

Annual Operational Report 2021

Shaping the Debate on more
Effective Peace Operations



**Challenges
Forum**

International Forum for the
Challenges of Peace Operations

Reflections from the Director



2021 was a turbulent year from a peace and security perspective around the world, with military coups in Mali, Sudan, Chad, Guinea and Myanmar as well as the sweeping takeover by the Taliban in Afghanistan. The climate security challenges were also prominent, with the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano, in Goma, DR Congo, as well as severe flooding in as diverse places as South Sudan and Germany. Many of the countries facing the most significant challenges are also hosting international peace operations. In some instances, this led to drastic evacuate of staff, reorganization of work and urgent re-evaluation of mandates by the United Nations (UN).

The Coronavirus pandemic also continued to have detrimental effects around the globe, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable populations. Enormous efforts were undertaken by multilateral peace operations to support host nations in combatting the effects of the virus, for example in the local prison communities, while UN peace operations themselves suffered from lack of personnel and banned troop rotations.

Due to the strength of its partnership, with members from 24 countries and all continents, the Challenges Forum and its International Secretariat (CFIS) managed to adapt its activities to these new realities. Several virtual activities, with high-level partner engagement, such as the Challenges Annual Forum 2021 (CAF21), the formal Partners' Meeting, along with webinars and roundtable discussions were held during the year. The platform

resolute continued to address the challenges that peace operations are facing, with the aim of increasing their effectiveness.

The aim of this report is to summarize CFIS key activities and results for 2021, and the secretariat's support to the Challenges Forum Partnership in delivering on outputs and strategic objectives. The overarching aim and desired impact of the Forum, as defined in our vision, is "sustainable peace strengthened through effective peace operations and multilateral peace operation partnerships". To strive to achieve this impact is what guides the strategic orientation of both the Challenges Forum and CFIS.

I believe now, more than ever, that the global partnership of the Challenges Forum needs to use its convening mandate to generate innovative ideas and promote ways and means for more effective peace operations. Miguel Berger, former State Secretary of the German Federal Foreign Office, coined this at the 2021 annual forum as "*The Challenges Forum provides a very important platform for active and practically focused multilateralism*".

For me personally, as the incoming Director in the middle of 2021, this year was much about learning from all our partner organisations, the Partnership Organizations' Advisory Committee (POAC), as well as my fantastic colleagues. It has been a time when we have had to think creatively to try to transform global challenges into opportunities for more effective peace operations. In Yemen, which was where I held my latest UN posting, there is a glimmer of hope for an end to the fighting and a more stable situation for the population. None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something. I am looking forward to continuing the close and committed cooperation with all partners, the POAC and key stakeholders. When partners and people come together and do something, it means a lot – in some instances almost everything – to our most important target audiences and beneficiaries. Let's continue to strive together for a safer and more peaceful world.

Pernilla Rydén
Director
Challenges Forum International Secretariat

Highlights: Key Results in 2021

The Challenges Forum continued to deliver results despite the persisting challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis which limited the possibilities of meetings and activities in-person. Below are the key highlights from last year:

- The Annual Forum, hosted by the *German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF)*, gathered over a hundred participants to exchange views and to discuss and develop recommendations on how peace operations could be more effective in addressing climate and environmental security risks and opportunities. It generated useful insights and concrete takeaways that will be strategically disseminated in 2022.
- During the year, CFIS stepped up its communication efforts and strived to increase its presence on social media by developing a social media strategy, applying more internal resources to the task. CFIS also enhanced efforts and delivered on our partnership's overarching communication strategy. A contract with a communication agency to strengthen its external communication efforts and design was also procured.
- A lot of effort has been put into developing the digital mission leadership tool in line with Partner's calls to make *Considerations* a widely available "living" resource for mission leaders and peacekeeping practitioners. The digital tool will be finished and made available for use in 2022.
- In 2021, the Challenges Forum continued to grow and welcomed a new partner, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay.
- Between July and December 2021, *Nordic Consulting Group (NCG) Sweden* conducted a mid-term review of the Challenges Forum Strategy for 2019-2023. The outcome showed many strengths of the Challenges Forum and identified six key recommendations on how Challenges Forum can become even more effective in reaching the set outcomes.
- During the year, CFIS continued to invest in developing its digital dialogue platforms which enabled the Challenges Forum partners to carry out several virtual events gathering a wide and broad circle of the partnership and key stakeholders.

Results-based Framework

This report summarises the results of the work carried out by the Challenges Forum International Secretariat (CFIS) in supporting the Challenges Forum Partners in 2021. The work consisted of delivering outputs and achieving strategic outcomes based on the Challenged Forum Strategy for 2019–2023¹. CFIS uses a results-based management (RBM) framework, linking activities and deliverables to our overarching goals and to evaluate the implementation.

At the beginning of each section, the overarching (i) strategic outcome, (ii) immediate outcome, and (iii) outputs for 2021 are presented followed by a more detailed account of the key results from the year.

These are the definitions used by CFIS related to the RBM framework:



Strategic Outcomes

Long-term expected results that indicate increased organisational capacity and/or changes to organisational behaviour.



Immediate Outcomes

Define our direct influence and are dependent on the outputs and activities executed by Partners and CFIS.



Outputs

Concrete deliverables by the CFIS and Partners throughout the year.



Key Activities

Actions by the CFIS to support Partners to achieve outputs and, in turn, the expected outcomes and strategic objectives.

1. [The Challenges Forum Strategy 2019 – 2023](#)

Results in 2021

Strategic Objective 1: Effective Reform of Peace Operations



Strategic Outcome 1

Effective implementation of the development and reform of UN peace operations and related regional partnerships.



Immediate Outcome 1

The UN, Member States and related regional partners use the CF platform and integrate its recommendation into development and reforms of peace operations.



Outputs

Output 1.1 - CFIS has supported Partners in organising the Challenges Annual Forum 2021;

Output 1.2 - C CFIS has organised dialogue platforms in support of the development and reform of peace operations and regional partners, incl. the African Union;

Output 1.3 - CFIS has supported analysis on the reform of peace operations.

Overview of Outputs and Outcome Result

Between 1 and 3 December 2021, the Challenges Annual Forum (CAF21) gathered partners and key stakeholders to exchange views and discuss and develop recommendations on how peace operations could be made more effective in addressing climate and environmental security risks and opportunities. The CAF21, co-hosted by the *German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF)*, engaged more than a hundred participants from across the globe.

As preparatory material for the CAF21 and with the great help of think tanks and research institutions such as *adelphi*, the *Stimson Center*, the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)* and practitioners from UN missions, the Challenges Forum also supported the development and production of a light, purpose driven and innovative publication on climate security and peace operations.



The CAF21 provided a unique and timely chance for policymakers, scholars, practitioners, and civil society representatives to engage in high-level conversations as well as dialogue-driven working groups. Furthermore, it helped raise awareness and build stronger relationships between a diverse group of actors. The three-day event generated useful insights and concrete takeaways on how peace operations can more effectively address climate and environmental security risks and opportunities, as well as positioning the Challenges Forum within the field of climate security. Apart from organizing CAF21, CFIS on behalf of the Challenges Forum also disseminated the recommendations from the Challenges Annual Forum 2020 (CAF20). This was disseminated through a virtual launch event which was held in May together with the *Permanent Missions of the Republic of Indonesia and Norway, to the United Nations (UN)*. The event was broadcasted live with 190 participants watching, including a high percentage of permanent missions to the UN.

Further, a number of other dialogue platforms were organised in support of the development and reform of peace operations throughout the year:

- In May, the Challenges Forum organised a roundtable exploring ‘Systems Leadership in Peacebuilding’ at the *Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development 2021*, together with Challenges Forum partners; the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt*, and the *Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)*. The event gathered 40 (invitation-only) participants, mainly key actors in the UN and academia.

- In June, the Challenges Forum together with the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia* organized a webinar on Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) in the Asia-Pacific. The webinar marked the third anniversary of the A4P initiative and reflected that, countries in the Asia-Pacific region – through enhanced partnerships can support the agenda priorities such as collective coherence behind a political strategy, and mindsets & capabilities.
- In October, the Challenges Forum together with the *Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)* hosted a roundtable on UN peace operations doctrine and principles. The event brought together academics for an exploratory reflection on a doctrine for UN peace operations, setting the analytical stage for potential approaches and entry points into the principles, practices and norms that make up the doctrine.

Throughout the year the Challenges Forum actively engaged and pursued dialogue with the UN and regional partners. CFIS also regularly interacted with research networks and academia to ensure linkages between academia, policy makers and practitioners.



Virtual launch event of the recommendations from CAF20. Top row from left: Benoît Plyser, CFIS, Cedric de Coning, NUPI, Roy Soemirat, MFA Indonesia. Bottom row from left: Fonteh R: Akhum, ISS, David Haeri, UN DPO, Lisa Sharland, Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

Strategic Objective 2: More Effective Mission Leadership and Management



Strategic Outcome 2

The UN and regional partners have more effective mission leadership and strategic & operational management capacity.



Internal Outcome 2

The UN, Member States and related regional partners have further integrated CF leadership guidance into their planning execution, and evaluation of peace operations.



Outputs

Output 2.1 - CFIS has supported the development of the digital leadership & management toolkit;

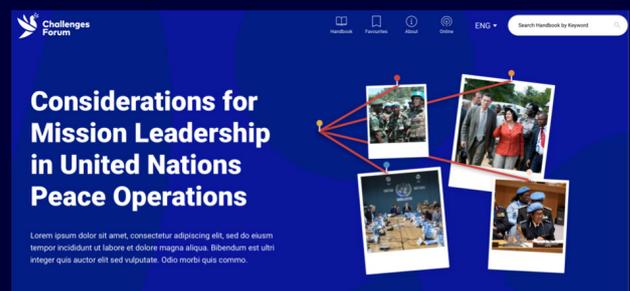
Output 2.2 - CFIS has supported CF outreach to the UN, regional organizations and other key stakeholders to integrate CF leadership guidance;

Output 2.3 - CFIS has supported CF Partners in utilizing CF leadership guidance;

Output 2.4 - CFIS has supported CF to organize dialogue platforms on leadership and management.

Overview of Outputs & Outcome result

Much of 2021 was focused on developing the mission leadership digital tool in line with Partner’s calls to make *Considerations* a widely available “living” resource for mission leaders and peacekeeping practitioners. The digital tool which builds on *Considerations* will feature more multimedia elements, including insights from former mission leaders. Challenges Forum Partner, the *Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)* committed additional funds to the digital project, allowing for a more elaborated tool to be developed. In addition, CFIS partnered with a web development agency where planning and design phases were carried out in collaboration with hybrid pedagogy experts, such as the project’s *Senior Advisory Group* and the *UN Secretariat*.





CFIS undertook a survey and desktop mapping study of Partners' work on mission leadership in the first half of 2021 to identify potential synergies and entry points for the Mission Leadership Toolkit. In 2022, CFIS is planning a launch and additional outreach regarding the digital tool. In line with the principle of shared ownership, partners have expressed a willingness to take responsibility for the translation of the *Considerations study* and the E-tool. Thus far, it has been translated into Chinese and French.

During the reporting year, CFIS initiated and maintained various outreach efforts with key stakeholders in the peace operations community to explore opportunities in which the mission leadership toolkit could support national, regional, and international training programmes. A scoping study was commissioned to assess the applicability of using the *Considerations study* in for example, the *Regional Senior Mission Leaders Course*, which CFIS will analyse further. Together with several of the Challenges Forum Partners, CFIS held discussions with the UN Secretariat and the organizers of the Viking22 civil-military exercise in supporting the UN during the exercise through the use of *Considerations*.

CFIS contributed to both the *International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC)* and *European Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (EAPTC)* annual meetings and held panel discussions on leadership considerations in UN peace operations. A keynote address was further delivered at a United Service Institution of India event regarding cultural diversity in the composition of UN leadership in peace operations. The academic and policy discourse showed that in most cases, diversity among the UN troops - as well as within the mission leaderships - increases the effectiveness of peace operations.



Presentation of Considerations at IAPTC. Top row from left: Jonas Alberoth CFIS, Brig. Gen. (retd) Gabriel Guerrero (Former MINUSTAH Deputy FC), Brigitta von Messling Head, Training Team, ZIF. Bottom row from left: Annika Hilding Norberg Head of Peace Operations and Peacebuilding at the GCSP, Lt. Gene. (retd) Carlos Alberto Dos Santos Cruz Former MINUSTAH & MONUSCO FC, Fanny Wellén CFIS

Strategic Objective 3: The Challenges Forum Partnership Engaging in Collaborative Action



Strategic Outcome 3

The CF Partnership is fostering an inclusive and creative approach to change management by engaging in collaborative action.



Internal Outcome 3

The CF Partnership has strengthened its capacity and brand as a global platform for enhancing international peace operations.



Outputs

Output 3.1 - CCFIS has supported CF Partnersto identify and engage in collaborative actions;

Output 3.2 - CFIS has supported Challenges Forum to develop its Partnership;

Output 3.3 - CFIS has finalized the Mid-term Strategy Evaluation.

Overview of Outputs and Outcome Result

The Challenges Forum Partnership maintained relations and upheld cooperation through digital channels during 2021, that was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of the year, a well-attended Partners Meeting was conducted. Discussions were held in both smaller groups and in plenary on Partners' priorities, demands and forecasts for the year. The outgoing CFIS Director, Björn Holmberg, was warmly thanked by the Partners for his achievements, visionary approach, and drive during his time at the helm of CFIS.



In June, Pernilla Rydén took up the position as Director of CFIS. She is bringing more than 20 years of experience from different international settings, including eight UN peace operations in Africa and in the Middle East, the *EU Civilian Crisis Management (CPCC)* in Brussels and the *Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)*. Her last posting for the UN was as the Chief of Staff in the UN Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement in Yemen (UNMHA). Since taking office, Ms. Rydén has worked on continuing the work of her predecessors as well as strengthened CFIS’s capacity to support the Challenges Forum to contribute to more effective peace operations. Among other things, she has participated in international efforts in outlining the most important issues for the partnership such as climate security, cohesion of UN mandate implementation and A4p issues.

The Partnership Organizations’ Advisory Committee (POAC) continued to play an important and appreciated role in advising and supporting CFIS, both as a group and as individual members. The 2020–2022 POAC is comprised of the *Institute for Security Studies (ISS, South Africa)*, the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia*, *Global Affairs Canada* and the *Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF, Germany)*.

During 2021, in collaboration with the *UN Department of Peace Operations*, Challenges Forum held an Expert Group meeting on emerging issues for Peace Operations, to gain a deeper understanding and to share ideas on how field missions address the growing spread and impact of misinformation and disinformation.

Between July and December 2021, the *NGG* conducted a mid-term review of the Challenges Forum Strategy for 2019–2023. Its focus was on the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of the Challenges Forum, as well as the effectiveness and sustainability of its international secretariat.

The outcome report showed that the Challenges Forum Partnership is one of few platforms where organisations from UN member states could engage in political dialogue on how to support the organisation’s development and improvements of its international peace operations.

The evaluation further showed that the Challenges Forum gives its Partners a unique opportunity to engage a wide range of actors with different backgrounds and perspectives on peace efforts. The *NGC* identified the following six recommendations on how the Challenges Forum could be more efficient:

- Explore opportunities to further engage with relevant regional organisations such as the African Union.
- Include field level practitioners with decision making power in discussions and recommendations of best practice to ensure these are implementable.
- Focus more attention on gender and environment and push the envelope beyond general rhetoric, to very practical practice points.
- Develop a mechanism to trace and assess the outcomes generated by the Challenges Forum activities. More specifically, this could entail developing a tool to trace deliverables and issuing a survey.
- Develop working groups composed of Challenges Forum members who can identify and develop recommendations for practice that are forward looking, relevant and implementable.
- Explore the opportunity of having secondments from partner organisations join the CFIS team for pre-determined periods of time, and whose costs are covered by the home agency.



Participants at the Challenges Forum Annual Partner Meeting

Strategic Objective 4: The Challenges Forum Partnership has Increased its Influence



Strategic Outcome 4

The CF has increased its influence on UN, regional organizations, and Member States regarding peace operations policy and practice.



Internal Outcome 4

The CF has strengthened its capacity and brand as a global platform for enhancing international peace operations.



Outputs

Output 4.1 - CFIS has engaged Partners in implementing the communication strategy;

Output 4.2 - CFIS has strengthened its communication internally (Partners/FBA) and externally (UN, Regional Organizations, Expert institutions);

Output 4.3 - CFIS has enhanced CF virtual platforms for dialogue and innovative ideas.

Overview of Outputs and Outcome Result

CFIS enhanced its communication efforts during 2021, in line with the partnership's communication strategy. During the year, CFIS further strengthened our presence on social media by sharing posts, highlighting important dates, and promoting Challenges Forum events. Between September and December there was a specific drive to highlight the Challenges Forum 25th anniversary, by sharing historical events and achievements. Looking at the overall reach through social media during 2021, the Challenges Forum has increased the number of followers on Twitter by 10 per cent.



Lessons Learned and Ways Forward

CFIS, being a minimal team of one Director and four permanent staff members with limited resources, acknowledges the importance of working efficiently and effectively. This involves being agile, flexible and learn to adapt along the way, as well as incorporating feedback from the partnership.

In 2021, given the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions, CFIS quickly readjusted to digital platforms, developing better tools for virtual meetings. Nonetheless, there is a collective wish within the Challenges Forum Partnership to resume physical meetings and direct interaction. Hence, the way forward will be a mix between digital channels of communication and in-person events. Looking ahead, the Challenges Forum will strive to introduce even more innovative participatory formats to complement in-person dialogues to develop relations, build trust and explore emerging issues and challenges with the aim of facilitating common ground and mutual understanding. In 2022, CFIS also intends to resume bilateral visits to our partner organizations to facilitate inclusiveness, better mutual understanding, increased contextual awareness and partnership building.

The mid-term review carried out in 2021, visualized the strengths of the Challenges Forum. In 2022 it is important to continue to uphold what works well, building on the recommendations made in the evaluation to be able to be more effective in shaping the debate for more effective peace operations. This is including, but not limited to, stronger cooperation with regional organisations, particularly the African Union. This will ensure that the Challenges Forum is able to continue delivering results and stay relevant to all the Partners and relevant stakeholders in the future.

“As climate change and other environmental crises gather pace, they are touching every aspect of life. The world of international peace and security is no exception.”



— Ilwad Elman, Elman Peace and Human Rights Center

Challenges
Annual Forum
2021



CFIS Financial Report 2021

CFIS was financed by FBA through funds from the Swedish Foreign Ministry in 2021. The table below specifies the budget and the budget outcome.

In addition to Swedish contributions, it is important to highlight that Challenges Forum Partners provided in-kind contributions and assumed costs during different events and projects. We specially want to highlight the contribution made by ZIF to this year's annual forum. Due to the continued pandemic, costs for events and

travels as well as for the annual forum were considerably lower than estimated. More funds were also added to the development of the Challenges Forums digital tool for mission leadership from the FBA.

In 2022, it is foreseen that the costs related to travel and in-person events will increase. The need to be able to further provide technical solutions for virtual and hybrid meetings will remain, which will have to be balanced in the budget for 2022.

Table 1: Challenges Forum International Secretariat Budget and Financial Results

1. Income 2021

	Budget SEK	Outcome SEK	Outcome EUR
Folke Bernadotte Academy	4 971 799	5 636 671	555 616
Swedish Foreign Ministry	3 108 000	2 419 706	238 515
Sum income and expenses per contributor 2020	8 079 799	8 056 377	794 131

2. Expenses 2021

	Budget SEK	Outcome SEK	Outcome EUR
2.1 CFIS Staff	4 971 799	5 636 671	555 616
2.2 CFIS coordination of Challenges Forum	225 000	139 876	13 788
2.3 Publications and experts	2 110 000	1 992 006	196 355
2.4 Virtual Annual Forum 2021	485 000	17 108	1 686
2.5 Roundtable(s)	200 000	0	0
2.6 Administrative overhead FBA	88 000	229 121	22 585
2.7 Virtual Challenges Annual Forum 2020	0	41 596	4 100
Sum income and expenses per contributor 2020	8 079 799	8 056 377	794 131

ABOUT CHALLENGES FORUM

Established in 1996, International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations (Challenges Forum), is a global partnership of about 50 peace operations organizations and departments in 24 countries. Our partner organizations come from major troop- and, police- contributing countries to peace operations, including the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. We continually strive to strengthen the international network of actors contributing to and supporting the development and reform of peaceoperations.

Challenges Forum is governed by the Partner Meeting consisting of all its partners. Daily operations are led by the Challenges Forum International Secretariat (CFIS).

The Challenges Forum provides an impartial and informal platform for dialogue on the enhancement of multilateral peace operations. A thought-provoking, innovative, inclusive and results-oriented network for sharing knowledge and experiences, we convene key actors in deliberation on different dimensions and approaches to peace operations at our events and workshops, and in our publications.

Through recommendations and guidance on effective policy reform of peace operations, we contribute to the strengthening of international capability and capacities so as to plan, conduct and evaluate peace operations. Central to our objective is to bridge the divide between policy and operational levels; and create a shared understanding among UN and regional organizations, Member States, T/PCCs and host countries.



Challenges Forum is a global partnership that uses its convening power to generate innovative ideas and promote results for more effective peace operations.



Challenges Forum International Secretariat is hosted by FBA – the Swedish Agency for Peace, Security and Development – on behalf of the Challenges Forum Partnership.

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Challenges Forum consists of Partners from:

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|---|
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| Armenia | Indonesia | Switzerland |
| Australia | Japan | Turkey |
| Canada | Jordan | United Kingdom |
| China | Nigeria | United States of America |
| Egypt | Norway | Uruguay |
| Ethiopia | Pakistan | World Federation of United Nations Associations |
| France | Russia | |
| Germany | South Africa | |

