corruption, governance, policing and the judicial system. After the Maidan revolution, helping Ukraine in its fragile state shed the vestiges of Soviet governance required a clear methodology to reform and develop resiliency against backsliding

into established ways. The elements of reform can be broken down into seven key areas:<sup>1</sup>

- 1) Legal Basis: appropriate laws must be established to provide the legal basis for reform.
- 2) Accountability/Oversight: specialized independent oversight mechanisms must be created to ensure oversight and transparency.
- 3) Change Management: strategies and capacities must be developed to manage reform.
- 4) Modern Human Resourcing: organizational reform requires professional staff, free from corruption, with inclusive representation of gender, ethnic, religious, language or other considerations as appropriate. A key concept is to recruit for values and train for skill.
- 5) Capacity Development: ensure that individuals are able to perform the tasks entrusted to them.
- 6) Resources: ensure that the organization has adequate financial, human and material resources.
- 7) Assess and Focus: evaluate progress and target problem areas that require additional support in order to function in accordance with democratic principles.

Canada’s direct contribution to the EUAM since 2014 has been the deployment of Canadian police officers to various roles within the EUAM, such as Anti-corruption, General Policing, Criminal Investigation, Mobile Unit and Organized Crime. Generally, there are two Canadian police officers deployed to the mission at a time. Currently, those officers hold positions as Senior Advisor on Organized Crime and Advisor/Trainer on General Policing. In addition to the officers’ individual contributions to their respective roles within the mission, the presence of the Canadian police has been a force multiplier for both CPMU/CPA and EUAM Ukraine. These officers have provided a vital link between the two missions, which has resulted in cooperation across multiple program lines including cooperation on training development and delivery and sharing of information in accordance with the EU’s “Integrated Approach.”<sup>2</sup>

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### Organized and Cross-Border Crime Reform

In 2019, the Ukrainian government published its Action Plan for Organized Crime, which laid out its priorities and planned activities. With his Organized Crime Unit colleagues from Ukraine, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Germany and Estonia, Sgt O’Brien was involved in planning and delivering on five activities within the Action Plan. This was in partnership with the National Police of Ukraine (NPU) and the Office of the Prosecutor General. The key interlocutors in the NPU were the Strategic Investigation Department, the Criminal Intelligence Department and the Witness Protection Unit.

The unit was involved in helping Ukraine adopt the Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) methodology. SOCTA is a strategic tool that the EU uses to get a strategic view of the organized crime situation across the EU, so that policy makers can assess the spectrum of threats facing Member States, prioritize them, and assign resources accordingly. Canada contributed to EU



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Sergeant Sean O'Brien, a police officer with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, is deployed on his second tour to the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine as a Senior Advisor for Organized Crime. He stands in front of the Monument to the Unknown Soldier in the Park of Eternal Glory in Kiev during a Remembrance Day ceremony.

SOCTA through its EU Partnership and produces its own national and provincial organized crime threat assessments through Criminal Intelligence Service Canada and its provincial representatives. These assessments have enabled governments to change their focus to address such things as the opioid crisis, money laundering, cyber-crime and related frauds, as well as border integrity issues such as human trafficking and migrant crises. SOCTA has been strongly supported by the Government of Ukraine through proclamations in the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament) in January 2022 and direction for the NPU to lead its implementation. In fact, the NPU Criminal Analysis Unit compiled SOCTA Ukraine 2019; however, it was not officially published. As with many reform items, this activity had difficulty finding support at various levels, despite government direction.

The EUAM also sponsored the concept of Regional Organized Crime Task Forces. As a mechanism to improve the fight against organized crime, the EUAM has advocated for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in Ukraine to establish regional task forces for the purpose of maximizing resources, prioritizing threats, and sharing information. Models of such cooperation in various EU countries and Canada were analyzed and collated in the EUAM's strategic advice package to advance this effort.

In any organized crime investigation, the lack of witness protection and the inability to ensure witnesses' safety after prosecution can scuttle any prosecution and potentially block law enforcement from infiltrating insulated organized crime groups.

The EUAM and partners in Europol (a support service for EU Member States) were providing training and strategic advice for witness protection legislation and organizational standard operating procedures. These efforts faced two fundamental challenges, as outlined in the CSSR process above. First, Ukraine does not have specific witness protection legislation that regulates police authority with respect to witness protection. Two legislative drafts were before the Ukrainian parliament: one to enact new legislation and a second to amend articles of the *Criminal Procedure Code* that could facilitate witness protection measures. However, both draft laws had been stagnant for 18 months. Second, there is no clear delineation of competencies within Ukrainian law enforcement with respect to witness protection and no single oversight body, unlike in most western countries. As a result of the lack of clarity and the lack of trust among law enforcement bodies, multiple LEAs within Ukraine had witness protection mandates with no coordination of efforts nationally or internationally.

To support intelligence-led policing approaches and strategic and tactical analyses, the EUAM has been facilitating criminal intelligence analysis training to NPU's Central and Regional Criminal Analysis Units throughout Ukraine using Romanian police experts in the field. This training was designed to dovetail with decision-making frameworks for policing leadership. The lion's share of this training provided practical skills, such as open source intelligence analysis, database analysis, signal intelligence and GIS mapping skills. However, the most important areas of the training were the concepts of intelligence-led policing and strategic intelligence analysis. One of the key challenges of those activities was that Ukrainian LEA leadership was primarily focused on developing practical skills and employing them in support of tactical investigations, with less consideration for the larger strategic organized crime picture internationally. Often, those skills were diverted from intelligence analysis tasks and used for forensic video processing. The lack of an objective intelligence-led prioritization and decision-making process removed an important strategic tool and oversight mechanism while maintaining a system with increased susceptibility to corruption.

Human intelligence is a highly valuable asset in law enforcement and is fraught with complications. A working group consisting of various EUAM experts representing different Member States, the United States International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) and the NPU Criminal Intelligence Section was in the process of developing practical human source handling specific to NPU criminal intelligence needs. This training was an incremental step towards developing unit competency prior to providing in-depth specialized training to be delivered by Estonian experts. One lesson learned during this process was that, in keeping with CSSR Key Area 4, Modern Human Resourcing (mentioned above), experts from the US International Bureau of Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) could not be involved in this activity, since the NPU had not committed to implementing modern staffing procedures as an anti-corruption measure.

On 23–24 February, Sgt O'Brien and the Organized Crime Unit were participating with the Office of the Prosecutor General in a conference for the rollout of the Regional Organized Crime Task Forces to the Regions of Ukraine. On 24 February, the Russian invasion ended the activities. Since then, Sgt O'Brien has been actively supporting his contacts in the NPU Strategic Investigation Department (SID) in many ways. Maintaining daily contact with

the NPU SID, he has focused his efforts on connecting key players to provide support in Ukraine, or to help those trying to leave. Moreover, through daily updates, Sgt O'Brien has helped to ensure that EUAM Ukraine is actively engaged in supporting its partners.

### Community Safety and Police Management Reform

Since its beginning, the EUAM has focused on strengthening the effectiveness of Ukrainian LEAs. Starting in 2021, the new mandate has aimed at specifically developing the NPU into an effective and efficient police service through the integration of Community Safety and Police Management principles and concepts, with sustainability always in mind.

Under the general term “community safety and security” lie the main principles of community policing. Although these principles have sometimes been misunderstood and not adequately applied by police services in Canada<sup>3</sup>, the core values of community policing have proven to be relevant in a CSSR process. The Mission aims at supporting LEAs in integrating a proactive and multi-stakeholder approach to ensuring the safety of citizens and their communities. This means involving local authorities, security actors, civil society organizations and representatives of the community at the central, regional and local levels. Concretely, the EUAM has put in place the Community Safety Dialogue project to gather counterparts at the central and regional levels. At the local level, the Security Environment Assessment System initiative has supported and monitored the implementation of Citizen Advisory Groups in smaller communities. These advisory groups identify criminal and non-criminal safety issues that affect citizens’ sense of security and address these issues with the “local solutions to local problems” approach.

On the sustainability side, one particularly promising approach has been the Community Policing Training of the Trainers (ToT) project. In partnership with the Donetsk State University (DSU) of Mariupol, the EUAM, in collaboration with the CPMU, created an extensive Community Policing curriculum based on the best practices and experiences in EU countries and in Canada. Until recently, this curriculum was gradually being integrated in all of the seven universities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA). MoIA universities are responsible for the initial and specialized training of police officers in Ukraine. In parallel, police officers from the EUAM and CPMU trained all the professors from the DSU in May 2021 in this Community Policing curriculum and a six-day seminar was organized to train the first group of teachers from the remaining six universities. The trainers were all the DSU professors paired with EUAM and CPMU mentors, in accordance with their field of expertise. Three more seminars in the same format were planned in 2022 to complete the training of community policing professors in all the MoIA universities.

The other pillar is the reform of the management system within the NPU. The

EUAM aims to advise, mentor and support the development and implementation of efficient management standards. This has proven to be quite challenging given the highly hierarchical and rigid style of management inherited from the past culture. Moreover, transparency and accountability issues in leadership are regularly addressed, as the Mission established good governance and anti-corruption as cross-cutting measures in its mandate.

As with community policing, the EUAM has focused on sustainable projects for the management of the NPU. For example, the Mid-Level Management ToT project trained approximately 150 police managers in the last two years. The training was divided into two parts. First, police officers were taught the skills required to become trainers themselves and deliver key learning strategies. Second, the training provided concepts and best practices on management and leadership, communication, human rights and gender, and anti-corruption. Last year, a module on sexual harassment in the workplace was added to the training. The first part of the project was completed just before the start of the Russian invasion. The second part, which was planned for spring and summer 2022, consisted of monitoring the training given by the new trainers to approximately 2,900 police managers across Ukraine. The EUAM, in collaboration with the CPMU, was planning to monitor approximately 50 training sessions.

### What's Next? The EUAM Pivots Its Mandate to Support the New Reality

As tension was building around Ukraine’s borders, EUAM management proactively evacuated non-essential Mission staff from the country in mid-February. On the day of the attack, senior management and essential staff executed the evacuation plan and established a temporary headquarters in Moldova. After an expeditious and intense assessment of



Interregional Conference organized by the Ukrainian Association of Women in Law Enforcement (UAWLE) in October 2021 titled “Break Stereotypes by Knowing Yourself.” (Left to right) Nina Pelkonen, Finnish policer officer working for EUAM Ukraine; Kateryna Pavlichenko, Deputy Minister of Interior of Ukraine and president of UAWLE; Erik Svedahl, Ambassador of Norway to Ukraine; Sergeant Grégory Gomez del Prado, Sûreté du Québec.

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the situation, EUAM Ukraine pivoted within its mandate to concentrate on several key activities.

The primary activity is providing emergency support for Ukraine. EUAM Operations collected and collated immediate needs from the EUAM's key partners and immediately redistributed the budget from planned operations to the provision of rations and humanitarian supplies. Likewise, it began the procurement process to reallocate additional funding through other police funding for personal protective equipment, rations, medical supplies and communications equipment.

EUAM Operations also aims at supporting operations on the different EU borders with Ukraine. In partnership with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), The EUAM aims to support Ukraine and Member States with the flow of goods and people across different border points.

The last activity consists of assessing the support to Ukrainian authorities in the investigation and prosecution of international criminal law violations.

## Conclusion

With respect to CSSR and its impact on helping fragile states build resilience to outside aggressors, or to internal subversive threats, it is clear through the lens of current events just how crucial it is to have a clear reform plan and to achieve the reforms as expeditiously as possible. Over the course of the mission, mission members and beneficiaries have experienced reform fatigue and complacency, which can then



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Deployed Canadian police officers stand respectfully during the singing of the Ukrainian National Anthem at a graduation ceremony, 16 August 2019.

become an obstacle to successful integration. One of the key takeaways from the operations following the initial invasion was how the COVID19 pandemic and the necessary transition to remote working helped prepare the Mission to be agile and to respond quickly to help manage aspects of this crisis.

Likewise, in the early onset of the war, there was uncertainty among the staff with respect to the status and future of the mission. Understandably, Ukraine has much more pressing issues to deal with at present—including its very existence—that take precedence over reform agendas. However, the EEAS Conduct Planning and Conduct Capability, as well as Mission leadership, left no doubt and reassured Ukrainian partners and Mission staff that they were in the business of crisis management and were still in the fight. It is this decisive leadership that has allowed EUAM Ukraine to pivot quickly and stay engaged.



## NOTES

- 1 International Security Sector Advisory Team, "Police Reform" (Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance): <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/SSR-in-Practice/Thematics-in-Practice/Police-Reform>.
- 2 ISP – Integrated Approach for Security and Peace Directorate (23 February 2021): [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage\\_en/93631/ISP%20-%20Integrated%20Approach%20for%20Security%20and%20Peace%20Directorate](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/93631/ISP%20-%20Integrated%20Approach%20for%20Security%20and%20Peace%20Directorate).
- 3 G. Gomez del Prado and S. Leman-Langlois, *Police et Policing au Québec: concepts, acteurs et enjeux* (Montréal, QC: Les Éditions Yvon Blais, 2020).