

Department of Peace Operations

Policy on Community Liaison Assistants



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Department of Peace Operations

Policy on Community Liaison Assistants

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Policy on Community Liaison Assistants

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A. Purpose and rationale

1. The successful implementation of peacekeeping mandates greatly depends on the ability of a mission to build confidence with local actors and communities; promote effective communication with and within these groups; and improve missions' understanding of contextual conflict dynamics. This link was previously emphasized in the 2015 report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations,¹ which stressed the need for United Nations peace operations to understand local conflict dynamics and actively engage with local communities.
2. In 2023, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations emphasized that the implementation of protection of civilians mandates should prioritize enhancing safe and effective community engagement and confidence-building, ensuring a good understanding of the protection needs and capacities of communities, and strengthening analysis of local-level conflict dynamics and threats against civilians. The Special Committee welcomed the role of Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) in that regard.²
3. The role of CLAs was introduced into United Nations peacekeeping operations in 2010. Since then, CLAs have been recognized as critical personnel for United Nations peacekeeping operations for achieving the above-mentioned goals, through their contribution to protection and stabilization via community engagement, situational awareness and early warning, and promotion of local peace initiatives. A 2016 survey of practice by the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET)³ highlighted the pivotal role that CLAs play in engaging with local communities, bolstering confidence and contributing to conflict analysis and situational awareness, all of which help missions to implement their mandates and enhance their operational capabilities. To leverage their unique capacity and understanding of local contexts, CLAs have been effectively deployed alongside military, police and civilian components, supporting protection of civilian activities, including dialogue and engagement, situational awareness and early warning, as well as initiatives establishing a protective environment.
4. In the absence of specific United Nations peacekeeping-wide guidance on the roles and responsibilities of CLAs, there have been varying practices across missions on how CLAs implement mandated tasks. Despite the favourable outcomes of working with other mission actors, a survey conducted for CLAs in 2021/2022 highlighted some common challenges to the effective and efficient deployment of CLAs in United Nations peacekeeping operations, including a lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities by mission stakeholders; confusion over reporting lines and chains of command; administrative and logistical constraints that hamper their flexible deployment; difficult physical conditions of deployment; and the absence of clear risk management assessment tools and risk mitigation strategies. In some cases, the

¹ [A/70/95–S/2015/446](#), paras. 156, 251 and 252.

² [A/77/19](#), para. 157.

³ *Community Liaison Assistants in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Survey of Practice* (2016).

ineffective deployment of CLAs has resulted in missed opportunities to support the mission mandate, particularly in terms of protecting civilians and addressing any existing erosion of trust between the mission and the local population; to operationalize valid information and counter risks of misinformation, disinformation, malinformation and hate speech (MDMH); and to strengthen understanding of the mission's role.

5. This Policy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of CLAs, including their working relationships with different components of United Nations peacekeeping operations. It also sets basic standards for their recruitment, deployment, redeployment and training. Furthermore, the Policy aims to provide a framework to improve consistency and efficiency across missions in the deployment of CLAs and strengthen the capacities of missions in overall local engagement.

B. Scope

6. Compliance with this Policy, under the overall authority of the Head of Mission, is mandatory for all civilian and uniformed personnel working in United Nations peacekeeping operations to which CLAs are deployed. Civilian personnel include all staff members, seconded civilian personnel, United Nations Volunteers, civilian experts on missions, consultants and individual contractors. Uniformed personnel include all members of the military, police and correction components, regardless of whether they are deployed under a memorandum of understanding or are seconded.
7. This Policy applies to all CLAs and their managers – usually civil affairs officers (CAOs) or, exceptionally, heads of field offices (HOFOS) – as well as the uniformed counterparts with whom they work on a regular basis.
8. This Policy is also relevant to all other civilian components, including those working on community engagement, protection, local conflict management, information integrity and addressing MDMH, and local peace initiatives.
9. In conformity with this Policy, missions may develop mission-specific guidance, such as standard operating procedures (SOPs) or guidelines, for their specific circumstances. Once the Policy is issued, already existing mission-specific guidance must be reviewed for compliance within three months. However, mission-specific SOPs should not set procedures relating to the recruitment of CLAs, which will remain subject to conditions set out under staff rule 4.4 of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations ([ST/SGB/2023/1/Rev.1](#)), as well as any applicable administrative instructions.
10. Lastly, this Policy applies to personnel in the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) under the authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, in their work supporting United Nations peacekeeping operations.

C. Policy

11. CLAs are national staff managed by CAOs or, exceptionally, HOFOs. They are deployed at the subnational level to engage with local actors and communities through dialogue and other mandated tasks of the mission, in support of efforts to protect civilians. CLAs support measures to enhance civilian physical protection and contribute to the establishment of a protective environment. To that end, CLAs are often deployed alongside uniformed personnel at operating bases (OBs) and other temporary deployments, such as temporary operating bases (TOBs) and surge teams.
12. CLAs contribute to the implementation of the mission's protection of civilians mandate by: (1) building trust at the field level between the mission (especially United Nations contingents) and the local authorities and population; (2) improving situational awareness and understanding of risks and threats to communities, as well as their expectations of the mission; (3) promoting community-based protection mechanisms such as early warning systems, and supporting local security governance initiatives, which includes planning local-level protection and stabilization activities; (4) supporting social cohesion through community dialogue, mediation and local peace initiatives, and strengthening the resilience of local communities; and (5) anticipating and mitigating the harmful effects of MDMH.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

13. CLAs are to be guided by the following principles:

▶ **impartiality:**

When engaging with communities and local authorities, CLAs must be perceived as impartial to the interests, objectives and agendas of all stakeholders, so that the mission can maintain its credibility.

▶ **inclusivity:**

Community engagement shall be planned and implemented in meaningful consultation with diverse groups, including women, men, boys, girls, youth from the local community, internally displaced persons, refugees, people with disabilities, community-based organizations, and traditional and religious leaders from local communities.

▶ **A coordinated and integrated approach:**

CLAs should promote and support an integrated approach in the implementation of protection of civilians mandates, owing to the multitude of actors who contribute to the protection of civilians both within and outside of the mission. CLAs must consider the comparative advantage, optimal positioning and appropriate modes of engagement vis-à-vis all the relevant actors, and systematically liaise and share information with them, as appropriate.

▶ **Do no harm:**

United Nations peacekeeping operations must be aware of the potential risks to civilians caused by the mission's presence or activities, and take steps to mitigate those risks. When interacting with civilians, missions must consider all possible risks (including reprisals for cooperating with the mission) and follow a "do no harm" approach. CLAs must abide by this principle and consider such potential effects of their engagement activities and adopt appropriate mitigation measures in collaboration with other mission components.

CLAs must not collect individual case testimonies relating to human rights violations (including conflict-related sexual violence and violations against children) or cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. If a victim comes forward, CLAs should only collect contact details and pass them on to the relevant sections.

▶ **Transparency:**

When engaging with communities, CLAs must clearly communicate the purpose of the engagement and what the collected information will be used for, while avoiding making unachievable commitments or raising unreasonable expectations.

Engagement with local actors should also include providing feedback on steps taken by the mission based on previous engagements and their outcome, whenever possible or relevant.

▶ **Confidentiality:**

CLAs shall respect the principles of impartiality and confidentiality when managing information. In coordination with the supervising section, information is to be disclosed to mission personnel on a need-to-know basis. Without prior approval from their supervisor or head of unit, CLAs shall not share sensitive or confidential details, information or reports to other mission components or non-mission United Nations personnel (e.g. United Nations country teams) or non-United Nations entities (e.g. the host State).

Similarly, sources of information shall be treated as confidential, and their identities shared only with key mission actors on a need-to-know basis, including in efforts to corroborate information provided by them. CLAs should implement measures put in place by the mission to guarantee the safety of sources and their protection against any retaliation.

▶ **Good judgment:**

As their operational duties are characterized by a high level of autonomy, CLAs should always exercise good judgment and common sense. CLAs should contact their supervisors for support whenever they are unsure about how to proceed in a specific situation. Furthermore, CLAs should document concerns and questions and raise them with their supervisors in cases relevant to other CLAs.

D. Roles and responsibilities

HEADS OF CIVIL AFFAIRS / HEADS OF FIELD OFFICES

14. Heads of civil affairs, or HOFs if the mission has this management arrangement for CLAs, are responsible for leading and providing strategic guidance relating to the CLA portfolio. They are also responsible for implementing this Policy and, where relevant, mission-specific SOPs and guidelines concerning CLAs.
15. Heads of civil affairs, or HOFs if applicable, are responsible for implementing periodic reviews of the roles and responsibilities of CLAs as set forth in this Policy, for possible adjustments and modifications by DPET in future iterations of the Policy, or by the Office of the Chief of Staff, for the amendment of relevant SOPs.
16. In close coordination with Mission Support and the Force, heads of civil affairs, or HOFs if applicable, shall ensure adequate duty of care for CLAs, which includes providing appropriate living and working conditions when they are deployed outside of the duty station and alongside uniformed components.

COMMUNITY LIAISON ASSISTANTS (CLAs)

Engaging with community and confidence-building

17. CLAs have the responsibility to engage meaningfully with local actors (e.g. local authorities, civil society, community and religious leaders, representatives and leaders of ethnic groups, women and children organizations, organizations for people with disabilities, youth, minorities, vulnerable or marginalized groups, as well as security forces and other key stakeholders), to foster confidence in the mission and its mandate and better understand any threats, protection needs, security concerns and local dynamics.
18. CLAs should work closely with United Nations uniformed contingents and civilian components (as applicable) deployed to an area of operations, to support them in establishing positive and constructive engagement with the local population and improve their understanding of the local dynamics through a context-specific and culturally sensitive lens, as well as raising awareness around local norms and customs.
19. The role of CLAs must not be confused or conflated with that of existing language assistants, who are assigned specifically to work with contingents as interpreters.
20. CLAs will liaise between local stakeholders and mission components not deployed in the area of operations, to improve programme implementation and communication and further strengthen confidence between local communities and the mission. They will also provide input and recommendations on areas that could be further improved in the mission's engagement with communities.

21. CLAs will support other mission actors in disseminating key messages to the local population and explaining the mission's mandate, as well as the roles of the uniformed and civilian components.

Improving situational awareness

22. CLAs will gather information from multiple sources, including Community Alert Network focal points, women's networks, local formal and informal authorities, and civil society organizations, and when tasked by the mission, armed groups and community self-defence militias. They will report on key sociopolitical and security dynamics and developments affecting local communities, focusing particularly on the different threats affecting women, girls and boys, youth, and other vulnerable groups and communities at risk.
23. CLAs are expected to facilitate gender- and age-responsive approaches in information gathering, threat assessments and analysis, as well as in planning responses and coordinating follow-up on field visits and patrols/operations.
24. CLAs will identify the needs, priorities and concerns of communities regarding their protection, and relay them to their supervisor and the commanding officer, when applicable, to inform the mission's strategic and operational responses.
25. CLAs will share with a supervisor and/or the deployment commanding officer, when applicable, all information that may contribute to situational awareness, conflict and risk analysis, and early warning mechanisms, including information on age and the gendered dimensions, in a timely and accurate manner, so as to contribute to existing mission operational and planning platforms, such as the Unite Aware–Situational Awareness Geospatial Enterprise (SAGE) and the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS).
26. CLAs will contribute information regarding the needs and perspectives of women, boys, girls, youth, minorities, and vulnerable or excluded groups to inform planning processes carried out by civilian and uniformed components.

Supporting community-based approaches to protection

27. CLAs will work with local stakeholders, uniformed components and other mission actors and partners to identify protection and security risks and determine requirements for local planning, early warning and rapid response mechanisms.
28. CLAs will support communities and local authorities, as appropriate, in local dispute management or resolution mechanisms where applicable, by establishing or strengthening local protection committees or similar mechanisms. CLAs will also support women's full, equal and meaningful participation in protection and governance mechanisms.
29. CLAs will facilitate the design and implementation of protection of civilian tools, in close coordination with the Force, including but not limited to early warning mechanisms (such as Community Alert Networks), as well as the design and implementation of community protection plans, where applicable. CLAs will also support the equal and meaningful participation of women in those mechanisms.
30. CLAs will identify and undertake actions supporting protection of civilian and stabilization initiatives, including but not limited to supporting military and police patrols, Joint Protection Teams, Joint Assessment Missions and surge team missions; facilitating dialogue and reconciliation

at the local level; assisting in capacity-building of local communities and institutions; and supporting local peace and stabilization initiatives.

Supporting action to prevent and mitigate information harms

31. Under the guidance of the Strategic Communications and Public Information Division, CLAs will help to monitor and report on emerging MDMH narratives targeting the mission, peacekeeping personnel, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and civilians, particularly ethnic minorities, women, journalists and activists, among others. They should also report on actors propagating MDMH, if known.
32. CLAs will engage in two-way dialogue with communities to understand motivations and underlying reasons for the spread and acceptance of rumours and/or MDMH, and work with the Strategic Communications and Public Information Division, substantive sections and/or a mission-established working group to devise compelling counter-narratives that resonate with the host communities.
33. When tasked by the mission leadership, CLAs will inform communities of military and police operations in advance, explaining the objectives of the operations, what communities can expect to see and how they may be affected, in order to minimize concerns and the risk of MDMH narratives emerging as a result of such operations.

FIRST REPORTING OFFICERS (CIVIL AFFAIRS TEAM LEADER OR HEAD OF FIELD OFFICE)

34. The Civil Affairs Team Leader at the duty station, or the HOFO where applicable, will be the first reporting officer, with overall responsibility for managing CLAs. The first reporting officer shall promote constructive collaboration with the Force and United Nations police and ensure that they understand the CLAs' functions and roles correctly.
35. The first reporting officer shall ensure that CLAs receive clear instructions on reporting requirements and modalities, as well as on the specific expectations attached to regular and ad hoc assignments, providing and facilitating the development of adequate mission-specific guidance (e.g. SOPs or guidelines) and mentoring modalities as needed. The first reporting officer is also responsible for initiating regular risk assessments and requesting ad hoc risk assessments, with due involvement from the Force when circumstances demand, as referred to in paragraph 45 below.

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS ADVISERS

36. The Senior Protection of Civilians Adviser is responsible for coordinating any protection of civilian efforts undertaken by civilian, police or military components and ensuring that protection of civilian concerns and threats identified by CLAs and others are considered in mission planning processes and operations. The Adviser contributes to the preparation of mission SOPs concerning the work of CLAs and can provide advice to CAOs and HOFOs on training of the uniformed components to collaborate with CLAs as an essential protection of civilian tool.

FORCE COMMANDERS

37. Force Commanders issue, disseminate and ensure compliance with any instructions requesting all military units working with CLAs to adhere to this Policy and any mission-specific SOPs on CLAs aimed at its implementation, if applicable.

POLICE COMMISSIONERS / FIELD OFFICE POLICE COORDINATORS

38. Police Commissioners and Field Office Police Coordinators, or United Nations police team leaders, issue, disseminate and ensure compliance with any instructions requesting all units working with CLAs to adhere to this Policy and any mission-specific SOPs on CLAs aimed at its implementation, if applicable.

COMMANDING OFFICERS OF UNITS DEPLOYED WITH CLAS

39. When CLAs are deployed with a uniformed unit, commanding officers are responsible for ensuring that CLAs receive the support needed to perform their duties and that effective, professional and collaborative working relationships are established. Commanding officers shall provide first/second reporting officers with input for the CLAs' performance appraisal.
40. Coordination of daily activities, when deployed in TOBs or similar deployments, must be agreed upon among the CLAs, their supervisors in the field office and the commanding officer, in line with the core responsibilities and duties of CLAs as described in this Policy.
41. Commanding officers are ultimately responsible for the safety and security of CLAs deployed with their units and shall determine jointly with the CLAs whether activities may be carried out without undue prejudice to their safety and security. Such decisions need to be promptly communicated to the CLAs' supervisors.
42. Whenever possible, commanding officers shall include CLAs in civilian-military and patrol planning related to community engagement and protection of civilians activities. Commanding officers shall also consider and incorporate information and analysis relating to threats against civilians provided by CLAs into military plans (community protection plans, contingency plans and others).

OTHER CIVILIAN SECTIONS

43. Other civilian sections should inform and consult CLAs, through their managers or supervisors, when planning field visits and activities in areas where CLAs are deployed, to ensure effective coordination and promote operational coherence.
44. Other civilian sections requiring CLAs' assistance to support their mandated tasks in the areas where CLAs are deployed should first coordinate with their first reporting officer to ensure that additional tasks will not interfere with the performance of their primary role and function as set out in this Policy.

E. Safety and security

45. Heads of civil affairs, or the HOFO when applicable, as second reporting officers of CLAs, shall develop a process to regularly assess, plan for and manage risks to CLAs. This includes area-specific or individual risks and threats linked to the performance of their duties, in consultation with relevant counterparts including first reporting officers, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of the Chief of Staff, the Joint Mission Analysis Centre, Force Headquarters and relevant military units, as well as human resources and Mission Support. This assessment shall include:
- (i) Threats made to their personal safety or that of their family members by armed groups, local authorities, security forces or others, which include online threats that could manifest through social media or other digital communications. The threats can take the form of the circulation of personally identifiable information (e.g. photos, addresses, contact details and identification numbers), direct or indirect threats, defamation, use of digitally created or altered visual media, or other forms;
 - (ii) Hostility from local actors triggered by the perceived association of CLAs with a specific ethnic group or faction;
 - (iii) Hostility from local actors triggered by unmet expectations and/or the perceived failure of the mission to deliver on its mandate;
 - (iv) Physical, financial or psychological pressure exerted on CLAs to illicitly obtain information or in any way influence the mission's operations.
46. CLAs should report any safety and security incidents targeting them to their first reporting officer, their commanding officer (where applicable) and the Department of Safety and Security.
47. As second reporting officers, heads of civil affairs (or the HOFO if applicable) have the responsibility, in coordination with other relevant mission components, to initiate a risk assessment and adopt appropriate mitigation measures, which may include, in extreme cases and under the discretion of the Head of Mission, relocation to another duty station.

F. Recruitment and deployment

48. The recruitment of CLAs shall follow the administrative instructions set out in [ST/AI/2016/1](#) and [ST/AI/2016/1/Amend.1](#) on the staff selection and managed mobility system. However, during selection particular attention should be given to the ability of future CLAs to build relations of trust with different groups, especially women and women organizations, youth and youth organizations, and communities present in the prospective area of responsibility, through the knowledge of local dialects and the absence of identity markers that could

undermine perceptions of impartiality or present a risk to the personal safety of future CLAs. It is recommended that CLAs should not be deployed to the exact locality where they are from, as this could present potential conflicts of interest.

49. Given the critical role played by CLAs to mitigate or prevent threats to civilians and to improve community engagement activities, their deployment to military operating bases or other locations outside the regular duty station should be supported and expedited as a matter of priority.
50. When CLAs are on a temporary duty assignment (TDY), which can be up to three months in a location other than their duty station, they shall receive the applicable rate of daily subsistence allowance. Missions should recognize that CLAs are expected to be on mission frequently and ensure that appropriate allocations are made at the time of budgeting and planning, to guarantee the sustainability of field operations.
51. When operational and strategic priorities require relocation to a different duty station, in line with the current interpretation of staff rule 4.4(a), CLAs who are General Service personnel may be considered for positions in another duty station. This is provided that they are authorized to work in that country regardless of where they live at the time of applying for the job opening. Where eligible General Service staff members are recruited, there is no requirement for separation or resignation; however, travel expenses to the new duty station are to be borne by the staff member.
52. When CLAs are selected in the National Professional Officer category, they may be considered for National Professional Officer positions in another duty station provided that they are nationals of the country and they are selected through a regular selection process. There is no requirement for separation or resignation; however, travel expenses to the new duty station are to be borne by the staff member.
53. Recognizing the essential role of female CLAs in engaging with women and girls in conflict-affected environments, thereby making them crucial for effective community access, missions should develop targeted recruitment measures to promote gender parity among deployed CLAs. Until adequate numbers of female CLAs are deployed, missions should consider mobile teams of female CLAs to ensure adequate gender balance in community engagement and protection efforts. Specific considerations must be given in terms of outreach efforts and tailoring job requirements and working conditions to promote the recruitment of female candidates to the position of CLA.
54. Given the high-tempo nature of CLA work when deployed with uniformed components in TOBs (or equivalent deployments), as well as the high demands on their ability to engage effectively with local stakeholders in often volatile contexts along with the hardship associated with their working environment, it is desirable for the mission to deploy teams of CLAs, consisting of a minimum of two individuals per location. Higher numbers are recommended for larger uniformed deployments.
55. Where CLAs are not provided with adequate logistic support (e.g. accommodation, bedding and transportation) by the contingent with which they are deployed, Mission Support should ensure that CLAs are provided with these provisions and services by the mission. In missions where female CLAs are deployed, arrangements should be made to ensure that they have a choice

between sleeping in the (potentially all-male) military base or in private accommodations. Female CLAs can refuse to be deployed if such a choice is not provided. In addition, careful consideration should be given to ensuring that female CLAs have separate and adequate ablution and rest facilities and have secure and effective means to report any incidents of misconduct or abuse to the Conduct and Discipline Unit.

56. Mission Support is to ensure that CLAs are issued with the necessary information technology (IT) and communication equipment required to collect data, submit reports and provide information to their managers and counterparts in a timely and safe manner. Where applicable, CLAs should be allowed automatic access to the Internet for working purposes through mission-provided equipment.

G. Terms and definitions

Community Alert Networks

57. Community Alert Networks are a tactical-level early warning tool. They are human and/or technology-based communication systems to reinforce the capacities of communities to protect themselves by enhancing and organizing their means of communication. They aim at providing early warning information on threats to communities or individuals at risk of violence and can assist tactical-level mission presence (including company operating bases and TOBs) to triangulate information and prevent or respond to threats. A Community Alert Network allows an at-risk community to contact the closest mission presence and alert them of impending threats.

Community protection plans

58. At the tactical level, each mission base or field presence is expected to have a community protection plan, which provides an overview of the security situation, threats to the civilian population, priority communities at risk of violence, and actions planned or required to address protection of civilian risks. Depending on the composition of the base or field presence, community protection plans will often be drafted by the CLAs and the field commander (United Nations police/the Force), with support from civilian components and in consultation with local communities.

Conflict-related sexual violence

59. Conflict-related sexual violence refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. That link may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator, who is often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group, which includes terrorist entities; the

profile of the victim, who is frequently an actual or perceived member of a political, ethnic or religious minority group or targeted on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; the climate of impunity, which is generally associated with State collapse, cross-border consequences such as displacement or trafficking, and/or violations of a ceasefire agreement. The term also encompasses the trafficking of people for the purpose of sexual violence or exploitation committed in situations of conflict.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

60. According to ST/SGB/2003/13, sexual abuse refers to actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Sexual exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including but not limited to profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This includes acts such as transactional sex, solicitation of transactional sex and exploitative relationships.

Gender-responsive approach

61. The United Nations defines a gender-responsive approach as that which recognizes and addresses the different needs, priorities and experiences of women, men, girls and boys. It involves integrating a gender analysis into policies, programmes and actions to ensure that they are designed and implemented in a way that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment. A gender-responsive approach is also inclusive of and supports the priorities of the women, peace and security mandate.

Head of field office

62. Field offices are led by HOFOs, sometimes referred to as heads of offices or State Coordinators. They act as a local representative of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and the chief of staff of the field office and the area security coordinator. The primary role of HOFOs is to ensure overall coherence in mandate implementation in their area of responsibility and oversee programme delivery in accordance with the mission priorities based on strategic and policy guidance from senior management.

Human rights violation

63. Human rights violations are any acts, by commission or omission, that infringe, directly or indirectly, upon enjoyment of the rights and freedoms guaranteed and protected by international human rights law. Human rights violations can take many forms, including but not limited to physical violence, discrimination, torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, censorship, restrictions on freedom of expression and denial of access to basic services, such as health care, education and clean water.

Information harm

64. The information harms referred to in this Policy include the following terms. “Misinformation” is inaccurate information that is unintentionally shared in good faith by those unaware that they are passing on falsehoods. “Disinformation” is information that is inaccurate, intended to deceive and shared to do serious harm. “Malinformation” is information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, social group, organization or country. “Hate speech” is defined as any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour which attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group because of who they are, in other words based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or identity factor.

Local protection committees

65. With the support of local communities, CLAs support the establishment of local protection committees to promote ownership of protection mechanisms at the local level within their areas of deployment. Local protection committees are trained regularly by CLAs on the protection of civilians and the early warning mechanism that facilitates their collaboration with protection of civilian actors, as well as the drafting of community protection plans that identify protection threats and mitigating measures.

Protection of civilians

66. The protection of civilians mandate in United Nations peacekeeping operations is defined as without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the host State, integrated and coordinated activities by all civilian and uniformed mission components to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians within the mission’s capabilities and areas of deployment through the use of all necessary means, up to and including deadly force.

Operating base

67. An OB is a military position (permanent or temporary) used as a secure location from which the United Nations Infantry Battalion/Company projects combat power in support of operational goals and tactical objectives. The establishment and maintenance of a secure and functional base of operations for the battalion and its subunits are important responsibilities of the United Nations Infantry Battalion Commander.

Temporary operating base

68. Typically, a TOB is a temporary base for a United Nations infantry platoon/company. Temporary can mean hours, days or months, depending on the unit’s mission. Given the statement of unit requirements of most United Nations infantry units, United Nations infantry platoons are not equipped to self-sustain for extended periods of time and should be supported by their United Nations infantry company. The level of TOB security/Force Protection depends on the capability of the unit, but remains the responsibility of the United Nations Infantry Battalion Commander and subordinate commanders.

H. References

Normative or superior references

- DPKO-DFS. Policy Directive on Civil Affairs (2008.09)
- Administrative instruction: staff selection and managed mobility system ([ST/AI/2016/1](#) and [ST/AI/2016/1/Amend.1](#))
- Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, including provisional Staff Rules, of the United Nations ([ST/SGB/2023/1/Rev.1](#))
- DPO. Policy on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping (2023.05)

Related procedures and guidelines

- DPKO-DFS. *Civil Affairs Handbook* (2012)
- DPKO-DFS. Guidelines on Engagement with Civil Society (2017.06)
- DPKO-DFS-DPA. *Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations* (2017)
- MINUSCA. Standard Operating Procedure on the Modalities of Collaboration between Mission Uniformed Components and Community Liaison Assistants (2018.6)
- United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech (2019)
- DPO. *The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Handbook* (2020)
- DPO. United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual (UNIBAM), 2nd edition (2020)
- DPO. *Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security: Resource Package* (2020)
- MONUSCO. Standard Operating Procedures on the Administration of Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) (MONUSCO-2022-01167)
- DPO. United Nations Engagement Platoon Handbook, 1st edition (2022)
- DPO. Policy on Civil-Military Coordination in UN integrated Peacekeeping Missions (UN-CIMIC) (2022.01)
- Countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms: report of the Secretary-General ([A/77/287](#))
- *Our Common Agenda – Policy Brief 8: Information Integrity on Digital Platforms* (2023)

Other related documents

- Secretary-General's bulletin: special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse ([ST/SGB/2003/13](#))
- DPKO-DFS. *Community Liaison Assistants in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Survey of Practice* (2016)

i. Monitoring and compliance

At the Headquarters level, compliance with this Policy shall be monitored by DPET. At the mission level, compliance shall be monitored by the Office of the Chief of Staff.

Regular assessments of peacekeeping operations, including those undertaken in the framework of military and police evaluations, as well as Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership reviews, shall also contribute to monitoring compliance with this Policy.

J. Contacts

The contact for this Policy is the Civil Affairs Team (pbps-civilaffairs-unhq@un.org), located in the Policy and Best Practices Service, a branch of DPET within DPO.

K. History

This is the first iteration of this Policy.

APPROVAL SIGNATURE: 

NAME, TITLE, DEPARTMENT

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Department of Peace Operations

DATE OF APPROVAL: 24 April 2024

