

جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي



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Letter of Recommendation

September 30, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of Maximilian M. Meduna, who worked with me closely as a Research Associate at NYU Abu Dhabi for the duration of a grant-funded project on “Islands of Stability in Fragile Countries” from 2016 to 2018. The project included groundbreaking work on the emergence of peaceful regions in war-torn states and included field research in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia as well as the compilation and analysis of novel datasets on subnational governance and peace operations.

With an impressive academic background and prior work experience at the UN and the International Peace Institute, Max excelled in his work from the very beginning. His extensive knowledge of international affairs in general and UN peace operations in particular was invaluable. At the same time, he proved to be an apt analytic thinker and I was able to put him in charge of complex research and organizational tasks. At any given time, I could rely on Max to manage effectively external consultants and local research assistants as well as keeping track of deadlines, budgets, communications and administrative requirements for the implementation of a complex, multi-year research project.

I was particularly impressed with Max’s skillfulness and courage in conducting field research in multiple locations across Iraqi Kurdistan and Somaliland---despite the volatile political situation in both entities. He was very well prepared for each interview, demonstrated cultural sensitivity, listened actively, built a rapport with the interview partners, and flexibly adapted the questionnaire by asking thoughtful follow-up questions. He also stayed calm in the face of great challenges: when the Iraqi government responded to the Kurds’ September 2017 independence referendum by closing the region’s airspace, he adapted rapidly to the changing situation and was able to take one of the last flights out of Erbil. In total, he completed over forty-five in-depth interviews and then led a team effort to transcribe the recordings with meticulous precision.

Max also made important contributions to research publications. With a keen eye for bringing together theory and practice, Max co-authored a highly recognized policy piece in the *Washington Post*, based on the field research in Somaliland. In addition, we are currently co-writing a paper on the role of organizational incentives for improving the effectiveness of troop deployments to UN peace operations. Max took the lead

in collecting and analyzing a new dataset on the gap between authorized troops and actual deployments to UN missions. This dataset is based on initial work by and close collaboration with the NYU Center on International Cooperation in New York, where Max was a visiting scholar in summer 2017. Max and I also successfully organized a panel bringing together leading peacekeeping scholars at the International Studies Association's annual convention in San Francisco, where we presented initial findings of our paper to an international audience. Finally, Max provided crucial help with preparing a successful grant application for a new project on donor strategies for managing risks in fragile states.

I expect Max to continue his exceptional performance in any future position in policy-oriented research and analysis, international diplomacy, or high-level consulting. His skills to manage complex tasks and diverse teams are invaluable and he will contribute to the success of any future endeavor. Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Harsch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Harsch, *NYU Abu Dhabi*

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Maximilian Meduna

Research Associate

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Education: MA (International Affairs), Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies; Postgraduate Diploma, Diplomatic Academy of Vienna; MA (Mag. phil., Political Science), University of Vienna; MA (Mag. phil., Cultural and Social Anthropology), University of Vienna

Max Meduna joined NYU Abu Dhabi in October 2016. His research examines why and when "[islands of stability](#)" emerge in fragile states and how the international community can promote subnational security and development.

Previously, Max was a Policy Analyst and Head of the Global Trends Unit at the International Peace Institute (IPI), where he worked on research projects and policy support to multilateral organizations as well as training courses for field mission staff. His focus ranged from peace operations and fragile states to humanitarian emergency response and transnational threats. Prior to joining IPI, Max completed internships at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in New York as well as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna. During his studies, he was board member of the UN Youth Association and Research Assistant at the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management (IFK) of the Austrian Ministry of Defense. Max speaks English, German, Spanish, French, Russian, Polish, and Italian.

His research interests include fragile states and peace operations, international responses to transnational threats; global trends and challenges.

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Publications

Meduna, Maximilian M., Michael F. Harsch and Teresa Krug. 2017. "As the U.S. gets more involved in Somalia, beware these three fallacies." Washington Post, 18 July 2017.

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Salzburg Global Seminar, August 2014. <http://www.salzburgglobal.org/calendar/2010-2019/2014/session-543.html>

Meduna, Maximilian M. and Walter Kemp. 2014. "Are We Sleepwalking Towards War?"

International Peace Institute, Global Observatory, March 2014.

<https://theglobalobservatory.org/2014/03/are-we-sleepwalking-towards-war-interview-with-chris-clark>

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Within a Global Network." International Peace Institute, October 2013.

<https://www.ipinst.org/2013/10/regional-civil-military-coordination-in-disasters-central-asia-within-a-global-network>

Meduna, Maximilian M. 2013. "How Organized Crime and UN Peace Operations Came to

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<https://theglobalobservatory.org/2013/07/how-organized-crime-and-un-peace-operations-came-to-converge-in-fragile-states>

Meduna, Maximilian M. 2013. "African Peace Operations and the United Nations: Lessons

Learned from Somalia and Mali?" Johns Hopkins University SAIS, Master Thesis, May 2013.

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Global Affairs, April 2012. <http://www.saisjournal.org/posts/somalia-failed-state-expired>

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