

EDA WORKING PAPER

Executive Summary



A Diplomatic Perspective on Stabilisation

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- This EDA Working Paper looks at the role of diplomacy in contemporary stabilisation missions. It highlights the need for diplomacy to occupy a central place in the debate on the future of stabilisation.
- Diplomacy is a *continuum* that tries to understand with a long-term vision the causes and consequences of problems and considers the divergence of interests normal, but the conflict as abnormal.
- In recent decades, the focus on stabilisation has downgraded the role of international diplomacy, including in the MENA region. While stabilisation does not necessarily deny classic diplomacy a role, it places it within a toolkit of other necessary instruments of external policy actions, including security and development aspects of conflict resolution, and weakens its preeminence and coordinating role between communities and policies. Also, stabilisation is predominantly unilateral in nature, at least as a strategic concept.
- A point has arrived at which intense work is needed to build consensus *for* stabilisation and *within* stabilisation. The focus must be on regranting diplomacy center stage as a natural and necessary coordinator between different policy communities, including the military and those practicing international development, as well as between the different state actors involved in an area requiring stabilisation.
- Putting diplomacy center stage, including in the MENA region, must also involve the evolution of diplomacy towards 21st century forms, in which *inclusion* can become one of its most valuable assets.
- The paper is divided into three sections. The first section describes the need for diplomacy at a *macro* level to reach viable parameters for stabilisation. This means working on general principles and international law and considering the role of the United Nations.
- The second section posits the reflection from the MENA region perspective, in which the diplomatic conversation must incorporate its own characteristics and toolkit in order to be considered as an option in one of the most challenging backgrounds one can imagine for stability.
- Finally, the paper presents some thoughts on the experience of Libya as an essentially diplomatic process of stabilisation, which was strongly indigenous in nature.