

CIOR CIMEX 2017 - Forging greater CIMIC Resilience in Prague



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The international *Confédération Interalliée des Officiers de Réserve* (CIOR), of which South Africa is a part, includes a Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Committee. This committee successfully executed its seventh annual CIMEX (CIMIC Exercise) as a preamble to its committee work during the 2017 Summer Congress held in the Czech Republic. The CIMEX was held at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague over the weekend of July 27th to 30th, 2017, with the theme *"The Migrant Crisis and the Changing Role of CIMIC Resilience and Internal Defence"*

CIMEX is guided by key overriding objectives: "to encourage liaison, networking and information sharing, and promote best practice within the international CIOR CIMIC community . . . in order to better understand our international partners, and work more effectively together."



Figure 1 CIOR CIMIC Committee Chairperson, United States Air Force Colonel Vanessa Dornhoefer, introduces key committee concepts.

CIMEX 2017 built upon the foundation laid in its 2016 iteration held in Madrid, Spain, expanding on the 'Refugee Crisis' topic. It saw some 27 attendees as well as presenters and observers drawn from Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US).

Lectures during CIMEX came in many forms, namely on *'Mass Migration – What it is & Challenges'* by US Colonel Mona Jibril; *'The World Today'*, *'What is CIMIC – A Dialogue'* and *'The Military and Resilience'*, by UK Lieutenant Colonel Graeme Olley; *'Internal Defence and Challenges in Countering Violent Extremism'* by Dr Marlen de la Chaux from Germany; *'Migration Crisis – Legal Implications for the Military'* by Captain Dr Gergely Toth from Hungary; *'Building a Refugee Reception Center – A German Perspective'* by Lt Col Dr Ralf Scheffel from Germany, and *'Maritime Migration: Coast Guard Operations & The European Crisis'* by US Coast Guard Commander Eric Driggs.



Figure 2 United States Army Colonel Mona Jibril (Rtd) presenting her lecture: “Mass Migration – What it is and Challenges”

The practical desktop-based exercise component of CIMEX grouped participants into multi-national teams with two hours at hand to tackle a fictional refugee crisis scenario in a similar fashion to that experienced in CIMEX 2016. This gave participants the opportunity to put their varied CIMIC expertise to use in response to the complex conflict situations which triggered the scenario's socio-political crisis.

The 'Exercise Sea Crossing' scenario involved a large stream of displaced persons moving from one large landmass to another over the ocean. This required syndicates to produce a CIMIC assessment presentation with recommended course of action to be followed. The dynamic nature of the scenario shaped subsequent CIMIC decision making processes by groups. They had to endeavour to promote the safety and security of civilian entities, and yet to support the overall mission commander's mission and intent. These courses of action were presented by the three groups to the scenario contingent commander.

International Security and Defence Consultant, Lieutenant Colonel Graeme Olley, British Army (Rtd), was on hand to facilitate the CIMEX scenario, devised in concert with CIOR CIMIC Committee members.

In the post-CIMEX 17 feedback committee session, the committee acknowledged an overwhelmingly positive response from the participants. Every category was rated higher than previous responses recorded in 2016. Participants acknowledged a well-chosen theme and excellent lectures, while information added by fellow attendees had allowed them to further develop their own CIMIC capabilities.



Figure 3 World War II Veteran Major General Evan L. “Curly” Hultman, US Army (Ret), former President of CIOR (1992-1994) and Honorary Life President of CIOR, along with members of the CIOR Council, addresses a packed room of CIMEX participants at the end of the three day long exercise.

During the course of CIMEX 2017, CIOR Council members also attended CIMEX briefings and presentations. Following his attendance, the President of the CIOR, Czech Colonel Arnost Libezny, commented: "While the speakers all presented salient insights to the migration crisis in Europe, the meat of what CIMEX provides comes in the form of the exercise scenario itself." He added that, "This year's 'Exercise Sea Crossing' scenario that Vanessa and her committee developed allowed the CIMEX participants to really apply the concepts introduced and propose innovative strategies for their nations, both from their combined civilian and military perspectives."



Figure 4 CIOR CIMIC Committee Chair leads the CIMIC Committee discussions on the theme for CIMEX 2018 with members of the South African RFC delegation, Major General Keith Mokoape and Colonel Johnny Sexwale in attendance.

The CIOR Summer Congress 2017 proved to facilitate a highly productive environment for the development and eventual unanimous acceptance of CIMEX 2018's theme at CIOR Council level. This will be "The Intersection of CIMIC & Technology: Exploring Information Challenges in Complex Emergencies". CIMIC Committee members will reconvene in February 2018 at the CIOR's Winter Meeting at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium to provide content structure for the next CIMEX to be held as part of the 2018 CIOR Summer Congress in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada.



Figure 5 The CIOR CIMIC Committee presents their annual report to the CIOR Council & introduces the theme for CIMEX-2018. Photo courtesy of the Swedish Armed Forces Reserve Officers' Association.

The CIMIC Committee continues to grow from strength to strength as it strives to fulfil its CIOR constitutional mandate of organising CIMIC symposia and exercises, fostering effective CIMIC in humanitarian aid missions that facilitates aid to civil authorities and communities. The reservist CIMIC practitioner continues to be the epitome of Churchill's conceptualisation of a reservist as 'twice the citizen.'



Figure 6 CIMEX 2017 participants and facilitators.

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