

CANADA'S APPROACH TO STABILIZATION

Canada supports stabilization efforts around the world, working alongside allies as well as multilateral and other partners. Although Canada has been active in conducting stabilization activities, government actors are sometimes unsure as to the exact meaning of “stabilization” and the role of departments and agencies. The purpose of this document is to clarify the concept and describe Canada’s whole-of-government approach to international stabilization efforts. This document also lists key lessons from Canada’s engagements thus far.

What is stabilization?

Canada defines its stabilization approach as the efforts to help a country or community manage, recover or emerge from an upheaval such as a violent conflict, political strife or natural disasters leading to large-scale social unrest. Achieving stability is one goal among others to pave the way for long term peace and prosperity. It includes different combination of processes and activities, depending on each specific context. It can involve supplying external joint military and civilian expertise in support of the host country, to perform some or all of the following tasks:

- Manage or reduce violence;
- Protect civilians and key institutions;
- Provide essential government services
- Promote political processes; and
- Prepare for longer-term reconstruction, peacebuilding and development.

Specific activities may include the enforcement of ceasefires, support to the management of population movements, restoration of basic services and infrastructures, security and justice sector reform, support to border protection, and facilitating democratic political processes. In certain circumstances, these activities may take place in parallel to other government efforts aimed at meeting basic needs and services according to humanitarian principles.

Canada’s response is not one-dimensional. Its stabilization efforts are generally part of a larger

international engagement mandated and/or executed by organizations such as the UN, NATO or the EU. Canada’s response may draw on any combination of activities and tools in areas such as diplomacy, defence, development, support to multilateral efforts, capacity-building, trade and investment.

Why should Canada engage in international stabilization efforts?

International stabilization activities are generally used to address state fragility and conflict. In such environments, states and societies often face multiple challenges simultaneously: political violence, autocratic rule, criminality, corruption, population movement, widespread human deprivation including human rights abuses, and increased vulnerability to external shocks and natural disasters. These problems may spill over borders, taking on a regional or global dimension. The consequences of state fragility and violent armed conflict can threaten Canadian security, stability and prosperity, at home and abroad. Confronting the unique challenges associated with fragile and conflict-affected states is in line with global and national security concerns, including terrorism and organized crime, as well foreign policy priorities related to promoting free and open societies; strengthening democracies and encouraging economic opportunity; and security for Canadians. Finally, addressing state fragility is in line with promoting core Canadian values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Whole-of-government coordination

The Prime Minister and Cabinet generally take the decision whether Canada should engage in major international stabilization efforts. Priority peace and security threats are ones of strategic interest to Canada and our allies, or where Canadians are at risk. From experience, we know that the complex security environment found in fragile and conflict-affected situations requires a holistic approach to international missions. Where required, military and civilian

resources must be brought together in a focused and coherent fashion. Canada has adopted a whole-of-government, comprehensive approach to its international stabilization efforts that respects the mandates of federal departments and agencies. DFAIT's Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) is responsible for the coordination of Canada's stabilization efforts. START provides the Government of Canada with an effective mechanism to respond in a timely manner to priority peace and security threats, including those related to natural disasters. This standing structure analyzes, plans and coordinates whole-of-government policy and operational responses.

Whole-of-Government Expertise

This section highlights the range of whole-of-government expertise used in Canada's stabilization efforts. It describes how each department and agency plays specific roles and draws on unique but complementary instruments and capabilities.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT):

Beyond coordination, DFAIT, through START, also supports stabilization efforts through programming activities with the Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF). START deploys its own civilian experts to the field to support the direct provision of stabilization and reconstruction assistance. START also coordinates the deployments of other departments' civilian experts, including Canadian police to international peace operations through the Canadian Police Arrangement (CPA).

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA):

CIDA's programme activity of "fragile countries and crisis-affected communities" seeks to address developmental issues in selected countries by improving the effectiveness of public institutions and society, fostering stability and security, as well as supporting the delivery of key services. This program activity also involves humanitarian assistance in response to man-made crises or natural disasters to ensure

the delivery of and access to essential emergency services to crisis-affected populations. In both cases, various partnerships offer flexibility and expertise to provide the most effective response.

Department of National Defence (DND):

Stabilization is one aspect of international peace, security, and stability in the full spectrum of operations that may be undertaken by the Canadian Forces (CF). DND and the CF participate in stabilization efforts by contributing to the provision of a safe and secure environment. Roles could include capacity-building of host nation forces, support to security system reform, and peace-support, counter-insurgency, or major combat operations.

Department of Justice (DOJ):

DOJ's international stabilization activities, which are funded by CIDA and DFAIT, are focused on justice sector reform by improving the laws themselves and strengthening law-related institutions.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP):

Canadian police are deployed to international peace operations as well as on a bilateral basis as part of Canada's stabilization and police assistance efforts. They provide police expertise, training and advice to police services in those states that require assistance, including those which have recently experienced or are threatened by conflict, so that local police forces may carry out their policing responsibilities in accordance with democratic principles and international human rights conventions. Canadian police who serve abroad come from municipal, provincial and regional police forces as well as the RCMP, and represent a variety of backgrounds.

Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA):

CBSA experts' deployments, funded by DFAIT, support Canada's stabilization efforts by strengthening border management through training and mentoring host nation border officials.

Correctional Services Canada (CSC):

With funding from DFAIT, CSC supports Canadian stabilization efforts by helping host nations' transition detention facilities to conform to international human rights standards. CSC experts provide advice on infrastructure and policy development, as well as training and mentoring on correctional operations.

Public Safety (PS):

PS develops policies that support the capacity of the department and portfolio agencies to ensure a safe and resilient Canada through international engagement. It also provides strategic advice to the Government of Canada regarding the development of security system capacity building programming abroad that mitigates threats to Canada. Finally, PS monitors the deployment of domestic public safety portfolio resources with regards to whole of government benchmarking initiatives.

Lessons Learned

Below are the main lessons that the Government of Canada has drawn from its international stabilization efforts.

Whole-of-government and whole-of-system coordination:

Canadian efforts to stabilize fragile and conflict-affected situations have evolved significantly over the years. The work at headquarters and in the field has changed because of Canada's experience acquired directly in fragile states (such as in Haiti, Sudan, Afghanistan and Libya) and because of the creation of new coordination structures, policy frameworks and programming tools. The establishment of START within DFAIT was in direct response to the recognition that *ad hoc* and uncoordinated policy, program and operational responses to complex international crises are insufficient and unsustainable. Whole-of-government coordination is needed through all phases of Canada's international responses (analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and review). Similarly, a whole-of-system coordination amongst donors and recipient countries is also essential for the success of any international stabilization effort.

Country specific engagement:

Each engagement requires an approach tailored to specific regional, national and local contexts; the needs and the actors vary, as do the tools that are best suited to the context. Country-specific engagements require a good analysis of the crisis, based on solid awareness of the situation on the ground. Such analysis will help in selecting and applying appropriate capabilities, clarifying roles and responsibilities. It will also help support the high level of engagement needed with local actors and governments, to ensure that Canada's activities are aligned with the host country's priorities. Sound situational analysis is particularly important with respect to capacity-building for state security institutions, which is among the more common forms of donor activity.

Civilian deployments:

An integrated approach to engagement in stabilization efforts requires early, substantive and sustained engagement by civilian experts, including police, in addition to the essential contribution that soldiers can make. Such civilian expertise is focussed on assisting the host country to build its capacity – not replace it – for security, governance, economic development and the establishment of the rule of law. Civilian experts assist by mentoring, training and helping to transfer technology.

Institutional structure to deliver:

Integrated whole-of-government responses to crises require appropriate legal mandates and financial authorities, flexible human resource modalities, and integrated planning processes. They also require clear decision-making on appropriate levels of Canadian involvement, including associated expert deployments. Moreover, Canadian experts deployed need to be provided with the appropriate levels of decision-making powers and resources to take effective action in the field, within the context of whole-of-government objectives and strategies. The design and delivery of effective interventions requires appropriately aligned institutional thresholds for risk.