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**STATUS:** Active  
**SPONSOR:** PKSOI -  
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**OPERATION:** \_Afghanistan General

**EVENT DATE:** 30 Nov 2011

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**UNIT / AGENCY:** PKSOI Staff - PKM

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## Topic:

### Civilian Casualty Tracking in Afghanistan

**This record has implications in the following areas:**

----- **-PMESII-PT** -----

MILITARY  
INFORMATION

----- **DOTMLPF-P** -----

DOCTRINE  
ORGANIZATION  
TRAINING  
LEADERSHIP/EDUCATION

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**This record has the following UJTLs associated with it:**

OP 5.1 ACQUIRE AND COMMUNICATE OPERATIONAL LEVEL INFORMATION AND MAINTAIN STATUS.

OP 5.2 ASSESS OPERATIONAL SITUATION.

OP 6.2 PROVIDE PROTECTION FOR OPERATIONAL FORCES, MEANS, AND NONCOMBATANTS.

TA 5.5 DIRECT AND LEAD SUBORDINATE FORCES

TA 6.5 PROVIDE FOR COMBAT IDENTIFICATION

**This record has no Essential Tasks associated with it.**

## This record has the following associated files:

- e [CIVCAS Tracking Kennan \(11-Jun-2013\)-LMS-1256.pdf](#)

### Topic:

### Civilian Casualty Tracking in Afghanistan

### Observations:

During Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan, the tracking and analysis of civilian casualties, along with command emphasis on civilian casualty (CIVCAS) prevention, led to a significant decrease in civilian casualties – positively impacting attitudes in the host nation toward the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) and host nation security forces.

### Discussion:

In late 2008, General McKiernan, the ISAF Commander in Afghanistan, established the first Civilian Casualty Tracking Cell (CCTC) in ISAF – to better enable his commanders and staff to monitor harm to civilians. In mid-2009, as leaders grew to realize that civilian casualties were in fact adversely impacting the stability mission, the next ISAF Commander, General McChrystal issued a [Tactical Directive \(6 July 2009\)](#) that stated:

"We must avoid the trap of winning tactical victories – but suffering strategic defeats – by causing civilian casualties or excessive damage and thus alienating the people.... I expect leaders at all levels to scrutinize and limit the use of force like close air support (CAS) against residential compounds and other locations likely to produce civilian casualties.... The use of air-to-ground munitions and indirect fires against residential compounds is only authorized under very limited and prescribed conditions." [Headquarters, ISAF, 6 July 2009]

After gathering data for several months, the CCTC was then able to identify/assess CIVCAS trends over time. Based on those assessments, the ISAF Commander developed and issued additional guidance to the force – adjusting ISAF's tactics and procedures in order to further decrease harm to civilians. For example, when data began to show that Afghan civilians were being killed in numerous traffic accidents caused by ISAF forces/drivers, the ISAF Commander issued a [directive on driving \(30 August 2009\)](#), which instructed soldiers to avoid aggressive driving and to instead emphasize safe driving. Likewise, when night raids were found to be contributory to Afghan casualties as well as cause for great irritation/anger among host nation citizens, the ISAF Commander issued a [directive on night raids \(5 March 2010\)](#), which directed commanders/units to explore all other feasible options before conducting any night raid in the vicinity of compounds and residences. That directive further stated the following:

"The ISAF policy on Night Raids builds upon earlier directives which establish guidance on entry into Afghan medical facilities to respect and protect innocent civilians; on driving, instructing ISAF personnel to adhere to appropriate, legal driving procedures and behavior in Afghanistan; and, an overarching Tactical Directive which provides guidance and intent for the employment of force in support of ISAF operations by gaining and maintaining the support of the people, by separating the insurgency from the innocents, and by avoiding civilian casualties through the application of an appropriate use of force." [Headquarters, ISAF, 5 March 2010]

Subsequent ISAF commanders continued to place strong emphasis on CIVCAS prevention. For example, General Petraeus modified the [Tactical Directive \(4 August 2010\)](#) to more effectively protect civilians across the range of situations where they could be involved. General Allen likewise issued his [Tactical Directive \(30 November 2011\)](#) – calling for an even more judicious application of force, soldier discipline, tactical patience, and regular reinforcement training – guided by Rules of Engagement (ROE). An OEF CIVCAS Smart Card and an OEF CIVCAS Handbook were also produced to facilitate awareness and education across the force. In conjunction with these directives and supplements, the CCTC provided the comprehensive data and trend analysis that informed ISAF commanders. That analysis enabled commanders to make informed decisions and to adjust tactics and procedures as needed.

The results speak for themselves. Civilian casualty rates dropped significantly over a 4-year timeframe. According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 828 civilians had been killed by pro-government forces (ISAF and host nation security forces) in 2008. One year later, in 2009 (Note: the CCTC was stood up in late 2008 and General McChrystal's Tactical Directive was issued in July 2009), the number of civilian casualties caused by pro-government forces dropped to 596. By 2012, the number of civilian casualties caused by pro-government forces was down to 316. Overall, through tracking, analysis, and recognition of how much civilian harm was occurring and its causes, ISAF commanders were able to adapt and make a positive impact on both CIVCAS reduction and host nation attitudes.

## Recommendation:

1. Forces involved in peacekeeping and stability operations should establish a Civilian Casualty Tracking Cell (CCTC) [also referred to as a Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis, and Response Cell (CCTARC)] – to provide commanders with accurate CIVCAS information and analysis of trends. Commanders should ensure that this cell is adequately staffed, resourced, and trained.
2. Commanders should emphasize the importance of Protection of Civilians (PoC) and CIVCAS prevention to all soldiers throughout peacekeeping/stability operations, providing clear guidance on tactics and procedures.

## Implications:

If CIVCAS is not tracked and analyzed by a dedicated cell, then commanders may not be able to conduct informed decision-making on this critical issue. Additionally, if commanders do not continuously emphasize CIVCAS prevention to their troops, then civilian casualties may rise, and host nation attitudes toward the international force may worsen – to the detriment of the overall campaign.

## Comments:

Related references:

1. [ATTP 3-37.31 Civilian Casualty Mitigation](#), Headquarters, Department of the Army, July 2012.
2. [Protection of Civilians Military Reference Guide](#), Dwight Raymond, Bill Flavin, and Juergen Prandtner, January 2013.
3. [SOLLIMS Sampler – Protection of Civilians](#), Dan French and David Mosinski, 2 January 2013.

4. [Strategic Lesson Number 13: The Imperative of Protecting Civilians](#), Dan French and David Mosinski, 27 November 2012.
5. [Afghanistan Annual Report 2008 – Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict](#), UNAMA, January 2009.
6. [Afghanistan Annual Report 2012 – Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict](#), UNAMA, February 2013.
7. [Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan](#), Department of Defense, July 2013.
8. [Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis & Response Cell \(CCTARC\)](#), Center for Civilians in Conflict, 12 February 2013.

## Event Description:

This lesson is based on the article "Operationalizing Civilian Protection in Mali: The Case for a Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis, and Response Cell," by Marla B. Kennan, 11 June 2013 (attached).  
Keenan, M.B. 2013. Operationalizing Civilian Protection in Mali: The Case for a Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis, and Response Cell. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2 (2):21, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.ba>

### MEMBER PERSPECTIVES ON THIS OBSERVATION:

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Reviewed and Approved for Release.

NOTE: all generals mentioned in this document were/are U.S. Army generals.

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