Annual Report 2002

Conflict Research Unit

Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’
Conflict Research Unit
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Introduction

The Conflict Research Unit (CRU) is a special section of the Clingendael Institute’s Research Department. It came into being as a special unit in 1998, although several of its activities started earlier. The CRU focuses on the study of intrastate conflict and on ways of preventing and dealing with these conflicts. The work of the CRU has a special though not exclusive emphasis on the developing world and countries in transition, and aims at translating theoretical insights into practical policy recommendations, as well as developing tools for decision-makers in national and multilateral governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The CRU consists of a head, a deputy head and five researchers. Their educational background includes political science, economics, history, human geography and development sociology, as well as more applied perspectives such as development and disaster studies. The CRU may also work with associated researchers and international researchers on an ad-hoc basis.

In accordance with the status of the Clingendael Institute, the CRU is independent in that its views and interpretations do not represent those of any public or private body, or institutions that provide grants or subsidies.

This report briefly summarizes CRU’s major objectives, its conceptual and methodological approaches, as well as its research activities on intrastate conflict, conflict prevention and peace-building. It then proceeds to detail CRU’s activities in 2002.

Approach

Conflict Paradigm

Each conflict has its own particular origins and is embedded in a unique socio-economic, political, military and cultural setting. The CRU takes the multi-causal nature of current conflict and the way in which different factors compound one another as its starting point. Although conflicts can have different manifestations, the CRU approaches conflict with a particular focus on group identity. This requires extensive knowledge of societies at risk, ruling elites, politics, history, culture, demographics and the economy. A crucial element in this regard is the political relations of social groups to each other and to the state. Instead of thinking in stereotypical and fixed delineations, analysis should acknowledge that group identity in disputes is of a highly complex and flexible nature and gets continuously constructed and reconstructed in the process.

A second point of emphasis in the CRU approach to analysing conflict is the focus on state-society relations. Violent conflict is mainly observed in plural societies ruled by regimes that are unable or unwilling to deliver goods and services to their citizens. Moreover, they fail to protect them, while others actively repress opposing groups. State failure and state disintegration are therefore closely linked to violent intrastate conflict.

The CRU considers conflict to be a process of violent struggle over power that exceeds the institutional capacity of the state or actors within the state to address claims from different groups in society. Although referring to ‘intrastate’ conflict, CRU’s research takes account of the regional and international context of these conflicts. This includes ‘spillover’ effects to neighbouring countries as a result of regional destabilization or refugees, as well as overt or
covert interventions by external actors. Here one can distinguish between governmental actors and a wide range of non-governmental actors. When analysing conflict, simplistic dichotomies between peace and conflict must be avoided. This also applies to the distinction between the phases of pre-conflict, open conflict and post-conflict. Intrastate conflicts are often characterized as protracted, with the existence of ‘pockets of peace’ alongside ‘pockets of war’.

**Applied Policy Focus**

The research activities of the CRU can best be characterized as applied and policy-focused. CRU research activities intend to be policy relevant. By critically analysing policy interventions and failures, the research first aims to provide lessons learned. Secondly, the research intends to provide policy-makers with concrete suggestions for improvement of conflict prevention and conflict management policies and to design framework, tools and instruments for policy practice. Thus, the CRU contributes to identifying general and specific conditions for successful implementation of conflict policies and to the provision of guidelines for appropriate policy options and instruments for conflict management.

**Grounded and Comparative Perspective**

Using mainly qualitative research methodologies and comparative perspectives, CRU research aims to draw general conclusions without, however, losing the context-specific diversity of findings. CRU research is also often empirically based. For this aim, the CRU closely cooperates with local research institutes. Through its research and local policy colloquia, the CRU also aims to mobilize local knowledge regarding violent conflict in the regions concerned. The CRU does not engage in direct action, mediation or lobbying activities. The CRU aims at high quality in its research products and control thereof through regular peer reviewing in the design, implementation and evaluation phases.

**Expertise, Typical Products and Networks**

**Expertise**

The CRU’s work over the last years has led to a build-up of experience in the following fields:

- Explaining conflict and its characteristics

Here, the CRU builds on the experience gathered in the project on ‘Causes of Conflict in the Third World’, which investigated the causes and nature of violent conflict in a selected number of countries. In the ‘Coping with Internal Conflict Project’ that was operative during 2002, the CRU focused on economies of violence, i.e. the role of economic incentives in fuelling violent conflict; governance systems promoting inclusion as well as exclusion of certain groups in society; weak institutional arrangements regarding overseeing the security sector; and entitlements systems that explain the political distribution of (economic) resources.
Assessing interventions, policies and capacities of donors and organizations
The CRU has assessed conflict-related interventions by (mainly) governmental organizations in a selected number of countries in South Asia, Africa and Central America in the ‘Conflict Policy Research Project’. The CRU has also analysed regional organizations and their organizational capacities for early warning, conflict prevention and conflict management. Special reference can be made to the OSCE and ECOWAS (research project ‘Conflict Prevention in West Africa’). The CRU also made a broad study on the role of women in conflict and associated institutional approaches.

Discussing conceptual approaches to conflict prevention
The CRU has worked and written extensively on the concepts of ‘early warning’, ‘early response’, ‘structural conflict prevention’ and ‘peace-building’. In doing so, the CRU has also tried to approach these issues from the perspectives of external (donor) organizations and the national governments of conflict-affected countries.

Developing practical policy tools
Based on institutional assessments and reviews of relevant concepts, the CRU has worked on the design of analytical frameworks that guide policy-makers in their decision-making concerning conflict situations. In this regard, a ‘Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework’ was developed, as well as a tool to enhance democratic governance in the security sector and a tool for managing group grievances / tracking increasingly violent group mobilization and state-society interactions.

Typical CRU Activities and Products

Typical CRU activities and products include:

- Up-to-date academic/conceptual reports on conflict issues;
- Analytical frameworks and methodologies for policy planning, execution and evaluation;
- Tools and policy guidelines for conflict prevention and conflict management;
- Country case studies and policy assessments;
- Conflict-policy briefing papers;
- Organization, facilitation and chairing of policy seminars, workshops and meetings;
- Informal briefings concerning conflict issues;
- The provision of briefing notes and background material;
- The provision of training courses, seminars and modules (in cooperation with the Clingendael Institute’s Training Department);
- Participation in academic seminars and meetings.

Networks

The CRU is an active member of various research networks on conflict-related issues. In addition, the CRU has its own network of research institutes in various regions of the world, including Central and South Asia, Africa and Central America. In addition, the CRU is well informed on, and has good contacts with, a variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations around the world.

In current research projects, CRU actively cooperates with:
Activities in 2002

The research projects and other activities undertaken during 2002 are indicated below, including their duration and, if relevant, their total budget in euro.

Research Projects

- Coping with Internal Conflict (2000-2003; euro 1,758,336): The research project focused on the changing nature of large-scale violent conflict in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It specifically analyses three components in-depth, including the Political Economy of Internal Conflict; Security Sector Reform; and Managing Group Grievances:
  1. Political Economy of Internal Conflict: This component aims to analyse the local dimension of political economies of conflict, the interface between the national and the international dimension, and the role of outside actors. Case-studies were carried out in Angola, Colombia, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka.
  2. Security Sector Reform: This component developed an institutional assessment tool for policymakers, which enables them to make analyses of the security sector and to develop strategies to enhance democratic governance of the security sector. The tool was applied in Guinea Bissau, Indonesia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka.
  3. Managing Group Grievances: This research project focused on the process of, and motives for group mobilization and aimed at designing an analytical tool for tracking
increasingly polarising and escalating interactions between state and society. Ultimately, it should inform and assist policy makers in the development of conflict-sensitive development co-operation policies. This tool has been applied to four country cases: Ghana, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka.

- Democratic Transition in Post-Conflict Societies. Building Local Institutions (2002-2004; euro 968,014): This comparative research project assesses the role and impact of international assistance on the democratization process in eight post-conflict countries, i.e. Cambodia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Guatemala and El Salvador. Focusing specifically on elections, human rights and media, local country teams will analyse the impact of donor support to key institutions in the process of democratization.


- Monitoring the Rule of Law (2002; euro 10,659): This start-up study provided information on the main components of the rule of law as well as methods and practices of monitoring the progress made towards the rule of law in transition countries applied by the Council of Europe, the EU and the OSCE. The project included the organization of an Expert Meeting on the Rule of Law at the Clingendael Institute with representatives of the three organizations under study.

- Sharing Studies and Conflict-related Initiatives on Sri Lanka (2001-2002; euro 81,680): The study gave an overview and analysis of major studies and donor-led initiatives regarding the Sri Lankan conflict.

- Social Harmony Component in Higher Education Programme (2002-2003; euro 264,840): This joint study by the Centre for Conflict Studies at Utrecht University and the Conflict Research Unit aims at strengthening the capacities of Sri Lankan universities for peace and conflict related studies.

- Workshop Series to test the Applicability of the Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework (2002-2003; euro 230,000): At the request of the Netherlands Parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with Clingendael and Fund for Peace embarked on a workshop series to test the applicability of a conflict and policy assessment methodology in the policy practice of the Ministry and its Embassies. In 2002, two workshops have been conducted on Mozambique and Rwanda. A third will be executed in 2003.

- Women’s Roles in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (2001-2002: euro 106,473): This study with the Centre for Conflict Studies at Utrecht University, Disaster Studies Wageningen, International Alert London and independent experts identified the major roles of women before, during and after armed conflict, and developed concrete policy options for (inter)national organizations to strengthen the roles and positions of women in conflict situations. The project included the organization of an International Round Table Conference on Women’s Roles in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Reconstruction at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

Consultancies

- Advice Post-Conflict Rehabilitation (January – February 2002; euro 6,788): Advisory support and review of lessons learned in the framework of a white paper on post-conflict
rehabilitation by the Peacebuilding and Good Governance Division of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- OSCE Academy Kyrgyzstan (December 2002): A fact-finding mission commissioned by the OSCE Task Force of Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs on possibilities for joint lecture series and research projects between the OSCE Academy and the Clingendael Institute.

Seminars and Workshops

- 2 December 2002: Brainstorm seminar on ‘International Democracy Assistance to Cambodia’ in collaboration with the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP), Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- 3 December 2002: Expert meeting on ‘Challenging OSCE Experience in East Asia’ organized by the Clingendael Institute and the Embassy of Japan to the Netherlands.

Courses and Training

- March-May 2002: Course ‘The Politics of Peace’, Webster University, Leiden

Lectures and Presentations

By Georg Frerks:


26 February 2002: Lecture ‘Conflict en Ontwikkeling’ (Conflict and development), Working Group Dutch Development Co-operation, Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen (CIDIN), Nijmegen.


19 April 2002: Chair and key-note speaker at Seminar ‘Sharing Studies on Development and Conflict in Sri Lanka’, organized by the Royal Netherlands Embassy at Colombo and the Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute, Hilton Colombo, Sri Lanka.


4 June 2002: Chair of Round Table conference ‘The Roles of Women in Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Post Conflict Reconstruction’ organized by the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Conflict Research Unit of the Clingendael Institute, the Peace Palace, The Hague.


1 October 2002: Chair on ‘From Diamonds to Diaspora’, Concluding Seminar on ‘Political Economy of Internal Conflict Project, Clingendael Institute, The Hague.


3 December 2002: Chair of Expert meeting on ‘Challenging OSCE Experience in East Asia’ organized by the Clingendael Institute and the Embassy of Japan to the Netherlands.

By Luc van de Goor:
- 6-8 May 2002: Introduction and session on good practices in security sector reform. The Early Warning-Early Response Workshop was hosted by the Peacebuilding Unit of the Canadian International Development Agency, facilitated by the Forum for Early Warning and Early Response in Ottawa, Canada.
- 18 November 2002: ‘Background and Development of Institutional Assessment Tool for the Security Sector in Indonesia’. Presentation at the Workshop on ‘Governance and


By Martina Huber:
- 11 April 2002: Conflict Trends and Conflict Prevention. Lecture together with Jeroen de Zeeuw at Instituut Defensie Leergangen (IDL), Ypenburg.
- 28 November 2002: Organizer and key speaker of Expert meeting on ‘Monitoring the Rule of Law’.

By Emeric Rogier:
- 12 April 2002: Lecture on ‘Conflict Prevention and Early Warning’, Webster University, Leiden. With Luc van de Goor.

By Suzanne Verstegen:

By Jeroen de Zeeuw:
- 11 April 2002: Conflict Trends and Conflict Prevention. Lecture together with Martina Huber at Instituut Defensie Leergangen (IDL), Ypenburg.

**Fieldwork and Travel**

- **17-24 February 2002**: Identification and formulation mission to Sri Lanka (Georg Frerks and Jeroen de Zeeuw).
- **18 April-1 May 2002**: Fieldwork in Sierra Leone in the framework of the component ‘Political Economy of Internal Conflict’ (Pyt Douma).
- **18-21 April 2002**: Trip to Sri Lanka to participate at the Seminar ‘Sharing Studies on Development and Conflict in Sri Lanka’, organised by the Royal Netherlands Embassy at Colombo and the Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute, at the Hilton Colombo, Sri Lanka (Georg Frerks and Jeroen de Zeeuw).
- **20-25 May 2002**: Series of interviews with OSCE officials in Vienna in relation to the ‘Effectiveness of OSCE missions’ project (Martina Huber).
- **2-11 July 2002**: Mission to Ghana, within the framework of the component ‘Managing Group Grievances & Internal Conflict’ (Emeric Rogier and Suzanne Verstegen).
- **16-27 July 2002**: Identification mission to Cambodia for research project ‘Democratic Transition in Post-Conflict Societies. Building Local Institutions’ (Luc van de Goor and Jeroen de Zeeuw).
- **10 August-2 September 2002**: Mission to Nicaragua, within the framework of the component ‘Managing Group Grievances & Internal Conflict’ (Suzanne Verstegen).
- **24 October-2 November 2002**: Trip to Rwanda to organize the workshop ‘Conflict Policy and Assessment Framework’ (Pyt Douma, Georg Frerks, Luc van de Goor and Suzanne Verstegen).
- **24 October-12 December**: Fieldwork and institutional support mission to Cambodia for research project ‘Democratic Transition in Post-Conflict Societies’ (Jeroen de Zeeuw).
- **2-15 November 2002**: Mission in Mozambique, within the framework of the component ‘Managing Group Grievances & Internal Conflict’ (Emeric Rogier and Suzanne Verstegen).
- **13-23 November 2002**: Trip to Indonesia to organize the seminar ‘Governance and Security Sector Reform in Indonesia: The Applicability of an Institutional Assessment Tool’ (Tsjeard Bouta).
- **26 November-6 December 2002**: Mission to Cambodia and brainstorm seminar on ‘International Democracy Assistance to Cambodia’ in collaboration with the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP), Phnom Penh, Cambodia (Luc van de Goor).
- **16-20 December 2002**: Mission to Kyrgyzstan in relation to a potential Dutch contribution to the OSCE Academy set up at Bishkek University (Tsjeard Bouta and Martina Huber).
Media


Acquisition/Proposals

The CRU has submitted a number of project proposals to different organizations during the past year. The following have been approved and/or implemented (see section research projects):

- Futures of the DRC (to be held in Spring 2003; euro 22.854): Workshop with (inter)national experts to discuss various future scenario’s for the DRC.

Pending the decision of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM):

- Proposal for a Joint Workshop on Natural Resources Conflict (to be held in summer 2003; euro 36.957): RIVM and the Conflict Research Unit hope to jointly organize an international workshop at the Clingendael institute, which would primarily focus on resources that have a major significance in rural livelihoods and productivity in the developing world. The nexus water-land-forestry and conflict has been identified as the major subject of the workshop.

Pending the decision of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

- Proposal Funding Conflict Research Program (2003-2006; euro 1.998.000): Proposal for policy-relevant and applied research covering the role of the state, aspects of conflict analyses, institutional conflict responses, reviewing ongoing practice and the design and application of conflict prevention and peace building instruments.

Reports and Publications in 2002

It is CRU policy to make all of its publications publicly available and free of charge. For this purpose, publications are downloadable from the CRU website (www.clingendael.nl/cru). The decision on clearance of reports, however, lies with the contractor.
Clingendael Papers and Reports


Journals and Chapters in Books/Reports


**Proceedings**


**Other Project Documents**


**Working Papers**


**Staff**

In 2002 the CRU comprised the following staff and associated researchers:

*Tsjeard Bouta MSc*
Development sociologist who works on the issues political-military relations, security sector reform, local coping mechanisms in conflict situations, and women and armed conflict. He conducted fieldwork in Mongolia and Central America.
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*Prof. Georg Frerks*
Professor Frerks is seconded from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Clingendael Institute as Head of the Conflict Research Unit. He also works as Professor of Disaster Studies at Wageningen University and as Professor of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management at Utrecht University. He specializes in development-related conflict and emergencies in developing countries.
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*Luc van de Goor MA*
Historian specializing in international relations and security studies, with a special research interest in conflict prevention and early warning, military expenditures, reform of the security sector and institutional aspects of good governance.
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*Martina Huber MA*
Economist/political scientist by background. Mrs Huber’s main focus is conflict prevention and the role herein of international organizations, such as the EU and the OSCE.
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Emeric Rogier Dr
Researcher in international relations with a special interest and expertise in conflict analysis, conflict prevention and conflict management. He conducted extensive research into multilateral diplomacy and the Yugoslav conflicts.
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Suzanne Verstegen MA
Development sociologist with postgraduate diploma in international (economic) relations. Mrs Verstegen worked and published on the topics of early warning, conflict prevention policy and poverty-related conflict.
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Jeroen de Zeeuw MSc
Development sociologist by education. Mr de Zeeuw has a special research interest in post-conflict rehabilitation and democratization issues and is currently the coordinator of the research project ‘Democratic Transition in Post-Conflict Societies’.
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Pyt Douma MA
Human geographer. Mr Douma studies economies of violence and causes of conflict in developing countries with special focus on development issues. He presently works as a part-time consultant for the CRU.
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