UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COLLEGE

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ONLINE

16 JUN 2025 - 13 JUL 2025

Analysing and Engaging Armed Groups (June 2025)

Stakeholder engagement and partnershipsSustaining Peace



LANGUAGE	DURATION	ENROLL BY	PRICE	LOCATION	TARGET
English	4 weeks	12 Jun 2025	1,000 USD	ONLINE	Everyone

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An online course equipping practitioners with theoretical knowledge of current key trends and practical tools to conduct analysis of armed groups in order to understand the implications of engagement.

Introduction

In the last decade, preventing conflict and sustaining peace have become increasingly complex. National armies and armed opposition groups are no longer the sole perpetrators of armed violence. Violence is being perpetrated more and more by a range of hybrid actors, such as armed groups, criminal organizations, and illicit trafficking networks. Understanding these emerging trends presents analytical challenges.

Developed in collaboration with the Global Security Programme at Oxford University and the University of Regina in Canada, this online course explores the political context driving the genesis of armed violence and the forces shaping armed group inception, structures and resources. It explores the links between criminality and insurgency, and analyses the different implications for engagement. By focusing on multidisciplinary investigative approaches, this course will strengthen your analytical skills and provide practical tools that can support your analysis of armed groups.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Use insights and tools from academia, research and practice to analyse an armed group of your choice.
- Identify engagement opportunities and describe what an engagement process could entail for the selected armed group.
- Predict possible adverse consequences of an engagement process.
- Appraise the varying approaches, tools, and methods of peace & security, and humanitarian actors.

Course methodology

This course offers the opportunity to engage in a dynamic online learning experience which combines learner-centred online design principles, recorded video segments, carefully chosen academic readings with stimulating webinar presentations from practitioners with interactive discussion fora.

Course contents

In this course, you will look at contemporary armed violence through a multidisciplinary lens and discuss different ways to analyse, interact and understand implications for engagement with armed groups.

- Module 1 provides an overview of key trends which influence armed groups analysis.
- Module 2 examines different stages of inception of armed groups formation as well as outlines different types of armed group structures.
- Module 3 provides a theoretical and practical overview of the links between criminality and insurgency which will be highlighted through a case study.
- Module 4 focuses on implications for the UN in terms of engagement with armed groups for political processes and for humanitarian access.
- Module 5 provides a toolbox with selected practical analytical tools for armed groups analysis.
- Module 6 broadens the scope to understand and trace the directions and pace of change in conflict by applying the Changing Character of Conflict tool introduced in module 5 and engaging with the interactive visualization of the Changing Character of Conflict Platform.
- Module 7 provides insights on social media for armed groups analysis.

A final assignment will allow you to apply the tools to an armed group of your choice.

Accompanying the self-paced modules, 4 live webinars will always occur each week on a Tuesday.

Target audience

UN staff as well as practitioners and representatives from governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and academia. It is geared to those who are either deployed in duty stations that are affected by the presence of armed groups or whose job description involves the analysis, interaction, and possible engagement with armed groups.

Cost of participation

The course fee is $1,000