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**United Nations**  
**Department of Global Communications**  
**Department of Peace Operations**  
**Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs**  
**Ref. DPO 2024.04 / DPPA 2024.01**

## **Policy**

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# **Strategic Communications in Peace Operations**

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Contact: DGC/SCD/PSS, DPO/OCSS/SCS and  
DPPA/OUSG/Communications Team

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**DGC DPO DPPA POLICY ON  
Strategic Communications in  
Peace Operations**

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**A. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE**

1. The purpose of this policy is to set a common standard for how peace operations, comprising peacekeeping operations and special political missions, approach and manage strategic communications.
  2. This policy outlines the role, purpose and objectives of strategic communications within peace operations. It sets standards and clarifies roles and responsibilities to facilitate a cohesive approach to communications.
  3. The policy updates terminology to ensure alignment between job title and the nature of work delivered. Staff should be progressively recruited under the title of “strategic communications officer” rather than “public information officer” to better reflect the rapidly evolving media and communications landscape.
  4. This policy intends to strengthen the capacities and capabilities of peace operations to foster support for their operations and successfully implement their mandates.
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**B. SCOPE**

5. This policy shall apply to all personnel in the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) who are tasked with strategic communications activities within peace operations, including civilian, military and police. Compliance is mandatory. Relevant personnel should be aware of the contents of this policy. Peace operations with limited or no specific strategic communications or public information capacity may use the policy for guidance in consultation with their counterparts at headquarters.

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## C. POLICY

6. Strategic communications is a political and operational necessity that is critical in enabling peace operations to fulfil their mandates.<sup>1</sup> It is essential to foster public support from the earliest stages of deployment and to maintain the effectiveness of a mission throughout its life cycle. Strategic communications should be fully integrated into all planning and risk management processes, promote the tangible impact of missions, build support, help manage expectations and shape narratives, and contribute to addressing misinformation, disinformation, malinformation and hate speech (MDMH). Strategic communication is a senior leadership responsibility and function. It requires a coordinated, whole-of-mission approach.

### C.1. Objectives of strategic communications

7. Strategic communications objectives are to:
- Support the mission:
    - Help build and maintain public and political support to enable missions to fully implement their mandates.
    - Protect and enhance each mission's reputation and credibility by providing clear information about its mandate, promoting its tangible positive impact on host communities and other key audiences while managing expectations.
    - Foster trust and confidence with host governments and communities through proactive, collaborative, interactive and sustained engagement.
    - Promote the work of the mission through outreach, public information, storytelling and advocacy campaigns including through the effective, human-focused and data-driven use of social and digital media.
    - Build new partnerships and strengthen existing ones with key stakeholders, including countries contributing troops, police, technology and financial resources; Member States; international and non-governmental organizations, including women and youth organizations, networks and groups.
    - Provide regular, timely, accurate and impartial information on operational developments and the overall work of the Mission.
  - Support political settlements and peace processes:
    - Provide information to foster trust and confidence among parties to conflict and within communities to advance political and peace processes.
    - Advocate for the meaningful inclusion and participation of all populations in political and peace processes, including women and youth, indigenous groups, and ethnic and other minorities, and amplify and elevate their voices.
    - Promote understanding of the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders.
  - Support the protection of civilians:
    - Proactively promote mission-mandated activities to protect civilians, such as monitoring ceasefires, mediation and reconciliation initiatives, investigating and

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<sup>1</sup> The Future of UN Operations: Report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/357-S/2015/682).

reporting on human rights violations and abuses as appropriate, peacebuilding and physical protection through peacekeeping.

- Manage reputational risks, threats and expectations:
  - Proactively provide regular, accurate, credible and timely information to stakeholders relating to the mission's role, responsibilities, capacities and operations.
  - Communicate transparently, candidly and proactively on misconduct related issues, on operational limitations, and help to protect personnel and communities by facilitating the monitoring, analysing and response to MDMH on digital and traditional media platforms; participate in mission-wide and headquarters working groups to address this issue; establish strong and interactive relationships with host communities; and provide timely information on potential threats.
  - Focus on partnering and collaborating with local groups and constituencies, as appropriate, on outreach, cross-cutting campaigns and communications projects to build engagement and demonstrate tangible impact and value.
  - Work with other units within the mission and at headquarters on MDMH issues.

## **C.2. Approach to strategic communications**

8. Peace operations are required to have an overarching Communications Strategy. In the case of peacekeeping operations, this is aligned with the SRSG's compact, the Mission Concept, the Mission Plan and the mission budget. Missions should regularly evaluate the use of specific platforms and communications channels to measure the reach and impact of narratives and key messages, including through social media management tools and public opinion surveys. Such outreach can also include robust engagement on a variety of digital platforms, including social media and websites; traditional media, in-person community outreach; United Nations radio stations and other emerging digital technologies and channels.
9. Strategic communications should include compelling character-driven, data-strengthened and solutions-focused storytelling that meaningfully demonstrates the impact of mission activities and strengthens understanding of the mission's mandate and operational tasks.
10. While strategic communications components are traditionally responsible only for external-facing communications, they should be consulted on internal communications, as relevant, particularly in developing and disseminating sensitive content. Responsibility for internal communications rests with mission leadership and/or support elements, who should establish clear, coordinated, and consistent processes to share mission priorities, objectives, and activities with all personnel.
11. A gender-responsive approach should be applied in strategic communications, which considers the perspectives of women, men, girls and boys and other identities, and ensures that strategic communications efforts do not perpetuate gender inequalities or reinforced harmful norms. Efforts must contribute to the pursuit of gender equality and women, peace and security mandates of the mission.

## **C.3. Establishment of strategic communications components/functions**

The following points should be considered during the establishment of strategic communications components/functions.

12. Strategic communications should be fully integrated into all stages of planning and deploying a peace operation. From the outset, this requires considering and refining the role of strategic communications as well as the structures and human and financial resources required to achieve its objectives in support of the mission.
13. A strategic communications assessment must be conducted as part of any assessments before the launch of a mission. The assessment should make specific recommendations on the required structure and approach to strategic communications. It should identify the objectives of mission strategic communications; suggest the most effective methods of communicating with local, regional and international audiences; define the scope of the media and communications environment and infrastructure; recommend resource and staffing levels; address and assess the MDMH environment; define relevant language requirements; and analyse the social media ecosystem to help define an appropriate and suitable overall approach. If a radio network needs to be established, this should be referenced in the Security Council resolution creating the mission and reflected in the Status of Forces and other relevant agreements. A sustainability and exit plan should be built into planning, resourcing and operations.
14. The head of strategic communications or the person responsible for the function should be recruited and deployed or designated at the earliest opportunity and should participate in the entire mission planning process. S/he should produce an initial communications strategy coordinated with all relevant components and sections, and integrated into the overall mission plan, mission concept, sub-strategies and concept of operations, as appropriate. The strategy should be in alignment with the United Nations Global Communications Strategy.
15. A spokesperson and a digital media officer should be among the first personnel designated or deployed to immediately engage with the media and other key stakeholders. Surge support staff may be deployed from United Nations headquarters or other missions to supplement initial capacity, including to identify needed personnel and equipment, and to prepare a budget.
16. The strategic communications component should be involved in all processes related to change and risk management throughout the lifespan of the mission, including mission transition, drawdown and liquidation.

#### **C.4. Role of United Nations headquarters strategic communications components**

17. The strategic communications components of DPPA, DPO, the Department of Global Communications (DGC) and other relevant departments should provide guidance and amplify priorities, narratives, key messages, campaigns and content from missions at the global level, and can directly support in crisis situations depending on available resources.

#### **C.5. Role of mission leadership**

18. Strategic communications is a core responsibility and function for heads of mission and/or special representatives or special envoys of the Secretary-General. As one of the principal voices for the mission, Head of Entity proactively leads communications efforts to generate support and understanding in local, regional and international communities. Heads of mission and/or special representatives or special envoys of the Secretary-General should be

evaluated for their leadership and management of strategic communications, per their senior leadership compact.

19. The head of mission/entity and/or special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General should ensure that other mission components work closely with the strategic communications component/function on all aspects of its work. These other components can include, but are not limited to, office of the chief of staff, mission support, JMAC, military, police, political and civil affairs, electoral, human rights, gender, security, protocol, conduct and discipline units.

#### **C.6. Role of the head of strategic communications**

20. Under the authority of the head of mission and/or the special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General, the chief of strategic communications is responsible for developing and implementing the mission-wide communications strategy aligned with mission-wide objectives and priorities. It is recommended that these strategies include the following elements: (a) purpose; (b) context/background; (c) objectives; (d) challenges, risks and milestone moments (such as political and peace processes, elections, mandate renewals, operations, human rights issues and reports); (e) communications approach; (f) narrative and key messages; (g) target audiences; (h) communications methods; (i) table of actions and intended outcomes; (j) allocation of resources; (k) assessment and evaluation process; and (l) applicable laws, rules and regulations relevant to the mission/operating environment. The strategy must be regularly reviewed and adjusted throughout the mission life cycle.
21. The head of strategic communications and/or spokesperson are the primary advisers to mission leadership on communications risks and opportunities. They must report to and have direct access to the head of mission/entity and/or special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General. They must be fully integrated into all planning and decision-making processes and be members of the Mission Leadership/senior management team or group, the United Nations communications group and any other relevant decision-making and risk management bodies, including on conduct and discipline, and safety and security.
22. The head of strategic communications and other relevant personnel such as the head of digital media will provide strategic and practical advice to and facilitate training for the head of mission and/or special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General and other members of the mission leadership team required to publicly engage with key stakeholders, including deputy heads of missions and/or deputy special representatives or deputy special envoys of the Secretary-General, force commanders, police commissioners and heads of other public facing components.
23. The head of strategic communications is responsible for leading the strategic communications component, including planning, budgeting, reporting and the evaluation of the impact of the communications strategy.

#### **C.7. Role of mission personnel in strategic communications**

24. Mission personnel can make important contributions to strategic communications by sharing information and participating in campaigns and content creation, including stories, videos, photos, social media products, media interviews and outreach events. These activities should be conducted under the direction and guidance of strategic communications or designated personnel and must be in line with relevant personal and corporate social media guidance,

including the United Nations Guidelines for the Personal Use of Social Media<sup>2</sup> and the Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Institutional Use of Social Media.<sup>3</sup>

25. The head of mission/entity and/or special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General, head of strategic communications and/or spokesperson are the principal voices of the mission. All personnel must adhere to the Staff Regulations of the United Nations and Provisional Staff Rules. Namely, "they shall avoid any action and, in particular, any kind of public pronouncement that may adversely reflect on their status, or on the integrity, independence and impartiality that are required by that status".<sup>4</sup>
26. The United Nations Guidelines for the Personal Use of Social Media should be regularly disseminated to personnel, who should strictly abide by them. For official accounts, the Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Institutional Use of Social Media applies. The misuse of social media by mission personnel can pose a significant threat to operational security. It may negatively affect the mission's reputation and damage relationships with stakeholders in a manner impeding mandate delivery.

### **C.8. Strategic communications responsibilities and resourcing**

27. The structure of the strategic communications component must be fit for purpose and reflect the size, mandate and scope of the mission. The structure should be designed to ensure a collaborative and integrated workflow under the head of strategic communications' overall authority.
28. The strategic communications components/functions should conceptualize and deliver compelling and interactive online campaigns and content tailored to target audiences and platforms. It may also undertake outreach activities and produce and disseminate print publications and promotional items. The content strategy should focus on advocacy and be interactive. It should include a call to action where appropriate and demonstrate the impacts of mission activities.
29. In some peace operations, the head of strategic communications also serves as the mission's spokesperson. In others, the spokesperson is a separate function that reports to the head of strategic communications and has direct access to the head of the mission. While specific configurations should be decided by senior mission leadership based on the mission's mandate and available resources, strategic communications components typically require the following functions and capabilities:

29.1. Media relations: The spokesperson or designated officer should host or facilitate regular press conferences, provide on- and off-the-record media briefings, draft and disseminate press releases, respond to media queries, facilitate interviews with mission officials, and in cooperation with JMAC and other mission units conduct monitoring and analysis of traditional and digital media. The spokesperson should liaise directly with relevant offices at United Nations headquarters, including the strategic communications components of DPPA and DPO, the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, DGC and other relevant United Nations entities, to provide updates on developments and information for the noon briefing and other public or media engagements, and to coordinate the amplification of mission content on global United

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Secretariat Guidelines for the Personal Use of Social Media, February 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Institutional Use of Social Media (ST/SG/2019/5).

<sup>4</sup> Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations (ST/SGB/2018/1).



Nations platforms. Media lines and briefing transcripts should be provided to headquarters in a timely manner.

- 29.2. Digital and social media communications is essential to reach external audiences, including the international community and media, diaspora, and countries contributing troops, police, technology and financial resources. All content should be channelled through the strategic communications component or designated personnel. The impact of digital campaigns should be evaluated on an ongoing basis. The mission must adhere to social media guidelines.<sup>5</sup> The strategic communication component/function may establish social media accounts for the head of mission and/or special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General and other mission leaders. The website of each mission must be hosted by the United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology on the peace operations web platform.

The strategic communications component should maintain and monitor social media channels, providing analysis to navigate reputational risks. For optimal performance, the component must be appropriately resourced, including access to existing and emerging digital tools, technology and software as well as 24/7 high-quality Internet access.

Strategic communications components must have personnel with the required expertise and experience and equipped with necessary communications tools and technology to engage with all audiences, in a proactive and interactive manner, across traditional and digital platforms.

- 29.3 Multimedia units should produce high-quality stories, photography and video products documenting activities of all mission components, and reflecting challenges faced by local communities as well as their participation in conflict resolution and political and peace processes. Videos should meet the standards required for broadcast on local television. Specific products should be produced for the UNifeed distribution system and repackaged by UNTV and DPO. Radio may be stand alone unit in some contexts and a sub section of multimedia in others.

- 29.4 Community outreach provides an opportunity to build grass-roots trust and confidence in the mission. This is particularly important in countries with low literacy rates and poor communications infrastructure. Outreach capacity should include personnel and/or strategic partners who can engage with different audiences in local languages with an awareness of relevant protection concerns.

30. Military and police communications specialists are vital to a mission-wide approach to strategic communications, providing an important link between civilian and uniformed components. Military and police communications specialists deployed to missions must have the required expertise and operational experience in media and communications. They should operate under the guidance of the head of strategic communications and work in an integrated manner with the civilian component to assist with media relations, including in facilitating journalist visits, responding to media queries, and maintaining records on the numbers and composition of police and military components for public release. Specialists should also assist with outreach activities and the production of digital and social media content in line with the approved mission narrative, messaging and visual branding standards. The head of strategic communications or nominated supervisor should ensure that military

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<sup>5</sup> Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Institutional Use of Social Media (ST/SG/2019/5).

and police communications specialists are fully briefed on the mission communications strategy and their role in its implementation, have ongoing access to approved messaging, and are provided with ongoing guidance and training.

31. To reach out to global audiences, the strategic communications component or designated personnel should ensure that products are shared in a proactive and timely manner with the strategic communications teams of DPO and DPPA, the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General and DGC, including the UN News Centre, UNTV, UNifeed, UN Photo, UN Social Media and UN Information Centres.

### **C.9. Crisis communications**

32. In an emergency situation, including an elevated security level, critical incident or military threat, and the evacuation of personnel, strategic communications is key in helping to manage risks and limit reputational damage.
33. Strategic communications components or designated personnel should determine communications needs and develop a crisis communications plan with clear responsibilities.<sup>6</sup> The chief of strategic communications and/or spokesperson should be member(s) of the crisis management team or group and liaise directly with counterparts at United Nations headquarters to provide regular updates on the situation, mission actions and key messages. The component should provide strategic advice and practical support to ensure the timely release of information throughout the crisis, using all relevant tools and platforms. All information and messaging should be supported by consistent data and facts that are verified and cleared by the head of mission and/or special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General and/or the crisis management team. Wherever possible, information should be shared with the United Nations headquarters crisis cell if activated. Sharing messages with the United Nations country team helps to uphold a “One UN” communications approach. For humanitarian crises, resident coordinators and/or humanitarian coordinators are expected to support the development of messages in consultation with United Nations organizations responding to the crisis.

### **C.10. Misinformation, disinformation, malinformation and hate speech**

34. Misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, and hate speech (MDMH) undermine information integrity and are growing challenges for missions.<sup>7</sup> They threaten the safety and security of personnel and communities and impede mandate delivery. The strategic communications component should support an integrated and cross pillar approach by helping bring together civilian and uniformed components, including as part of a dedicated coordination structure, such as a working group on MDMH.
35. The strategic communications component plays a central role in responding to MDMH across all platforms, including producing and disseminating key messages, digital and radio campaigns and content, establishing networks of partners to support prevention and response efforts, and community outreach. In collaboration with JMAC and other relevant Sections, the strategic communications unit should also help the mission to understand the information environment by supporting efforts to anticipate risks, monitor, analyse, and report

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<sup>6</sup> The following documents may be relevant in crisis situations: Policy on UN System Response to Unconstitutional Change of Government, United Nations General Guidance on Engagement with De Facto Authorities and the 2023 United Nations System-Wide Crisis Management Policy.

<sup>7</sup> The definition of hate speech, disinformation and misinformation is available in the section on terms and definitions.

incidents of and trends in of mis/disinformation to mission leadership, including mapping key actors involved in producing and propagating harmful messaging. Analysis of sources, amplification networks, narratives and the spread of MDMH should inform mission responses, including the threshold for acting on particular incidents.<sup>8</sup>

### **C.11. Communications on sexual exploitation and abuse**

36. System-wide communications guidance on responding to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel was adopted in February 2022.<sup>9</sup> The guidance states that “transparent, honest, and regular communications on sexual exploitation and abuse are vital for the United Nations to maintain credibility with a range of stakeholders”. Peace operations are responsible for communicating on allegations against their personnel. The head of mission and/or special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General is responsible for authorizing all communications, including statements by UN personnel under her/his authority. The head of mission/entity and/or special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General may delegate this authority to the deputy or another official. All public statements on sexual exploitation and abuse require prior consultations with DPO in peacekeeping settings or DPPA for special political missions. The Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General must also be informed.
37. Communications on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse goes beyond simply responding to media reports of allegations. Peace operations need to communicate information proactively and continuously on United Nations policies to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as on reporting mechanisms, the status of investigations, accountability measures and support to victims, including via United Nations websites and social media platforms, and through radio broadcasts and in-person outreach activities.

### **C.12. Archiving**

38. The United Nations is committed to preserving and providing access to material that documents the history of peace operations. The strategic communications component is responsible for ensuring that the material it produces and disseminates is routinely archived throughout the life of the mission. The mission must provide adequate financial and human resources for this task.
39. Archived material must reflect the various activities and stages of the mission. Materials should contain accurate metadata describing the content and be transferred to the appropriate entity according to type, including the Archives and Records Management Section for press materials, the Audio-Visual Library for audio, video and photographs, and the web platform for digital content. Third-party social media channels such as YouTube and Flickr are not adequate platforms for archiving United Nations material.
40. At the time of liquidation or transition, the mission must make financial and human resources available for archiving the final contents of the mission. Raw materials not selected for final archiving can be provided to national archives, libraries or government cultural institutions, where appropriate.

### **C.13. Budget, procurement, stock maintenance and contracting**

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<sup>8</sup> Addressing Misinformation and Disinformation in United Nations Peacekeeping Settings: Tips and tools, December 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Communications Guidance to Respond to Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel, February 2022

41. Missions should provide strategic communications components or designated personnel with the necessary budget to fully implement all required communications activities. Chiefs of strategic communications should be fully engaged in mission planning and budgetary processes to ensure the timely implementation of projects and procurement of equipment. Heads of components are responsible for developing and implementing the budget, including reporting on expenditure and the impact of activities through the results-based budgeting process and other mechanisms.
42. Strategic communications components have specific equipment needs beyond other mission entities, including hardware and software to run radio stations; maintain websites and social media accounts; and produce photography, videography and publications. Sustained crisis communications capacity may require satellite phones and stand-alone Internet capability as well as accommodations for critical communications personnel, including national staff where required. These requirements should be reflected in resources provided by missions. Heads of strategic communications should develop an acquisition plan for required goods and services and liaise closely with relevant sections, including budget and finance, procurement, mission support, and field information and technology services. The Strategic Communications budget should be under and independent cost centre, as possible.
43. Where mission staffing is inadequate or specialized profiles are required, the strategic communications component may consider recruiting contractors with specific skills to support the implementation of the communications strategy and activities. Examples include radio and video production, the management of perception surveys and focus groups, and assistance with major ad hoc projects.

#### **C.14. Language requirements**

44. Strategic communications materials and services should be produced in the official language(s) of the host country/authorities and, if possible, in other local languages. Strategic communications components or designated personnel should have staff with appropriate language skills to communicate with local populations and assist with language translation and the dissemination of multilingual materials.

#### **C.15. Capacity-building**

45. From the outset, strategic communications components should actively recruit local staff and contractors who reflect gender balance and the diversity of the local population.
46. National/local staff should clearly understand the role and mandate of the mission and act with impartiality, in accordance with United Nations values and standards of conduct. The Head of Strategic Communications should provide opportunities for national/local staff to develop skills to support career development.
47. In cooperation with other relevant partners, strategic communications components should support the development of free and independent host country media that adhere to the highest journalistic ethics and standards, and advocate for the full freedom to report and move throughout the country. The mission and/or United Nations country team can provide training and equipment for local journalists as well as for government and non-governmental communications personnel, depending on the mandate and available resources.

#### **C.16. Outreach to countries contributing troops and police**

48. United Nations peacekeeping operations have a particular responsibility to conduct outreach to countries contributing troops and police, including to promote the tangible impacts of their work in the protection of civilians, conflict prevention and response, and peacebuilding. Specific content should be produced to reflect these activities, including stories, photos, videos and social media products. This content should be disseminated online and shared proactively with DPO and DPPA strategic communications sections, as well as with DGC, including United Nations Information Centres, and resident coordinators.

### **C.17. Evaluation procedures**

49. The strategic communications component must develop and implement evaluation procedures to guide the efficient and effective achievement of communications objectives and to make any necessary adjustments to the communications strategy and operational activities. Evaluation should be both quantitative and qualitative. The strategic communications budget should factor in the cost of evaluation processes and tools.

### **C.18. Coordination with the United Nations system**

50. The head of strategic communications and/or a nominated representative should actively participate in the local United Nations communications group to ensure a “One UN” approach. They should foster an understanding within the group that the head of mission and/or special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General must play a central role in developing and disseminating information, particularly of a sensitive political or security nature, due to their roles as designated officials responsible for the safety and security of United Nations personnel. Information from the field should be harmonized with messaging at United Nations headquarters, particularly concerning the Security Council and/or Secretary-General.

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## **D. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**Strategic communications:** Purposeful or directed communications with the objective of building support for the mission, its mandate and activities as well as peace processes and related host country activities, such as elections. Strategic communications requires considering objectives, audiences, narratives, messaging and content, platforms for dissemination and evaluation of impact. It is part of planning and risk management processes and responses to crises.

**Content:** Information, materials or products such as public statements, written stories, audio, video, photography, digital and social media developed and disseminated by missions and United Nations headquarters through various communications methods, including external media, mission-owned digital and social media platforms, in-person engagement and outreach to key stakeholders.

**Digital and social media:** Websites and other platforms such as Twitter/X, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Flickr, LinkedIn, Medium and others.

**Hate speech:** The working definition of hate speech at the United Nations is “any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are,

in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor”.<sup>10</sup>

**Disinformation, misinformation and malinformation:** The Secretary-General has described disinformation as “information that is inaccurate, intended to deceive and shared in order to do serious harm”.<sup>11</sup> Misinformation is inaccurate information that is unintentionally shared in good faith by those unaware that they are passing on falsehoods<sup>12</sup>. Malinformation is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, social group, organization or country.<sup>13</sup>

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## E. REFERENCES

- The Future of UN Operations: Report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/357-S/2015/682).
- Strategic review of strategic communications across United Nations peacekeeping operations (S/2023/282).
- Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations (ST/SGB/2018/1).
- United Nations Communications Group: How to communicate in a crisis, June 2018.
- United Nations Secretariat Guidelines for the Personal Use of Social Media, July 2023.
- Secretary-General’s Bulletin on the Institutional Use of Social Media (ST/SG/2019/5).
- Media Guidelines for United Nations officials, 2001.
- United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, September 2020.
- Report of the Secretary-General on countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (A/77/287).
- UN System Response to Unconstitutional Change of Government.
- United Nations General Guidance on Engagement with De Facto Authorities.
- United Nations System-Wide Crisis Management Policy, 2023.
- United Nations Global Communications Strategy, 2020 and updates.
- Guidelines for Submission of Photos to UN Photo Digital Assets Management System for News and Media Production, Distribution as well as Archival Collection Development and Long-Term Preservation, 12 July 2021.
- United Nations Communication Guidance to Respond to Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel, February 2022.
- Addressing Misinformation and Disinformation in United Nations Peacekeeping Settings: Tips and tools, December 2022.
- Guidelines Mission Start-Up Field Guide, 2010.
- Special Political Mission Start-Up Guide, 2020.
- UN Branding Guidelines, Department of Global Communications.

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<sup>10</sup> See: [United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech](#).

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms ([A/77/287](#)).

<sup>12</sup> United Nations: “Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 8: Information Integrity on Digital Platforms”, p.5 <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-information-integrity-en.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> UNESCO: “Journalism, ‘Fake News’ and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training”

- International Civil Service Commission Standards of Conduct for the International Service, 2013.
  - Gender-Responsive UN Peacekeeping Operations, Policy, 2024.
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## **F. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

51. Compliance with this policy is mandatory. It shall be monitored and enforced by the Peace and Security Section of DGC and the strategic communications sections of DPPA and DPO. Non-compliance will impact the ability of missions to carry out their mandates and hamper the global distribution of mission-produced messaging and content.

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## **G. CONTACT**

52. The contact offices for this policy are DGC's Peace and Security Section, DPPA's Communications Team (OUSG) and DPO's Strategic Communications Section.

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## **H. HISTORY**

53. This policy supersedes the 2016 Policy on Strategic Communications and Public Information originally approved in 2006 and amended in 2017.

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**APPROVAL SIGNATURE:**



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**DATE OF APPROVAL:** 22 February 2024

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DATE OF APPROVAL: approved by USG DiCarlo 8 April 2024

APPROVAL SIGNATURE: *Jean-Pierre Lacroix*

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DATE OF APPROVAL: 6 June 2024