

Training for the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping Operations

Recommendations for Member States ahead of the 2021 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial

This policy brief provides recommendations for consideration ahead of the next United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial-level Meeting hosted by the Republic of Korea in 2021, as well as the accompanying preparatory meetings on key priority areas. Though this brief was informed through consultations and a virtual roundtable series on Training for the Protection of Civilians hosted in various partnerships with the Governments of Bangladesh, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, and Uruguay, as well as with the Stimson Center, this policy brief was produced by PAX and does not represent the views of the aforementioned Governments or Organization, or of any other participants.

Introduction

From the very first, United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Ministerial-level Meetings have served as instrumental opportunities for States to take stock of the progress and challenges faced by UN peace operations, and to take vital next steps in closing capability gaps through tangible pledges to improve operational effectiveness and better ensure successful fulfilment of mandates. The upcoming 2021 Ministerial in Seoul will also be an important opportunity for States to reaffirm their commitments to peacekeeping and assess implementation of the explicit priority areas outlined in the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, and in other recent reform agendas.

Efforts to improve implementation of protection of civilians (PoC) mandates in UN peacekeeping operations have consistently been underscored as priority areas of focus for Member States and the UN Secretariat in recent years, including as an A4P priority theme. However, challenges in implementation remain despite such efforts, including the effective delivery of UN developed courses in accordance with UN standards and the development of training courses at national and international peacekeeping training institutions that are based on UN standards. In consultations and events, PAX noted particular concerns around the need for more context-specific training, a lack of outcome evaluations and integrated feedback loops, limited capacities to plan for and adjust to local realities, and a general lack of prioritization and integration of related protection agendas, such as the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

This policy brief intends to serve as a set of recommendations for consideration by Member States in their planning and preparations for making concrete and impactful pledges on improved training for better protection at the 2021 Ministerial. This brief will draw on consultations and events (co-)hosted by PAX outlining the importance of improving and mainstreaming PoC in all peacekeeping training curricula and proposing a number of recommendations seeking to address the most salient concerns.

Thematic Challenges & Pledge Recommendations

Context-specific Training

The Comprehensive Protection of Civilians (CPOC) pre-deployment training materials developed by the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) Integrated Training Service (ITS) have been rolled out for military and police. The materials include protection-specific scenario-based exercises. However, challenges remain regarding the understanding of individual and unit responsibilities. These include how to anticipate, plan for, and respond to a variety of mission-specific POC threats, situations, and challenges, as well as coordination with civilian and other actors involved in the broader human rights response.¹ At the mission level, the Secretariat – ITS and the Policy and Best Practice Service (PBPS) – is supporting efforts to develop and roll out context-specific trainings and exercises that are integrated and whole-of-mission.

Recommendations for Member States

These pledges would allow for **better knowledge retention and expertise** to be shared, as well as better prepare incoming troops and police **to anticipate, plan for, and respond to the local civilian protection needs and security environment**:

- ◆ Incorporate local threats-based analysis in in-mission training and include the ability to collaborate in localized threat assessments through community engagement and analysis for early warning and prevention.
- ◆ T/PCCs should develop mission- and unit-specific PoC training based on unit needs and mission-specific material, including concepts of operations, statement of unit requirements, rules of engagement, etc. This training should follow the UN mandatory and recommended training (Core Pre-deployment Training Materials, Specialized Training Materials, and Reinforcement Training Materials).
- ◆ Ensure civilian perspectives are meaningfully included in training to improve effectiveness and ensure civilians in conflict benefit from training for PoC in terms of their human security.
- ◆ Support the inclusion of personnel with direct experience in or knowledge of the context where peacekeeping personnel will operate in the designing and delivering of pre-deployment training.
- ◆ Support and participate in improved training and capacity-building partnerships to provide context-specific training through the Light Coordination Mechanism (LCM) by establishing operational mentor programs or mission-specialist status for those providing training by the Secretariat.
- ◆ Support the further development and activities of the Triangular Partnerships Platform (TPP) and Light Coordination Mechanism to improve coordination and more effectively identify and match training needs with providers, and coordinate and deconflict T/PCC activities.

Recommendations for Member States (continued)

- ◆ Commit resources to flexibly deploy additional experts to assist with scenario-based training derived from an assessment of mission-specific operational needs and threats to improve capacities to respond to threats to civilians.
- ◆ T/PCCs should commit to creating and drawing upon the roster of successful participants in UN specialized training, as maintained by DPO/Policy, Evaluation and Training Division (DPET), when identifying protection focal points for the next rotation.
- ◆ T/PCCs should support the good practice of ensuring experienced troops are directly involved in the training of incoming rotations of peacekeepers.

Evaluation: Learning and Reporting

With the introduction of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System (CPAS), peacekeeping missions now have the tools to track strategic mandate implementation and progress. While it currently does not have monitoring and evaluation capabilities, practitioners have noted that implementing CPAS has incited an internal culture change that relies upon instituting processes for data collection, analysis, and data-driven decision-making.² This change in working methods indicates that such activities are not outside the capacity of UN peacekeeping missions, and that the shift towards impact-driven activities are not outside the scope of operations. Ensuring this shift, however, requires the resource mobilization of the international community to develop and implement those tools.

Gaps remain due to a general lack of incorporating lessons learned in planning and the absence of PoC outcome tracking and assessment when measuring mission success. These gaps prevent missions and trainers from adequately addressing weak points among their personnel's understanding of PoC, as well as developing materials to address such weak points. Closing this loop of evaluation, planning, and training will invariably strengthen protection activities and their effectiveness over time.

Recommendations for Member States

Member States can **increase learning** among peacekeeping missions by **resourcing and implementing return-from-duty practices, developing SOPs and training materials** that meet the unique needs of the mission and **harvesting information and experiences from outgoing personnel**.

- ◆ Support the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/ assessments on how to deal with lessons learned, including identifying and adapting to lessons learned from deployments, and improve information sharing of national lessons learned with other T/CCCS.

Recommendations for Member States (continued)

- ◆ Support the creation of a taskforce for the purpose of developing appropriate monitoring and evaluation frameworks for peacekeeping missions, including establishing PoC indicators.
- ◆ T/PCCs should explore and develop practices where units returning from deployment are required to train and share lessons learned/lessons identified with future deployments.
- ◆ Fund opportunities to support the retainment of officers deployed in training functions with ITS or in the field, for example to be assigned to peacekeeping training centers.
- ◆ Resource a collaboration between T/PCCs and the Secretariat to identify ways of regularly informing the update/review of training materials through lessons learned/lessons identified by T/PCCs during deployment.
- ◆ Provide resources to support Mobile Training Teams to support national PDT and Mission Specific Training, as well as assessment of deploying contingents on PoC and their mission's context-specific challenges.
- ◆ Support a desk review of existing practices of information-sharing between outgoing and incoming rotations.
- ◆ Commission the translation of guidance documents, mandates and SOPs in language of personnel.
- ◆ Sponsor additional training for protection-related staff on core competencies in monitoring, capacity building, protection of victims and advocacy.

Integrating protection through training

PoC is a mission-wide responsibility, not a niche skill but a core skill of all personnel. Dedicated training related to specific mandates and mission needs must be reinforced, particularly for uniformed personnel designated to serve as a focal point or in an advisory role in a specific protection area (e.g. uniformed Human Rights Advisors, Gender Focal Points, etc.). This has been further strengthened, for example, in pre-deployment training through CPOC with all protection agendas (PoC, CAAC, WPS, human rights, etc.) integrated and linked throughout training and exercises.

For example, the Office for the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) and ITS have ensured the mainstreaming of human rights content in core pre-deployment training (PDT) modules. However, T/PCC instructors require more training of trainers to effectively deliver these materials. OHCHR and the Standing Police Capacity of the Police Division of DPO, in consultation with ITS, have developed a new Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on Human Rights in UN Policing, which is being delivered to major police-contributing countries. OHCHR is working on a similar forthcoming ToT course for military instructors. Following an initial pilot and test phase, these courses will be finetuned in close cooperation with ITS.

Recommendations for Member States and the Secretariat

- ◆ Support the development of integrated training – including pre-deployment training where possible – focusing training not only on prospective peacekeepers, but across military, police, and civilian personnel, mission leadership, and other relevant stakeholders, and that all protection agendas (PoC, CAAC, WPS, human rights, etc.) are integrated and linked throughout all training and exercises.
- ◆ Support dissemination of all existing training materials and recently developed handbooks, including through provision of translation for accessibility, to ensure materials reach key civilian, military and police personnel.
- ◆ Host and/or sponsor the roll out of new Specialised Training Materials (STMs) to key personnel such as Military Child Protection Focal Points.

Gender Mainstreaming and Sensitivity

Like PoC, implementation of the WPS Agenda has been prioritized in the A4P initiative, yet a similar lack of systematic integration of gender perspectives persists in peacekeeping. UN peacekeeping operations should continue to develop a better understanding of why and how improved gender sensitivity and its mainstreaming in training and continued learning can improve the effectiveness of missions. This must include taking the conversation beyond gender parity commitments and taking practical steps to ensure both men and women peacekeepers at all levels are trained on gender-sensitive issues to take on the difficult and nuanced challenges of peacekeeping operations in the field.³

Gender is often a standalone component in training curricula, which can limit peacekeepers' abilities to implement gender-sensitive responses across mandate activities. Increasing personnel's understanding of gender theory can assist in overall improvement on reducing communal harm and responding to violence in conflict. Such training may also assist in removing obstacles and challenges to equal and meaningful participation, thereby improving overall mission protection capacities.

Recommendations for Member States and the Secretariat

- ◆ Commit to securing trainers who are able to conduct initial gender theory learning in the native language and culture of peacekeepers.
- ◆ Support the development of training modules and activities that are gender mainstreamed.
- ◆ Sponsor higher-level learning and training opportunities at all levels to reinforce gender sensitive decision-making.
- ◆ Fund Gender Advisor positions for training to provide technical expertise and employ gender dynamics in a practical sense.
- ◆ Support the retention of a Protection Advisor in Sector Headquarters to ensure gender perspectives in peacekeeping operations.

About PAX

PAX means peace. PAX is an international peace organization working together with local partners in (post) conflict areas in the joint aim of promoting human security and building just and peaceful societies across the globe.

About the PoC program

The PAX Protection of Civilians (PoC) programs seeks to increase the effectiveness of PoC interventions by enabling civilians to hold local and international security actors to account, and by enabling and motivating security actors to design and implement protection strategies that are civilian centered.

Contact details

Brittany Roser
UN Advocacy Advisor, PAX

roser@paxforpeace.nl

www.paxforpeace.nl

www.protectionofcivilians.org

End notes

¹ PAX Virtual Event on “Training for PoC”, <https://protectionofcivilians.org/virtual-event-poc-week-2020-training-for-the-protection-of-civilians/>

² Aditi Gorur, The Global Observatory, “The Need for Monitoring and Evaluation in Advancing Protection of Civilians”, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/10/the-need-for-monitoring-evaluation-in-advancing-protection-of-civilians/>

³ The Government of Rwanda, PAX, and the Stimson Center, Virtual Event Summary on “Improving gender-sensitive capacities for the protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping”, https://protectionofcivilians.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/EVENT-SUMMARY__Improving-gender-sensitive-capacities-for-the-poc-in-un-peacekeeping-training.pdf