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# Comprehensive Defence. Considerations Regarding the National Implementation of the Resistance Concept

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## Abstract

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In the context of the deterioration of the security environment on NATO's eastern flank, many European states have intensified the development of additional defence mechanisms alongside traditional diplomatic and military instruments, aimed at deterring adversaries and countering both conventional and hybrid threats. One such mechanism involves integrating the whole of society into the national and allied defence effort. However, the adoption and implementation by Black Sea states of modern concepts associated with Comprehensive Defence, resilience, and resistance represent a complex process requiring substantial adaptation to national specificities, the nature of the threats, and lessons identified in ongoing or recent conflicts. This article examines the possibilities for implementing at the national level in Romania an Asymmetric Defence Component as an essential element of Comprehensive Defence.

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## Keywords:

Society; Comprehensive Defence; Asymmetric Component; Deterrence; Resilience; Resistance.

## Article info

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**D**ynamism, asymmetry, and unpredictability are frequently associated with the contemporary security environment, often correlated with the manifestation of hybrid threats and with the increasing role of non-state actors and civilian populations in the conduct of modern conflicts ([Kilcullen, Counterinsurgency 2010](#), 34-36). Relevant examples can be observed in the development of territorial defence structures in the Baltic states, where the participation of civil society contributes to strengthening resilience and national defence capacity. At the same time, contemporary conflicts, such as the one in Ukraine, highlight the essential role of societal resilience and population mobilisation in supporting states' capacity to withstand external aggression ([Mälksoo 2024](#), 12).

From a historical perspective, the involvement of society in matters of security and defence has often proved to be an important factor both in deterring hostile intentions and in ensuring an adequate response in situations of conflict. Over time, small organisations composed of members of society with limited military training and modest equipment have, by exploiting the advantages offered by knowledge of the environment and the support of the population, managed to create significant imbalances in the balance of forces and to affect the adversaries' morale ([Kilcullen, Counterinsurgency 2010](#), 38-40; [Szenes 2024](#), 5).

The motivation for selecting this topic lies in the need to deepen the study of possibilities for expanding national defence capabilities through the integration of the whole of society into the national defence effort, especially given that, in recent years, NATO has placed increasing emphasis on strengthening societal resilience, considered an essential element of collective defence and of states' capacity to cope with contemporary crises and conflicts ([NATO 2024](#)). This paper represents a structured analytical endeavour, based predominantly on inductive reasoning, through which existing theoretical models regarding Comprehensive Defence and resistance are analysed, and the possibilities for their adaptation at the national level are evaluated. While the first two chapters address, from a theoretical perspective, the characteristics of the main models and concepts associated with Comprehensive Defence and resistance, the third chapter examines how the previously detailed theoretical models may be adapted and implemented at the level of Romania.

Given the specificity of these instruments, associated with the field of security and defence, the specialised literature available in open sources is relatively limited and mainly includes information formulated at a high level of generality. In this context, the analysis carried out in this paper is based primarily on unclassified doctrinal documents and specialised studies relevant to the field of security and defence.

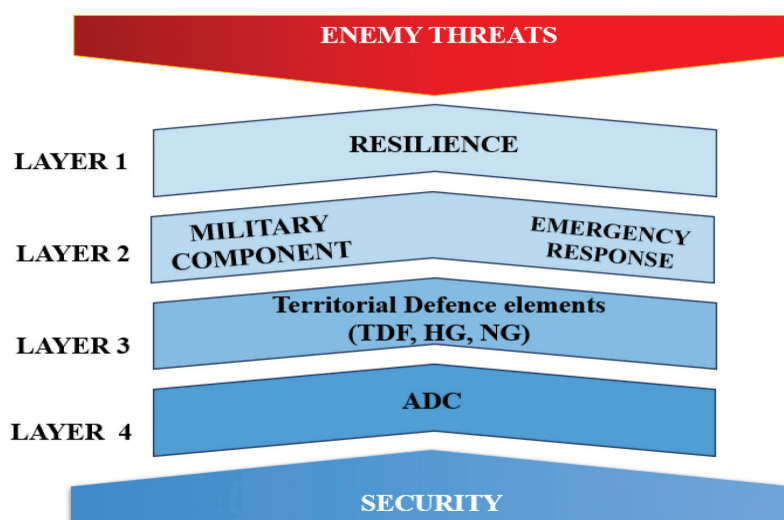
## **1. Comprehensive Defence**

In recent literature, the resilience of a nation is analysed as a central element of national security, being associated both with the capacity of institutions to function

under crisis conditions and with the mobilisation of societal resources in support of defence (Szenes 2024, OECD 2024). One of the most frequently referenced concepts within NATO when addressing the active involvement of civil society in achieving national security objectives is “*Comprehensive Defence*” (CD). The concept is grounded in Article 3 of the Treaty, which stipulates that, alongside the need for collective defence of the Alliance, it is equally important to maintain and develop the individual national defence capacity of each member state. At the level of certain European states, such as Sweden or Finland, the involvement of the whole of society in the national defence effort is conceptualised through “*Total Defence*” models, which entail the integration of civilian, economic, and military resources in support of national defence (Wither 2020, 63). These models are associated in recent literature with the development of a security culture at the societal level and with an increased degree of involvement of civilian actors in supporting national defence (Wrange 2024, 6).

In order to support member states in developing a national defence capability anchored in the realities of the current security environment, a series of non-binding documents has been elaborated at the Allied level, outlining the possibilities and modalities through which society may be integrated into the national defence effort. The most relevant documents in this regard are the *Resistance Operating Concept – ROC* (Fiala 2020) and the *Comprehensive Defence Handbook – CDH* (NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020, 15).

From a theoretical perspective, the CD concept is defined as an “*official governmental strategy aimed at protecting national interests against potential threats through the involvement of the whole of society*” (NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020, 15). Such an approach is designed to be effective both against threats generated by state actors and against those originating from non-state actors, natural phenomena, or major accidents. The levels/layers of CD are illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Illustration of the layers of CD

Source: rauthor’s own elaboration based on NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020, pp. 33–34

It can thus be observed that the second layer of CD represents the traditional response ensured through the state's specially designated structures: the armed forces (including reservists), structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (police, gendarmerie, emergency services, border police, etc.), intelligence services, specialised cyber defence structures, and others. Considering that the focus of the present paper is placed on the *Asymmetric Defence Component* (ADC), the second layer will be addressed only from the perspective of its links and implications for the ADC.

Resilience represents the cornerstone of Comprehensive Defence, ensuring its consistency, flexibility, and stability. It is considered an essential element of national security, representing the capacity of society to maintain the functioning of institutions and to support the defence effort in situations of crisis or conflict (Szenes 2024, 5). The concept is defined as "the capacity of societies to resist, adapt and recover from major shocks, including security crises or armed conflicts" (OECD 2024). In international specialised literature, several concepts may be associated with the third layer, the most widespread being *Home Guard* (HG), *National Guard* (NG), and *Territorial Defence Forces* (TDF). Although similar, these concepts are not identical, as each nation adopts different approaches regarding the characteristics, organisation, and responsibilities of such structures. In general, the concepts listed above refer to groups of volunteers or reservists organised and coordinated by state institutions, which contribute to various aspects of national or Allied security (NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020, 17).

In Romania, such structures included the "*Patriotic Defence Guards*", which operated for a short period beginning in September 1944, and the "*Patriotic Guards*", established in 1968 (Romanian State Council 1968) in response to the occupation of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic by the Soviet Union, and which remained operational until the Romanian Revolution of 1989.

In order to avoid associating HG, TDF or NG type structures with Romania's current efforts to diversify recruitment and staffing modalities and, at the same time, to avoid using the historically established Romanian equivalent of these concepts – "*Patriotic Guards*" – which could generate confusion due to its historical connotations, this paper employs the generic term "*Territorial Defence Elements*" (TDE). By TDE, we refer to territorial defence structures within the HG, TDF, and NG spectrum, organised in a manner similar to conventional forces, which have the role of increasing the national capacity to provide a response to various situations. Regardless of the territorial defence model adopted, such structures can fulfil a variety of responsibilities, including support to civilian authorities, protection of infrastructure and population, participation in the management of emergencies, and support for military operations (NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020, 38).

## 2. The Asymmetric Defence Component

In defining and properly understanding the ADC, one may start from the broader concept of resistance, with which it is most often equated.

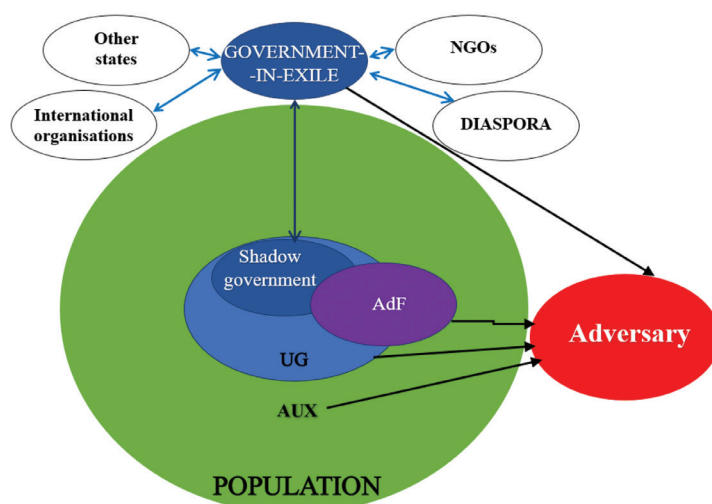
The word “*resistance*” has multiple meanings and may sometimes generate confusion. Used in a generic sense, “*resistance*” refers to the ability of a system to withstand a certain factor. When addressing a security or defence context, however, the term “*resistance*” represents the “*effort of the whole of society, organised and led by a legitimate government (understood as legitimate political leadership formed by state authorities), potentially in exile, relocated, or operating ‘from the shadows’, encompassing both violent and non-violent activities aimed at restoring independence or autonomy within national territory partially or totally occupied by an occupying force*” (Fiala 2020, 5). Another term within this conceptual sphere is “*national resistance*”, which differs from “*resistance*” and is defined as a capability based on pre-planned, pre-conflict efforts to establish the legal framework, develop plans and employ resistance in the event of aggression or occupation (Fiala 2020, xv-xvi). In certain contexts, the term “*resistance*” may refer both to the organised effort of society to oppose an occupying force and to the individuals or groups that participate in these actions (Fiala 2020, 5).

Another concept within the sphere of the term “*resistance*” is the “*resistance movement*”, which in specialised literature is generally associated with the opposition of organised groups against a legitimate political leadership, most often supported by state entities lacking legitimacy over the respective territories, with the general objective of changing the legitimate political leadership. The term “*resistance movement*” is more commonly associated with the concept of “*unconventional warfare*”, as defined in American doctrine (U.S. Department of Defense 2024, II-9).

In order to avoid confusion and to emphasise the strictly defensive character of CD, the term ADC is introduced, defined as that component of CD which provides the nation with the ability to conduct, under the leadership of state institutions, whole-of-society resistance against an occupying force, with the aim of maintaining/restoring independence and territorial sovereignty (NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020, 43). ADC represents the fourth layer within CD, yet it plays a particularly important role in achieving the first layer, resilience.

In recent literature, the organisation of resistance is analysed as a complex system that includes clandestine structures, logistical support elements, and armed components capable of conducting actions against an occupying force (Barno and Bensahel 2023). ADC, similarly to the resistance movement described in the specialised literature on unconventional warfare, operates in territory under enemy control and uses structures and networks that can operate clandestinely in order to support resistance elements. Its structure (Figure 2) comprises four interconnected components (NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020):

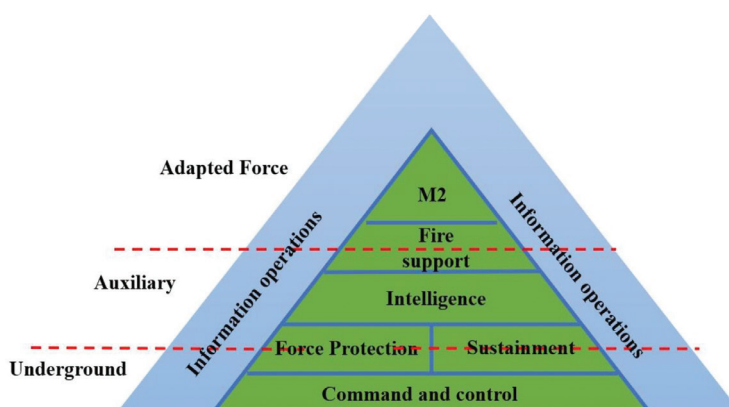
- *the Underground (UG)* – responsible for ensuring the organisation’s leadership; in the specialised literature, this component may also be referred to as “clandestine networks”, being responsible for coordinating activities and maintaining communications between the different components of the resistance, thus ensuring the coherence of actions carried out against occupying forces (Paul, Helmus and Glenn 2023, 22).
- *the Adapted Force (AdF)* – the operational response element;
- *the Auxiliary (AUX)* – provides support to all ADC elements. This component is also referred to in the specialised literature as “support networks” and has an essential role in providing logistical and intelligence support (Paul, Helmus and Glenn 2023, 25).
- *the public component* – representing the political dimension of ADC.



**Figure 2** ADC structure

Source: adapted from NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020, p. 43

As a methodology for developing ADC capabilities, the joint functions may be employed, as they support resource prioritisation and the integration of the organisation’s constituent elements. The responsibilities of ADC in relation to the joint functions are graphically illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3** Functions of the Resistance Elements

Source: adapted from US SOCEUR 2022, p. 2

The description of the elements may be summarised as follows:

- *command and control (C2)* – includes the command and control architecture (regional and zonal commands, subordinate command elements), inter-institutional coordination, and the development of information management capabilities;
- *information operations* – ensure the achievement of non-lethal effects.
- *protection* – encompasses the capabilities that ensure the security of actions, communications, personnel, and the population;
- *sustainment* – in addition to traditional logistic support, includes personnel-related aspects, medical support, and financial support;
- *intelligence* – ensures understanding of the environment and is essential for the conduct of resistance activities. It includes counterintelligence, collection, analysis, and dissemination capabilities;
- *fire support* – enables the creation of lethal and non-lethal effects against targets. It requires both an internal target management process and one at the joint level, particularly for targets requiring the engagement of external capabilities;
- *movement and manoeuvre* – ensures freedom of movement within the area of responsibility and the positional advantage necessary for engaging enemy elements, especially by AdF.

The four components of ADC are in a dynamic relationship, influenced by both internal and external factors. UG is primarily responsible for leading and coordinating resistance activities, while AdF represents the operational element that conducts actions against the occupying force ([NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020](#), 46).

In Romania, the Government “*ensures the implementation of the country’s domestic and foreign policy and exercises the general leadership of public administration*” ([Romanian Government 2026](#)). In the context of CD, the term “*government*” essentially refers to “legitimate political leadership”, not necessarily strictly limited to the executive branch, and encompasses the legitimate state authorities and institutions exercising decision-making, regulatory, representative, or executive roles.

In the event of total or partial occupation of national territory by the enemy, should the primary location be compromised, political leadership may be ensured either through the relocation of central authorities to a non-occupied area, through a “*government in exile*”, and/or through a “*shadow government*” operating clandestinely within the occupied territory ([Fiala 2020](#), 5-6).

In the most likely situation, in which legitimate political leadership functions from outside the occupied area (either from unoccupied national territory or from exile), the term “*shadow government*” designates only the territorial element deployed within the occupied area, operating clandestinely and coordinating resistance

activities. At the same time, it functions within ADC, receives direction from the institutions ensuring proper governance, and constitutes the core leadership element and, simultaneously, the expression of the state's continued existence within the occupied territory.

On the other hand, the underground element represents the resistance component with the greatest number and variety of responsibilities, including ensuring ADC leadership and executing actions in areas inaccessible to AdF.

UG exists and operates clandestinely, relying on leaders who, through flexibility and vision, are capable of ensuring the timely adjustment of actions, organisation, and C2. UG command is centralised, while execution is predominantly decentralised, thus ensuring both effective coordination of operational elements and operational security. It is particularly important that at least the essential elements of UG be organised and functional already in peacetime.

The key responsibilities of UG (Fiala 2020, 20) include:

- *recruitment of members* – this task is essential and involves identifying, vetting, contacting, and integrating the personnel required for the diverse responsibilities of resistance;
- *intelligence support* – this function is considered directly responsible for the success or failure of resistance and encompasses planning/direction, collection, analysis, and dissemination of three categories of information: military information, information necessary for the execution of sabotage, and political information;
- *financing* – the underground element is responsible for securing and managing financial resources for the entire resistance. Particularly important are financial resources provided by legitimate authorities (for example, those in exile), those granted by non-state actors, and those received from other states;
- *logistic support* – this function is planned and supervised by UG, while execution belongs to AUX. It encompasses all activities related to procurement, storage, and distribution of goods and supplies, as well as maintenance, medical, and transport services. Another measure that may be considered in preparing national territory for defence is the establishment in peacetime of secret “cache” type depots, which may be used by the resistance in the event of occupation;
- training of ADC members during occupation – UG is primarily responsible for the training of all ADC members;
- *communications* – vital for ensuring the success of resistance actions and for their effective integration into the CD effort. The underground element is responsible for both ensuring the internal information flow within ADC and for communication between ADC and external actors;
- *security* – represents an essential element in ensuring the functionality and survival of the underground element and, implicitly, of ADC. It is primarily

the responsibility of UG, although AUX also contributes significantly (for example, through early warning). In general, UG must be integrated within civil society, following the principle: “the more you succeed in behaving like an ordinary citizen, the less suspicious you will become” ([US Army Institute for Military Assistance 1978, 69](#)).

In addition to the key responsibilities outlined above, UG is the principal ADC element responsible for planning and executing information operations within occupied territory and for carrying out acts of sabotage and subversion.

**AdF** represents the ADC element responsible for conducting military actions of a kinetic and/or lethal nature, in accordance with the direction received from UG. The term “Adapted Force” is preferred over the term “guerrilla”, frequently used in specialised literature, as the latter does not necessarily imply that such structures are organised and controlled by legitimate leadership, as is the case with ADC. AdF represents a combination of traditional military structures and elements of society and may include: military personnel and units, reservists, territorial defence structures, and volunteers. As a rule, AdF is smaller in size than the other ADC elements.

Unlike traditional armed forces, AdF is organised into small operational elements, primarily armed with light infantry weapons. Among the most frequently employed techniques are raids, ambushes, and sabotage. The primary purpose of AdF actions is to deny the enemy freedom of movement and to degrade its combat capability ([Fiala 2020, 27](#)).

AdF structures are generally organised in cells (ranging from a few members to several dozen), geographically distributed (for example, in the area of a rural locality, one or more cells may operate). AdF generally has a limited vertical development, with cells subordinated directly to regional or zonal commands or to UG leadership cells ([Fiala 2020, 26-27](#)).

The recruitment of AdF should already be initiated in peacetime, at least at the leadership level. Given their prior military training and vetting, members of TDE constitute an especially valuable recruitment base. For this reason, it may be more advantageous for a certain number of members to remain within occupied territory and to be integrated into AdF.

**AUX** does not constitute an organisation in itself, does not possess a formal structure, and has no independent leadership. It represents that part of society which performs tasks in support of resistance, at the request and under the coordination of UG or AdF. AUX is composed of members of society who participate in resistance activities only occasionally and on a task-specific basis, carrying out highly specialised tasks. Members of the auxiliary element are aware of resistance activities only to the extent strictly necessary for the fulfilment of their assigned duties. The principal activities in which AUX is involved include: procurement and distribution of goods and supplies; manufacturing of specialised materials; provision of security through early warning; intelligence collection; support to recruitment activities; provision

of communications; distribution of media materials; administration of resistance facilities; logistic activities and transport services (Fiala 2020, 27).

**The public component** of ADC represents the extension, image, and public face of legitimate political leadership within the occupied territory. It may consist of a single public personality or of a more complex structure. Depending on the situation or the degree of tolerance shown by the enemy, the public component may negotiate directly with it, may take the form of an opposition political party, or may operate clandestinely.

A useful model in the creation and employment of ADC may be the National Resistance Model (NRM), which comprises six phases (US SOCEUR 2022, 22):

- *preparation* – includes activities such as determining the feasibility and necessity of resistance, establishing the legal framework, defining responsibilities and inter-institutional relationships, and preparing the population through specific narratives. Particularly important in this phase is the establishment of the levers and instruments necessary for recruitment, training, and activation of members;
- *capability development* – in this phase, the necessary infrastructure, networks, and ADC capabilities are developed. Initial efforts focus on developing those elements that ensure the survival, control, and subsequent development of resistance. At the end of this phase, ADC elements are synchronised and capable of conducting violent and non-violent actions against an occupying force or aggressor;
- *engagement* – involves activating zonal commands and engaging the enemy, gradually increasing pressure and regaining control over occupied areas;
- *consolidation* – exploits previous success and, together with conventional forces, creates the conditions for repelling the aggressor and liberating national territory;
- *liberation* – through the success of previous phases, the majority of society is mobilised in support of ADC through non-violent activities. At this stage, AdF reconfigures its operational posture by concentrating forces into larger elements and conducts large-scale actions integrated into the liberation operation (executed, for example, with the support of Allied military structures). Subsequently, a link-up with conventional forces takes place;
- *transition* – involves the transfer of authority to the responsible structures within the national defence, security and public order system and the return to the pre-occupation state.

In conclusion, specialised literature on national resistance analyses existing models primarily through the lens of American unconventional warfare doctrine. Although American doctrine details the components and internal processes of resistance, it focuses predominantly on supporting elements of society in a foreign state in their effort to replace legitimate political leadership. By contrast, European models aim

at deterring the aggressor and ensuring state survival. These differences require the adaptation of resistance priorities, infrastructure, and operating procedures so that it may be effectively integrated into the national defence effort.

### **3. Applied Analysis Regarding the Organisation of the Asymmetric Defence Component within Romania's National Territory**

This chapter has a predominantly analytical character and includes a conceptual exploration of how ADC could be implemented at the national level, in accordance with the theoretical foundations presented in the previous chapters, as well as with Romania's particularities and national specificities. The analysis uses a simplified scenario, constructed exclusively on the basis of information available in open sources, with an illustrative role in assessing the applicability of the theoretical model, without representing elements of actual operational plans. Within this analytical endeavour, the aim is to formulate an answer to two main questions:

- "How can ADC be organised optimally and efficiently at the level of Romania?"
- "How can the recruitment and training of ADC members be conducted in peacetime?"

From a methodological perspective, the paper employs a qualitative approach, the main instruments and techniques being the vignette, conceptual modelling, experimentation, and observation. The vignette was selected as it allows for the construction of a controlled analytical framework and the establishment of specific parameters and details, facilitating the analysis of particular situations without requiring the development of complex scenarios ([NATO Science and Technology Organisation 2015, 2-10](#)). Within this analytical endeavour, the vignette is used to assess how the previously discussed theoretical concepts can be adapted at the national level.

Conceptual modelling is employed to represent the relationships between the main components of the resistance system and to identify possible organisational structures. Observation enables the interpretation of the results obtained in relation to the specialised literature and to existing examples in states that use similar defence models. The experiment has an exploratory character and consists of the conceptual testing of the proposed model by applying it within the analysed scenario, with the aim of evaluating the functioning of the relationships between the components of the resistance system.

***The general analytical framework is defined by the following elements:***

- *The security context* is defined by an analytical scenario inspired by recent developments in the security environment of the Black Sea region
- *The target area* for organising resistance is the Dobrogea region.
- *The time horizon* is three years, during which resistance structures must become capable of self-management, contributing to the repelling of

aggression or supporting the liberation of occupied territory.

- *Concerning the civilian population*, it is assumed to be characterised by a moderate level of attachment to national values/patriotism and a moderate willingness to participate in the defence of the national territory, the population being rather inclined to leave the conflict area. At the level of the target area, it is estimated that there are approximately 100,000 men who have completed military service, relatively evenly distributed across administrative-territorial units.

- *The current national legislative framework* is not considered a limiting factor, as the political decision-maker demonstrates openness to adapting it according to necessity.

***The main elements resulting from the operational environment analysis (PMESII-PT) are as follows:***

- ***Political:*** The existence of a large number of administrative-territorial units of the commune and town type allows for a balanced dispersion of ADC elements. The size of the municipality of Constanța, the existence of a developed administrative apparatus, and numerous logistic facilities recommend this urban concentration as the primary option for the functioning of a regional resistance command.
- ***Military*** (semi-fictional): Within the target area, military structures belonging to all service branches are deployed, including a mechanised infantry brigade, a marine infantry regiment, naval fleet forces, elements of the river flotilla, and two air bases. In addition, three TDE battalions staffed with reservists and volunteers are deployed in the area, whose personnel have undergone the necessary training to master basic techniques, tactics, and procedures.
- ***Economic:*** The diversified regional economy may provide the resources necessary for sustaining resistance. At the same time, considering that during a conflict or occupation the service sector is particularly affected, and that a significant proportion of the active population is employed in this sector, a considerable level of popular support for resistance may be anticipated.
- ***Social:*** The ethnic configuration represents a relevant element, with the Romanian ethnic population exceeding 90%, the other significant ethnic groups being Turkish and Tatar. This proportion is similar with regard to the Orthodox religion. The distribution by gender and age categories is relatively balanced. The level of education is higher in urban areas, lower in the central and north-eastern areas, and medium in the north and west. This configuration makes it difficult to justify a potential occupation and facilitates the clandestine functioning of resistance.
- ***Information:*** In the event of degradation or disruption of mobile communication networks and internet access, efforts to inform the population will need to be redirected towards printed materials and radio broadcasts transmitted from outside the target area. In order to maintain ADC's internal and external information flow, alternative communication solutions are required.

- *Infrastructure*: Road, maritime, and river infrastructure supports the functioning of resistance by ensuring the mobility of personnel and goods within the area, but limits personnel and material flows from and to the outside. Solutions may be identified through the development of AUX capabilities in localities along the Danube floodplains and through the use of small craft.
- *Physical environment*: Dobrogea represents a distinct geographical area, bounded by water on three sides. The terrain consists predominantly of hills and plateaus (100–300 m) in the central and southern areas, with floodplains along the Danube, delta areas in the north-east, and lagoon coastline in the east. The hydrographic network includes the Danube River with its branches and delta, lagoon lakes, and the Danube–Black Sea Canal. The accessible terrain has enabled the development of good road infrastructure and a relatively uniform distribution of settlements (over 75% of the surface area), with minimum density in the north-east and maximum density in the south-east.
- *Time*: The time factor represents a significant constraint, requiring the priority creation and organisation of essential ADC elements, with their further development to be carried out progressively upon the emergence of a crisis or during occupation.

With regard to the organisation and development of ADC, these will be conducted during the first two phases of NRM, as outlined in the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. The first phase is predominantly the responsibility of the political factor and will be addressed at a general level.

**a) Phase I–Preparation** – approximately 12 months. The duration and activities of this phase result from adapting the previously presented NRM model to the specifics of the analysed scenario. The main activities are detailed in Table 1.

**TABLE no. 1. Main Activities Associated with the Preparation Phase**

Nr. crt.	Task	Actions	End state
1.	Determining whether the establishment of a resistance structure is feasible	Feasibility study, identification of implications, and calculation of required resources	Confirmation of the assumption that the establishment of ADC is necessary, appropriate, and achievable
2.	Designation of responsible structures	Political and inter-institutional debates and negotiations	MoND designated as the responsible structure; establishment of specialised structures; allocation of responsibilities
3.	Creation of the legal framework	Amendment of existing legislation and regulations	The legal framework enables the creation and functioning of resistance
4.	Preparation of the population	Development and dissemination of narratives, public information materials, etc.	The population understands and agrees with involvement in the national defence effort

Once the requirements, responsible structures, and legal framework have been established, and public support has been secured, the actual development of ADC may begin.

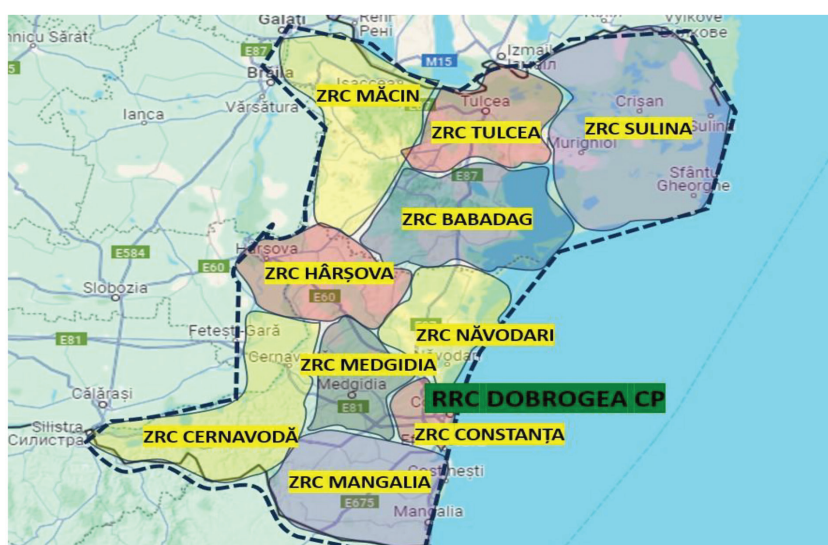
***b) Phase II – Capability Development – 24 months;***

The main structures and C2 relationships of ADC are composed of the following elements:

- **UG** – comprising Regional Resistance Commands (RRC), which also integrate elements of the “shadow government”, Zonal Resistance Commands (ZRC), local-level leadership cells, and specialised cells;
- **AUX** – composed of AUX cells providing support across various domains to all ADC elements;
- **AdF** – the element specialised in violent actions, organised into cells;
- **the public component** – representing the element that ensures the public representation of resistance within society and in relation to the enemy.

Extrapolating to the national level, the conclusions of the previously conducted PMESII-PT analysis, it is considered appropriate to organise resistance by regions, each region generally comprising between two and five county-level administrative-territorial units and being led by an RRC, subordinating several ZRCs. Each RRC is capable of fulfilling the functions specific to a “shadow government” or, as appropriate, integrating and ensuring the functioning of its elements, depending on the evolution of the operational situation.

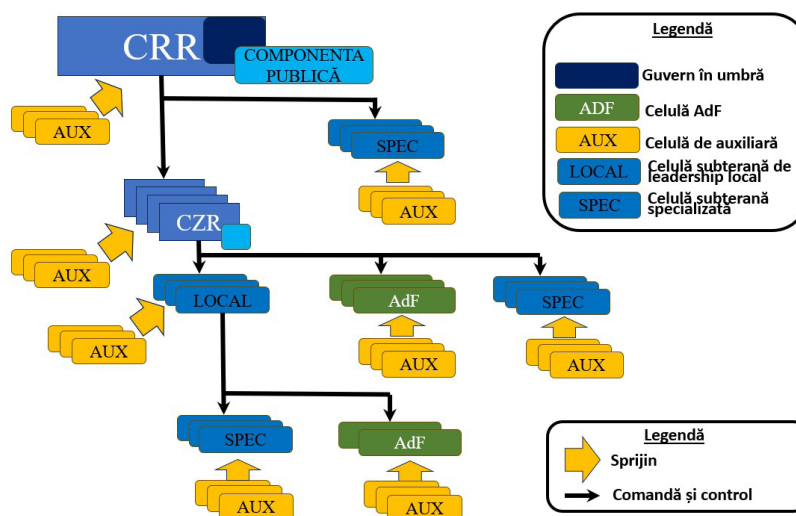
With reference to the study’s target area, the exercise of command and control will be conducted through RRC Dobrogea, with its primary location in the municipality of Constanța. Based on the analysis of geographical factors, the distribution of localities, and the C2 requirements of the resistance, Dobrogea was divided into ten distinct areas (Figure 4).



**Figure 4** Areas of Responsibility of the ZRCs within RRC Dobrogea

Source: author’s own elaboration based on the analysis of geographical and administrative factors of the Dobrogea region, using exclusively information from open sources.

Each of the ten ZRCs is capable, through the efficient use of available forces and resources, of accomplishing the tasks assigned by RRC Dobrogea. Figure 5 provides a generic graphical representation of the organisation and C2 relationships of the resistance. At the regional level, the RRC structures, the “shadow government”, and the public component exist in a relationship of interdependence, ensuring the leadership functions of the entire ADC. They coordinate liaison with state and non-state actors, maintain contact with national authorities operating outside the occupied area, and conduct strategic communication and public representation activities.



**Figure 5** Generic Structure of ADC and C2 Relationships

Source: representation developed by the author based on the specialised literature (Fiala 2020; NATO Special Operations Headquarters 2020)

Analysing the average size of rural localities, of approximately 3,000 inhabitants, as well as their distribution within the target area, it is estimated that within each locality, between one and three small-sized cells may function optimally, each comprising several dozen members.

The development of ADC capabilities, both in peacetime and during periods of crisis, will be conducted under the coordination of the Department for Asymmetric Defence (DAD). This represents an inter-institutional structure subordinated to the Ministry of National Defence, specifically created for the development of the infrastructure necessary for ADC functioning, the integration of its activity into the national defence effort, and the coordination of recruitment, training, and equipping processes for its members. At the territorial level, within each region under the responsibility of RRC, DAD will subordinate a Regional Directorate for Asymmetric Defence (RDAD). Within the target area, ADC development is coordinated by RDAD Dobrogea, headquartered in the municipality of Constanța. DAD and RDAD do not exercise direct command over the resistance under occupation conditions. Their responsibility is confined to the development of capabilities, infrastructure,

and preparatory mechanisms required for resistance to function effectively during a crisis and potential occupation.

In order to conduct a realistic analysis, extrapolating publicly available data regarding the mobility of the Ukrainian population in areas occupied by Russia in the current conflict, we assume that in the event of aggression followed by occupation, through evacuation or relocation, the population of the Dobrogea region would decrease by approximately 60%, meaning that around 400,000 inhabitants would remain within the target area, distributed across approximately 120 localities. The most affected areas would be the urbanised zones in the south-east of the region.

The objective is that, during the consolidation phase of the NRM, under occupation conditions, in order to maintain an appropriate balance between organisational needs and the normal functioning of societal activities, resistance should comprise approximately 5% of the remaining population. The 5% estimate represents a balanced approximation within the limited range of active participation identified in classical insurgency and resistance literature, where only a small fraction of the population engages directly in operations, while the majority provides passive support or remains neutral (Kilcullen, Counterinsurgency 2010, 35). This implies that ADC infrastructure would need to sustain up to 20,000 members. The distribution by elements would be as follows:

- 20% within UG – 4,000 members;
- 15% within AdF – 3,000 members;
- 65% within AUX – 13,000 members.

Given the unpredictable nature of the situation, the application of a safety margin of at least 30% is recommended. At the same time, the figures mentioned represent the maximum potential size of the resistance, without implying the recruitment or simultaneous activation of all members. In peacetime, emphasis will be placed on the recruitment of leaders, specialists, and key personnel for the development, training, refinement, and validation of resistance processes and network functionality.

Correlating ROC recommendations with the previous analysis, the selection base is outlined as follows:

- **UG**: reservists, TDE members, informal leaders. The majority of these must be identified, vetted, and confirmed (establishing contact and confirming their intention to support resistance) already in peacetime. Some of them will be involved in organising and developing infrastructure, as well as in training and recruiting members.
- **UX**: any citizen capable of supporting resistance. As the tasks of this component are simple and specific, members do not require a complex vetting or training process. Most of them may be recruited during a crisis or even during an occupation, depending on necessity.
- **AdF**: citizens with military training or who express willingness to undergo

training. TDE represents an essential instrument for identifying, vetting, and training AdF members. The activation of AdF cells and joint training, for security reasons, is recommended to take place at the earliest, during a crisis. Nevertheless, key personnel should be identified, vetted, confirmed, and trained, as far as possible, in peacetime.

The recruitment and training process of AdF members, both in peacetime and during crisis, is complex and challenging, particularly due to the need to ensure operational security. Training must be conducted in locations and conditions different from those in which members will operate, and the majority of members should not know precise details regarding their place and role within the network. For example, a reservist trained to occupy a position within an infantry battalion may be requested to remain within territory estimated to be occupied in order to fulfil tasks that will be communicated at a later stage.

## Conclusions

Although inspired by American specialised literature on unconventional warfare, ROC and CDH may constitute the foundation for the development of an effective Comprehensive Defence. Alongside the national development and adaptation of these theoretical models, it is necessary to establish a solid, assumed, and dynamic normative framework.

In response to the question “*How can ADC be organised optimally and efficiently at the level of Romania?*”, based on the analysis of environmental factors, an organisational model applied to the Dobrogea area was developed, which may be extrapolated to the entire national territory or even to other states within the Black Sea region. The implementation of this model requires the creation of a legal framework supporting the functioning of specialised structures, at both central and regional levels, responsible for coordinating the entire resistance organisation process. The organisation of ADC across multiple C2 levels entails: regional commands covering generally two to five counties and subordinating six to twelve zonal commands, usually located in urban areas and responsible for adjacent areas. For the sake of efficiency, ADC must necessarily be organised in peacetime, particularly with regard to network infrastructure, processes, and staffing with key members.

The response to the question “*How can the recruitment and training of ADC members be conducted in peacetime?*” highlights the need to establish TDE-type structures, which would allow the establishment of contact, vetting, and training of potential resistance members within an appropriate framework. Such an approach would considerably expand the selection base for ADC, support the mitigation of the continuous decline in the number of citizens with military or security training, and contribute to the development of both individual and national resilience.

In light of the above analysis and conclusions, in the event of an intention to organise resistance at the national level, the following proposals may be formulated:

- A detailed study should be conducted regarding public perception of organising resistance at the national level. In the case of an unsatisfactory result, it is critical to successfully conduct extensive campaigns promoting national values and developing security culture, responsibility, and patriotism.
- A significant number of TDE structures should be established at the territorial level, both to compensate for the effects of the reduction or ageing of reservists and as the principal mechanism for recruiting and training resistance members.
- Based on thorough analysis and testing, dedicated structures should be established for the organisation, development, and command of resistance, both at central and territorial levels, integrating and coordinating the efforts of institutions with responsibilities in defence, public order, and national security.

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#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

The author declares that there are no potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

#### **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

This article does not rely on primary datasets requiring public archiving.

#### **STATEMENT ON THE USE OF AI**

The author declares that artificial intelligence tools were used exclusively for linguistic refinement and translation support, without involvement in the development of the scientific content of the paper. The author retains full responsibility for the content of the article.