

Policy Brief

July 2014.



Belgrade Centre for Security Policy



Norwegian Institute
of International
Affairs



Shoulder to Shoulder: Albania's Civilian Capacities In Support Of Capacity Development Abroad

Foto Duro

Institute for Democracy and Mediation

Executive summary

For more than two decades, Albania is building its own (civilian and military) capacities for the core state functions. Since 1996, it has contributed with military troops abroad, but there is no such contribution with civilian capacities so far.

Capacity building (either military or civilian) in Albania looks better regulated vis-à-vis NATO, while concerning EU and UN there is no progress.

Currently there are no plans in Albania for contributions with civilian capacities abroad, even though some of these capacities exist or are being created. They are mostly focused on strategic macroeconomic planning, security planning, health, education, human rights, law enforcement, etc. Being built anew they might be better suited (contextually seen) in helping conflict affected countries, which struggle to develop their own capacities. In this case, due to Albania's limited resources, it is necessary to gain support from 3rd party countries.

Due to ethnic and cultural links, Albania's contribution to Kosovo capacity development looks more feasible. In this case, working "shoulder to shoulder", a term that has a strong emotional effect in population of both countries, can produce fast and tangible effects.

Given the actual situation, it is necessary for the Government of Albania to take concrete actions in assessing the capacities in place and the ones which are more reasonable to be built, supported by the adequate implementation measures, with the right level of comprehensiveness, in partnership with private initiatives. Part of these efforts should be asking for support from third party countries/international institutions.

Introduction

In its transition from authoritarianism to democracy, Albania had to (re)build its own governance capabilities. Notably, the military capability building process was better organized and planned, from the outset, to serve the nation and as contributions abroad. Quite in contrast Albanian civilian capacities were foreseen only for domestic use.

So far, in Albania, the possibility of deploying civilian capacities in peace operations abroad is considered at best, "*beyond the horizon*". Several factors have conditioned this: conceptually – the difficulty to comprehend this new role of civilian capacities; legally – the lack of explicit provisions in this area; practically, any inter-agency effort seems difficult because of the differences in institutional culture, characteristic friction concerning "*who is leading whom*", parochial positions, reluctance in contributing with resources, etc.

For the purpose of this policy brief, civilian capacities [CivCaps hereafter] are considered: *civilians with proper expertise and adequate financial and material support, able to deploy in the conflict affected countries and assist in developing any of designated native capacities for sustained running of the government core functions.*

Advantages/opportunities

There are some advantageous preconditions in Albania for building and deploying CivCaps for peace operations. Firstly, since early 90', Albania has benefited from several programs financed by EU, USA, UN, etc, in building its own governance capacities, which for the period 2000-2012, amounted to about € 3.2 billion,¹ focused mostly on justice and home affairs capacities; public administration; transport; environment and climate change; social development; agriculture and rural development, etc.² Among these built capacities, the ones related to enhanced governance had been crucial. They can be offered as well in capacity development programs for other nations. Being built anew, it is supposed that the Albanian personnel manning these CivCaps, can better understand situation in the hosting country, increasing thus the flexibility and effectiveness of these programs.

Secondly, Albanian political parties of the whole spectrum have invariably expressed a strong desire for integration in Euro-Atlantic structures. In many official documents, they have pledged to fulfill any obligation deriving from their Euro-Atlantic agenda. Contribution with CivCaps is part of these obligations. Time looks ripe now for concrete deeds also in this aspect.

Finally, there are already a relatively large number of the Albanian militaries with experience in missions abroad, which constitute an important pool for CivCaps. Since 1996, more than 6000³ Albanian soldiers have participated (at least once) in such missions. Due to the "military personnel life cycle", about 125 militaries, with PSO experience, still relatively young, are already retired. Out of them, about 50 are of ranks "Major" to "Colonel", which basically means - good experience in international staffs, decision making and problem solving processes. Due to their skills gained in missions abroad: cultural awareness; foreign language; knowledge on international laws related to peace operations; experience of working in multinational/multi-actors environments; in addition to their military skills (survivability in particular) they could be considered as a valuable, almost ready, contingent for CivCaps (after gaining some skills of 'civil nature').

¹ Donors to Albania-generalized, at: <http://idmalbania.org/activities/donor-contribution-albania-figures>.

² EC Albania Progress Report, 2013 , 4.

³ Source: <http://www.aaf.mil.al/english/index.php/misione-aktuale> and <http://www.aaf.mil.al/english/index.php/misione-te-kryera>.

Challenges

There are several challenges against Albanian government/nongovernment undertaking to contribute with CivCaps abroad. It is, first of all, the lack of experience of state/nonstate institutions in dealing with such issues. As it was mentioned above, despite the defense sector, no other sector possesses such capacities for missions abroad. Secondly, the whole process of building CivCaps, need to be better supported by a legal framework, which is to be build almost anew. Above all, it is the challenge of raising the awareness of the Albanian government concerning the need for such contributions. After benefiting, in this aspect, from the international assistance, for about two decades, now, despite declarations, it's time for the Albanian state institutions to think more seriously for contribution with CivCaps abroad.

Conceptual and Legal framework

The AAF is the only institution, which has in its mission a clearly stated legal obligation for contribution in peace missions abroad, in addition to other domestic roles.⁴ For that purpose, a set of other conceptual/doctrinal documents was developed, supported by operational plans. So far, other official documents related to Albania's obligations for CivCaps contributions are either missing or sketchy. The Strategic Security and Defence Review (SSDR) approved by the government in April 2013, is the first document with such obligations for other ministries. Even there, the CivCaps are envisaged as short-time, disaster relief capacities. (Albanian) AL-CIMIC⁵ Doctrine is an important normative document in this aspect, but again, its predicted tasks are limited in scope and time. They do not go beyond the operational level and short-term effects in the assisted country.

NATO-Albania "Capability Targets" (CT) package has three CT-s, directly related to "Stabilization and Reconstruction" missions. They could be considered as a foundation for the CivCaps building process, but still, despite their interagency nature, they are envisaged mostly

⁴ Albania's Constitution, 1999, Article 12, The Albanian Military Strategy, 2007, 15.

⁵ CIMIC – Civil-Military Cooperation

‘operationally’ focused, rather than ‘strategically’, with effects hardly to go far in the future. However, despite some very sketchy obligation matrixes, so far, there are no concrete steps in materializing these NATO related CTs.

As for the possible obligations deriving from any agreement between Albania and EU, the only binding document, so far, is the “Agreement for the participation of the Republic of Albania in the EU crisis management operations”.⁶ Again, so far there are not inter-ministry implementation plans derived from this agreement. On the other hand, considering the “Agreement” terms, it could be inferred that these obligations, similar to NATO CTs, are mostly operational with short-to-midterm effects. Related to UN, there is not any explicit obligation, till now, for Albania⁷. Nevertheless, Albania has contributed so far in some UN military missions,⁸ on a case by case basis.

Albania has to develop its own adequate legal framework (till now absent) related to conditions and contractual obligations of the Albanian state institutions and the individuals to be deployed in such missions, being they led by UN, EU, or any multinational setup. The legal framework should regulate as well problems related to paid/unpaid leave of civilians deployed, the modalities of testing and selection, recruitment, keeping stand-by, rostering, pre-deployment training, etc.

Some nascent CivCaps in Albania

Despite the above mentioned shortfalls, a close look will present some CivCaps in Albania, which are already built or in building stage.

⁶ Ratified by the Albanian Parliament, with the Law No.103, dated 08 Nov. 2012

⁷ UN Convents/agreements where Albania is a party, MFA archive, Vol.1.

⁸ E.g. Albania contributed in the MINURCAT mission (Chad), with one “Commando” company <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/minurcat/facts.shtml> (Country contributors)

a. Strategic/macroeconomic planning

“*Integrated Planning System*”, introduced in Albania in 2007,⁹ despite bolstering a more effective economic development, has produced a new cohort of high level managers, better fit for thinking strategically and handling mid-to-long term assessments and planning. On the other hand, they constitute an important CivCap for other countries in developing their own macroeconomic capacities.

b. Strategic Security planning

“*Strategic Security and Defense Review*” (SSDR) was finalized in March 2013 after about two years of an inter-ministerial process related to national capacities to be built for serving national interests about 15 years into the future. People involved in that process, gained a unique experience on strategic thinking, planning and programming. As a team or individually, they represent a precious CivCap, which Albania could provide for any (post conflict) country in developing such capacity.

c. Public health

Albanian CivCaps in public health sector were built gradually by simultaneously reforming itself and contributing to Kosovo and Afghanistan. For the health system in Albania (still to be finalized) international actors have assisted with programs worth of about €128 million.¹⁰ While in Kosovo, Albania contributed with one team (for about one year), in Afghanistan, there have been 30 military medics (for more than two years) providing expertise for both receptive countries in rebuilding their public health system. As a consequence, a category of visionary persons has surfaced, able to drive revolutionary changes in this sector, constituting on the other hand, a precious CivCap, to be offered to other countries where needed.

⁹ SIGMA Assessment, Albania, 2012, 17-18.

¹⁰ Database of donors to Albania, at: <http://idmalbania.org/activities/donor-contribution-albania-figures>.

d. Education

Education reform in Albania has benefited from international support counted of about € 30 million¹¹ in 2000-2012. The Albania's Strategy on Education (2004-2015) is oriented to reforming education governance and strengthening system management with special focus on "student-centred" philosophy and policies. This process has produced positive results, both in education system and national capacities for education transformation. On the other hand, this "fresh" experience, along with CivCaps developed, could be very valuable for other countries struggling with the same problems.

e. Gender rights

Gender equality actions in Albania were focused on: a) protective legal and institutional mechanisms; b) empowering women through increased participation in decision-making; c) women's economic empowerment; d) equal access to quality education; e) improving the social situation of women at risk; f) boosting the women specific health system, etc.¹² International community has supported in this aspects with projects amounted to about € 5.3 million during 2000-2010¹³. Some good results and capacities have been achieved so far, which can be offered also as contributions abroad.

f. Police capabilities

Since Summer-2012, Albanian State Police (ASP) is contributing in building capacities and training of the Afghani State Police, as part of the Italian police mission, in the western province of Herat. So far, 21 ASP officers have provide expertise for the Afghani counterparts in the areas of Police reform, training in using investigative methods, collecting intelligence etc. Performing in mission of this nature, as well as working with and benefiting from the experience of the Italian counterpart, has been a very precious opportunity for enhancing the ASP professionalization itself and creating police CivCap, to be used for other contributions abroad in the future.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "National strategy on gender equality (2011-2015)", 78-81.

¹³ Database of donors to Albania, at: <http://idmalbania.org/activities/donor-contribution-albania-figures>.

‘Shoulder-to-shoulder’ approach towards Kosovo

Due to ethnic/cultural links and other contextual advantages, Albania’s CivCaps contribution to Kosovo, under a ‘Shoulder-to-Shoulder’¹⁴ approach, is expected to have high pay-off effects. Better awareness of the Albanian experts, on political, economic and social developments in Kosovo, can be very supportive for adaptability of the Albanian personnel, while being twinned with the Kosovo counterparts, increasing thus the flexibility and effectiveness of the programs. In addition, there is a demonstrable willingness of both governments for cooperation in several areas¹⁵, which goes up to joint government meetings, taking place periodically in the territory of each other. In that respect, it’s very natural for the Albanian government to consider and support any twinning project with Kosovo institutions. There have been several projects, so far, in Kosovo, with personnel from Albania, hired privately by EU and SIDA¹⁶ (mostly on gender issues) which in themselves constitute a good foundation for the future in this aspect.

Despite the advantages of offering Albanian CivCaps to Kosovo, there are some disadvantages as well. First of all, it is the sensitivity of some other countries, Serbia in particular, for any cooperation demarche between Albania and Kosovo, which so far, has caused some hesitation from international authorities operating in Kosovo, to accept Albania’s contributions. In addition, Albania’s capacities remain limited and barely would produce any effect, all by themselves, without being augmented and supported by third party countries. On the other hand, due to the understandable failure aversion, both governments are expected to be very prudent, even refusal, to any endeavor that does not guarantee full success.

¹⁴ Referring to Albanians’ culture (both in Albania and Kosovo), ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’ expression, is used commonly and has a strong emotional effect.

¹⁵ Albania is actually the second trade partner for Kosovo, after the EU (see at: <http://www.evropaelire.org/content/article/25182919.html> and <http://www.mfa-ks.net/?page=2.4.1571>

¹⁶ SIDA – Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

Conclusions and recommendations

C.1. The comprehensive process of institutional reform in Albania has reached now the stage where Albania, alongside with furthering its own reforms, can (and should) contribute to other countries in developing their national capacities.

R.1.1. All state institutions in-charge, coordinated by the MFA, should start revising and adapting the necessary legal framework, with the required level of comprehension and elaboration to provide for building and contributing with CivCaps abroad.

R.1.2. Implementation plans should be developed in parallel, with all necessary measures, to ensure that the CivCaps, will be suitably manned, equipped and trained for complex tasks of capacity development programs abroad.

C.2. Most of the actual governance capabilities in Albania have been built from the scratch during the last two decades. As such, the Albanian CivCaps can be contextually better fit for capacity development missions abroad.

R.2.1. Since the CivCap contribution abroad is very context sensitive, the Albanian Government, should build working groups, with the proper inter-ministry composition to assess CivCaps already in place or to be built (as the best effect producing ones).

R.2.2 Inter-ministerial groups should analyze and propose the best cost-effective combination of “stand by” and “rostering” methodologies in dealing with CivCaps.

R.2.3. These groups should conclude, as well, what could be the most appropriate regions/countries for CivCap contributions.

C.3. So far, out of a number of international organizations where Albania is a member or aspires to be, only NATO has been very explicit in its capability requirements vis-à-vis Albania, enabling some concrete implementation plans and products from the latter.

R.3.1. Albanian government should initiate analyses on what could be done for an active participation with CivCaps in EU and UN capacity development programs.

R.3.2. The process of building CivCaps in Albania, designated for deployment abroad should be comprehensive as much as possible, while the MFA should take the lead in bringing together and coordinating all ministries/agencies involved.

R.3.3. The Albanian MoD, due to its experience with NATO (even though military by its nature) should provide expertise for other ministries about the way of planning and building of the pre-decided CivCaps.

C.4. It looks less likely any seconding from the Albanian government for the Albanian CivCaps, beyond keeping the employees' jobs and paying their salaries, while being abroad.

R.4.1. Albanian government or the international organizations involved in capacity development should seek for other countries, as third party, willing to fund the rest of the programs' cost.

C.5. While so far, the Albanian governments have not showed any immediate intent to contribute with CivCaps abroad, some capabilities, for such programs (partially hired privately in the past by international organizations) still exist.

R.5.1. A concerted effort should be initiated from both the Albanian government and any interested international organization to put this process on a more organized basis (even though a private endeavour, the Albanian government is expected to be interested and assist in this chipper option).

R.5.2. In that respect, having a clear picture, identifying the options of private CivCaps already in place and rostering them, should be some of the first steps.

R.5.3. Activating Albanian CivCaps privately needs coordination, which in this case can be taken over by domestic NGOs with adequate understanding and managerial capacities. The IDM-Tirana could be one of them in "roster agency" role.

C.6. In many aspects Kosovo capacity development process looks more preferable to be supported by Albania.

R.6.1. The Albanian government, in concert with the Kosovo government and international organizations operating actually in Kosovo, should seek the most proper areas and ways for incorporation of the Albanian CivCaps in capacity development programs already in place there.