

HANDBOOK for
**Child Protection Staff
in United Nations
Peace Operations**

United Nations
Department of Peace Operations and
Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|------------------|---|
| CAAC..... | Children and armed conflict |
| CLA | Community Liaison Assistant |
| CPA | Child Protection Adviser |
| CPC..... | Community Policing Committee |
| CPFP | Child protection focal point |
| CPO | Child Protection Officer |
| CPS..... | Child Protection Section |
| CPU | Child Protection Unit |
| CRSV | Conflict-related sexual violence |
| CTFMR | Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting |
| DDR | Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration |
| DDRRR | Disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration, and resettlement |
| EW..... | Early warning |
| JPT | Joint Protection Team |
| HOM | Head of Mission |
| HRC | Human rights component |
| ICRC..... | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| JMAC..... | Joint Mission Analysis Centre |
| JOC | Joint Operations Centre |
| MARA..... | Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangement |
| MRM | Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism |
| MRM-IMS+ | Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism information management system |
| NGO..... | Non-governmental organization |
| OCHA | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| OHCHR | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| OSRSG-CAAC | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict |
| POC | Protection of civilians |
| SMART..... | Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound |
| SRSR | Special Representative of the Secretary-General |
| SSR | Security sector reform |
| SWOT | Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WPA..... | Women Protection Adviser |

1

Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The *Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations* is a practical guide to support child protection staff in United Nations peace operations in the substantive implementation of the child protection mandate.

Child protection staff play a vital role in United Nations peace operations, which include both peacekeeping and special political missions. They monitor and report on violations related to child protection, advocate with parties to the conflict to end violations, train peacekeepers and advise mission leadership on child protection concerns, among various other tasks. As advisers, trainers, coordinators, enablers and advocates, child protection staff also drive implementation of the broader children and armed conflict agenda – all of which directly impacts the lives of children, families and communities.

The 2017 Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support and the Department of Political Affairs *Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations (2017 Child Protection Policy)*¹ highlights the need for continuous training,² in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1261 (1999), 1379 (2001) and 1460 (2003). This *Handbook*³ is therefore designed to build the capacity of child protection staff in peace operations to ensure effective delivery of the child protection mandate. The *Handbook* provides child protection staff with concrete guidance and practical tips, taking account of their unique identity/role as both child protection actors and members of United Nations peace operations. It complements the *2017 Child Protection Policy* and serves as a guide to support child protection staff in taking the lead for stronger delivery of the child protection mandate in the face of rising internal and external challenges, including resource, budget, and mandate constraints; the changing nature of conflict; and a general lack of mandate awareness.

With regard to consolidation of protection functions:

“In 2015, the Secretary-General indicated that dedicated capacities on child protection would be consolidated within the Human Rights Division (HRD) of United Nations peace operations to enhance coherence in the delivery of human rights and protection mandates, with due consideration for the requirements of flexibility to respond to different mission contexts.”⁴

1 The *2017 Child Protection Policy* is available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/child-protection>.

2 See *2017 Child Protection Policy*, paras. 16.9, 20.2 and 22, and sect. D.4.

3 In 2022, the Manual for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations (developed in 2017/18) was updated – and reissued as a Handbook. This primarily involved adding a new chapter to provide guidance to child protection staff on how to prevent grave violations against children. The update partially reflects recent normative developments that highlight the critical importance of prevention in implementing the child protection mandate in missions, including the adoption of Security Council resolution 2427 (2018) and the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers (2017). Training materials for child protection staff to accompany the Manual (developed in 2019) were also reviewed and updated to include a new training module on prevention.

4 See *2017 Child Protection Policy*, para. 17; see para. 18 for further details on staffing.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The *Handbook* is designed to strengthen the capacities of United Nations peace operations child protection staff to fulfil their distinct responsibility to protect and promote the rights of children in armed conflict.

The *Handbook* specifically aims to:

- Enable child protection staff to leverage resources for child protection purposes within the mission and externally.
- Increase coherence among child protection staff operating within and across different contexts.
- Support child protection staff in tailoring approaches to their specific context.
- Familiarize child protection staff with best practices in child protection and related fields, such as human rights, gender, humanitarian affairs, conflict analysis and management, and peacebuilding.
- Positively influence other mission components regarding implementation of the child protection mandate.

1.3 TARGET AUDIENCE

The primary target audience for the *Handbook* is civilian child protection staff in United Nations peace operations, including national and international child protection advisers, officers, assistants and United Nations volunteers. It is also meant as an awareness-raising tool for other staff serving as child protection focal points (CPFPs) in missions, including uniformed personnel. The *Handbook* aims to ensure coordination and coherence and lay the groundwork for greater collaboration and partnership in the interest of effective child protection mandate delivery. As such, it is useful for other mission components, child protection partners and other actors working on the implementation of the *2017 Child Protection Policy* or on child protection more broadly, including regional organizations, Member States, and experts. The *Handbook* is to be used in conjunction with pre-existing guidance and training standards on children and armed conflict.

2

Role of Child Protection Staff in UN Peace Operation

Learning objectives

At the end of this chapter, learners will be able to:

- Explain the roles and responsibilities of child protection staff in United Nations peace operations
- List responsibilities that fall within/outside the child protection mandate
- Describe the added value of having child protection staff in United Nations peace operations
- Adapt their roles and responsibilities to the specific mission context

Chapter contents

- The need for child protection staff in United Nations peace operations
 - Security Council mandate
 - Added value of child protection deployments
- Roles and responsibilities of child protection staff
 - Core functions of child protection staff
 - Contextualizing roles and responsibilities
- Defining the child protection mandate
- Exercises
- Additional resources

2.1 THE NEED FOR CHILD PROTECTION STAFF IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS

2.1.1 Security Council mandate

In the past few decades, the international community has increasingly recognized that conflicts have far-reaching and devastating consequences for children and that the protection, welfare and rights of children in conflict situations are both a humanitarian issue and a concern of international peace and security — as affirmed by the Security Council's first resolution (1261) on the issue in 1999.

Subsequently, the Security Council has included specific provisions requesting the inclusion of child protection advisers in United Nations peacekeeping mandates and has addressed the protection of children in a series of resolutions on children and armed conflict: 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014), 2225 (2015), 2427 (2018) and 2601 (2021). The resolutions paved the way for the United Nations to establish dedicated child protection staff in United Nations peace operations worldwide.

2.1.2 Added value of child protection deployments

Having dedicated child protection staff enables United Nations peace operations to leverage political, security and civilian assets to better protect children in armed conflict, an essential element to fulfilling the child protection mandate and building more peaceful societies.

Some benefits of a dedicated child protection capacity include:

- **In-house expertise:** United Nations peace operations often face complicated child protection concerns that require a high level of technical expertise. Having in-house child protection staff ensures that missions can systematically implement the child protection mandate, including advising senior leadership and engaging with parties to conflict. It also enables United Nations peace operations to respond to urgent child protection requests at short notice.
- **Demonstrable impact:** With the support of child protection staff, United Nations peace operations can produce tangible outcomes for children, families, and communities. For example, United Nations peace operations with child protection staff, together with partners, have secured the release of thousands of children from armed forces and groups, and driven the implementation of action plans with parties to the conflict.⁵
- **Entry point for dialogue with parties to conflict:** Virtually every State has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and supports the work of the Committee on the Rights of Child under the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. This provides a particularly strong universal basis for strengthening the overall protection of children and the work of humanitarian actors, including UNICEF. Governments and armed forces and groups are often more willing to engage on child protection issues because of the specific vulnerability of children in armed conflict. Having dedicated child protection staff creates an important entry point for the mission to engage with these actors on broader concerns such as other types of human rights violations or abuses, including conflict-related sexual violence.
- **Direct link to Security Council:** The information that child protection staff in the field collect and verify can lead directly to political actions by the Security Council through its unique Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict,⁶ including imposing sanctions against persistent perpetrators. Child protection staff also contribute to the overall strengthening of child protection in the hosting country, including by adhering to and abiding by the highest international norms and standards reflected in the body of the law and guidance on children's rights.⁷
- **Comprehensive response:** The mainstreaming of child protection requires missions to integrate child protection in all operational and strategic processes and activities, as appropriate. Child protection staff therefore work with all mission components (e.g., military and police; human rights; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); rule of law; protection of civilians; gender), resulting in a more comprehensive response to child protection in armed conflict. Moreover, with the support of child

5 An action plan is a written, signed commitment between the United Nations and those parties to conflict which are listed as having committed grave violations against children (see sect. 6.3).

6 Subsidiary body of the Security Council that reviews the situation of children in country-specific situations and gives recommendations to parties to conflict, United Nations actors and others. See <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/subsidiary/wgcaac>

7 See 2017 Child Protection Policy, pp. 19-21 for specific violations.

protection staff, military and civilian personnel deployed in remote and difficult-to-access areas have been able to monitor and report on grave child rights violations and other child protection concerns to ensure appropriate responses.

- **Sustained focus and expertise:** United Nations peace operations often have complex and shifting priorities, which may make it difficult for mission leadership and other components to focus on children. Because child protection staff focus solely on the concerns of children, they can ensure that mission staff deliver on this important mandate.

Quick tip: Delivering a compelling and concise ‘pitch’ on the value of child protection staff in United Nations peace operations is useful for coordination meetings, field missions and other types of gatherings. Take a moment to prepare and practice a quick synopsis, or ‘elevator pitch’, on the role and value of child protection staff in United Nations missions. Limit your pitch to 30 to 60 seconds, that is, the time it takes to ride an elevator. Take care to make your pitch compelling and avoid jargon. Note that in some cases you may need to make longer presentations on the topic. In these instances, you should use data and real stories to help make your point.

2.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILD PROTECTION STAFF

2.2.1 Core functions of child protection staff

Child protection staff derive legitimacy from several documents adopted at the highest levels of the decision-making structure of the United Nations. These documents offer a valuable resource for child protection staff in understanding and communicating their roles and responsibilities. These include:

- Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict⁸
- Security Council resolutions setting out the mandate of United Nations peace operations⁹
- The *2017 Child Protection Policy*¹⁰

Based on these documents, child protection staff serve at least five primary functions:

- **Mainstreaming, training, and providing strategic advice on child protection concerns throughout the mission:** Child protection staff are the main resource within the mission for advising and training staff on all matters relating to child protection (see chap. 3).¹¹
- **Monitoring and reporting violations against children:** Child protection staff monitor and report on grave violations that armed forces and armed groups perpetrate against children in the context of armed conflict. With UNICEF, child protection staff also co-lead

8 For United Nations resolutions and reports on children and armed conflict, see <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/virtual-library>.

9 For mandates, reports and other resources of United Nations peacekeeping operations, see <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en>; to access relevant resources for United Nations special political missions, see <https://dppa.un.org/en>.

10 The *2017 Child Protection Policy* is available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/child-protection>.

11 For example, child protection staff can contribute to integrating child protection concerns in the implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces (HRDDP).

the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) at the technical level in relevant missions, as mandated by the Security Council (see chap. 4).¹²

- **Advocacy on behalf of children and advisory role to the mission leadership:** Child protection staff are a powerful voice for ensuring that the host government, the United Nations and others account for children’s concerns throughout the peace process (see chap. 5).
- **Dialogue with parties to the conflict to end violations against children:** Child protection staff engage in dialogue with relevant armed forces and armed groups, including negotiating, developing, and implementing action plans to end recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups, and other grave violations (see chap. 6).
- **Coordination of child protection response:** Child protection staff coordinate child protection interventions on behalf of the mission with external actors. This includes acting as an entry point to the mission for actors such as local NGOs and service providers that work on child protection issues (see chap. 7).

Depending on the situation, child protection staff may also engage in other activities, such as building the capacity of national counterparts, advocating legal reform, and raising awareness among the wider population.

2.2.2 Contextualizing roles and responsibilities

Child protection capacities in peace operations differ according to context, ranging from single child protection advisers to child protection units composed of various staff, to focal points who typically also hold other functions. Child protection advisers and child protection staff in United Nations peace operations are generally only deployed in MRM contexts, although there are some exceptions to this. Monitoring of and reporting on violations against children is likely to look different in a context where the MRM exists versus a context where the MRM has never existed or no longer exists. That is because non-MRM contexts usually have fewer resources available for monitoring and reporting on violations against children.

Overall, the context, type, phase, and size of the United Nations mission, as well as the role of child protection within the mission, provide some key parameters that can help child protection staff fully understand the operating environment and define or redefine their roles and responsibilities. Table 1 presents some guiding questions for consideration.

TABLE 1: Guiding questions for understanding the operating environment for child protection staff

| CATEGORY | GUIDING QUESTION |
|-------------------------|---|
| Conflict context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is the type of conflict (i.e., international armed conflict, non-international armed conflict)?¹³ Who are the parties to the conflict? ■ What phase is the conflict in (e.g., unstable peace, crisis, active conflict, post-conflict, peacebuilding)? ■ Are there mediation efforts under way by the United Nations or other external or internal actors? |

12 Note that, in addition to the regular reporting pathways to the Security Council, published reports or other information pertaining to violations against children generated from the MRM may be shared by the country task force on MRM with other reporting mechanisms as appropriate for further advocacy action, accountability and response. Human rights mechanisms provide additional reporting avenues and other opportunities at the national level.

13 As defined under International Humanitarian Law. See 1949 Geneva Conventions, art. 3; and its Additional Protocol II, art. 1, respectively.

TABLE 1 *continued*

| CATEGORY | GUIDING QUESTION |
|---|---|
| United Nations mission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the overarching goals and key strategic priorities of the mission? How does child protection contribute to them? ■ What phase is the mission in (i.e., recently established, well-established, transition, winding down)? ■ What is the size of the mission? What are the mission's geographic operational divisions? What resources does it have? |
| Child protection within the United Nations mission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is there a dedicated child protection capacity within the mission? Where is the child protection capacity located within the mission structure? ■ What is the foundation for the child protection mandate in the mission? Does the UN peace operation have a mission-specific Security Council mandate on child protection? ■ How long has the mission had a dedicated child protection capacity? What have been the roles and activities of the child protection team until now? Have these been successful? Why/Why not? ■ What type of political and operational support does the child protection team have? |

Quick tip: Understanding the past and gaining new perspectives can help avoid misunderstandings and open opportunities for collaboration and support going forward. Talk with colleagues in the mission (e.g., political affairs, military liaison officer) and external partners to learn more about their experiences and views on the past, current and future role of child protection staff in the mission.

2.3 DEFINING THE CHILD PROTECTION MANDATE

Governments, United Nations agencies, NGOs and sometimes even staff within the mission, may lack awareness about who the child protection staff in United Nations missions are and what they do. As a result, they may ask child protection staff to engage in activities that either fall outside of or only marginally relate to their areas of responsibility — particularly when unforeseen challenges or new needs emerge — such as:

- Providing services (e.g., medical, legal, or other assistance for sexual violence survivors)
- Funding programs (e.g., funds for building a school)
- Training national and/or local actors on child protection
- Organizing or co-organizing events with or for children
- Responding to violations perpetrated against children that are not directly related to the armed conflict (e.g., domestic abuse of children)

b) Monitoring and reporting grave violations against children?

c) Advocacy on behalf of children and advisory role to the mission leadership?

d) Engaging in dialogue with parties to conflict?

e) Coordinating with external actors?

3. Are there certain tasks that you have been asked to do that do not fall within your area of responsibility? If so, which ones? Are they essential? Can you delegate them? (Consider using the decision-making tree in figure 1.)



The Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 2427 on children and armed conflict, strongly condemning all violations of applicable international law involving the recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict, and aims at safeguarding children's rights in conflict.

2.5 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- United Nations, *Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations* (2017), available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/child-protection>
- *Child Protection in United Nations Peacekeeping – One-Pager* (2020), available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/child-protection>
- Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC), *25 Years for Children: Study on the Evolution of the Children and Armed Conflict Mandate 1996-2021* (2022), available at <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2022/01/25-years-for-children-understanding-the-past-to-inspire-the-future/>
- Website of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, which includes an overview of the children and armed conflict agenda, relevant United Nations reports and resolutions, and other resources, available at <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org>
- UNICEF, *25 Years of Children and Armed Conflict: Taking Action to Protect Children in War* (2022), available at <https://www.unicef.org/reports/25-years-children-armed-conflict>
- Documentary film “A Child’s Fate” (2014), available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=gNFnRIGPzSM&feature=emb_logo

3

Mainstreaming the Child Protection Mandate



UNMISS Child Protection Section Joint Mission (2021)

Learning objectives

At the end of this chapter, learners will be able to:

- Prepare messages to increase the mission's support for child protection
- Propose options for mission components to engage on child protection
- Design appropriate child protection training for various mission components

Chapter contents

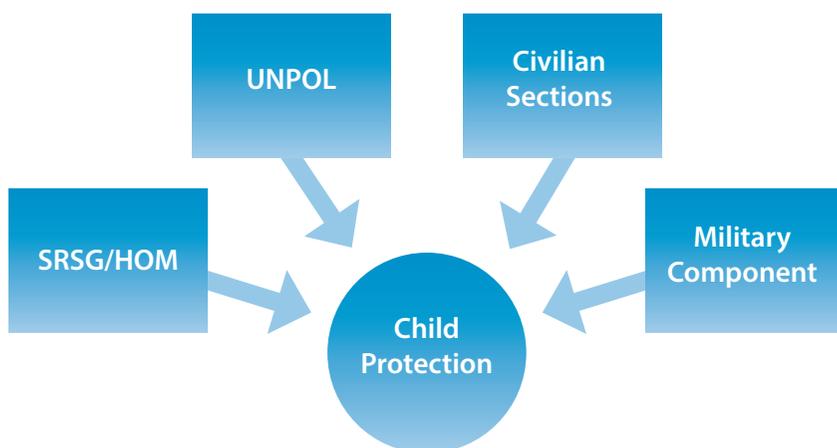
- What is mainstreaming?
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- Training for mission components
 - Child protection basic training
 - Training needs assessment
 - Training development
 - Training implementation and evaluation
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 - Focal points
 - Mission-wide plans
 - Policy and guidance documents
- Exercises
- Additional resources

3.1 WHAT IS MAINSTREAMING?

3.1.1 Defining 'mainstreaming'

Mainstreaming is an approach for integrating the protection of children in armed conflict into all relevant aspects of United Nations peace operations, including strategies, policies, training and other activities. This approach allows the United Nations to use all mission staff and their different types of expertise, networks, and capacities to ensure more comprehensive and better protection of children. The *2017 Child Protection Policy* clearly defines roles and responsibilities for almost all mission components (see annex 1). In this way, the Policy offers a blueprint for systematically integrating child protection issues in United Nations peace operations and validates the mainstreaming work of child protection staff.

FIGURE 2: Mission components with child protection roles and responsibilities



3.1.2 Mainstreaming tools

Some mission staff neglect child protection concerns because they do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the issues in question; consider it a lower ranking priority; or do not know how to integrate the issues into their work. Child protection staff play a lead role in addressing these challenges and mobilizing their colleagues in the mission. To achieve this, they should employ a combination of three approaches:

- **Advocacy within the mission:** Seek to influence mission leadership or specific mission components, including their specific workplans or activities, to reflect child protection concerns (e.g., by advising senior leadership or making requests for political, logistical, technical, and other types of support).
- **Training mission staff:** Build the capacity of mission staff so that they can better contribute to the child protection mandate (e.g., briefings for incoming staff or specialized training).
- **Organizational reform:** Seek to change the mission's approaches, structures, and processes so that mission staff can eventually apply a child-sensitive approach on their own (e.g., creating CPFs within components, developing mission-wide child protection plans and producing relevant policy guidance), and create tools to safeguard the institutional memory on child protection mandate implementation. Child protection

advisers should try to be involved in planning exercises of key sections with strong protection elements, including human rights, rule of law, justice, protection of civilians, political affairs, civil affairs, DDR, security sector reform, gender, HIV/AIDS, the military component and the United Nations Police. Child protection advisers need to build strong relationships with these sections to ensure that child protection concerns are reflected in their work.

3.2 ADVOCACY WITHIN THE MISSION

Direct access to relevant strategic decision-making and management meetings is critical to ensure effective implementation of the child protection dimension of Security Council mandates. The child protection adviser supports the mission leadership to advocate for the child protection mandate and enhance visibility for the rights and protection of children. This position allows child protection staff to conduct advocacy within the mission, including through senior management meetings, daily and thematic reports, and individual meetings. For 'consolidated' missions, the head of the human rights component facilitates direct access of the Senior Child Protection Adviser to mission senior leadership to enable her/him to perform her/his advisory function on children and armed conflict.

However, access alone does not translate into influence. Child protection staff need to know how to successfully convey their messages in an environment of multiple competing priorities and urgent requests.

Here are five practical tips to help child protection staff conduct effective internal advocacy:

- 1) **Make it relevant.** Some colleagues consider child protection a 'soft' or marginal issue and do not grasp its relevance to political and security considerations and its relation to international humanitarian law. To overcome such misconceptions, child protection staff should make sure that the child protection issues they are tackling respond to and align with the mission's mandate and strategic and political priorities.¹⁴
- 2) **Be consistent.** Consistent messaging and speaking with one voice on child protection issues is critical. Child protection staff should regularly remind colleagues of the mission's child protection mandate and key messages on core issues, using the *2017 Child Protection Policy*, any mission-specific child protection implementation documents, directives or standard operating procedures and relevant Security Council resolutions as key references. They should also consider the production of child protection policy and advocacy papers to assist with internal advocacy.
- 3) **Collaborate.** Despite their small numbers, child protection staff usually have working relationships with nearly every component of the mission. Where possible, they should win the support of relevant colleagues for common advocacy requests. For example, the mission leadership is more likely to grant a special flight for a field mission if several civilian components request it.
- 4) **Decentralize.** The mission structure is not necessarily reflective of the power structures within a country. Child protection staff should visit and engage heads of regional offices on child protection issues so that they can effectively advocate at the regional/field level.

¹⁴ For example, peace negotiations, peace agreement implementation, protection of civilians, gender equality and women, peace and security, elections, DDR, sexual exploitation and abuse.

5) Leverage the strategic level.

United Nations peace operations work across strategic, operational, and tactical levels, as illustrated in figure 3. While child protection staff conduct most mainstreaming efforts at the operational and tactical levels, they should keep in mind other channels that allow them to influence the strategic and political levels, including through reports submitted to the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and by working with the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

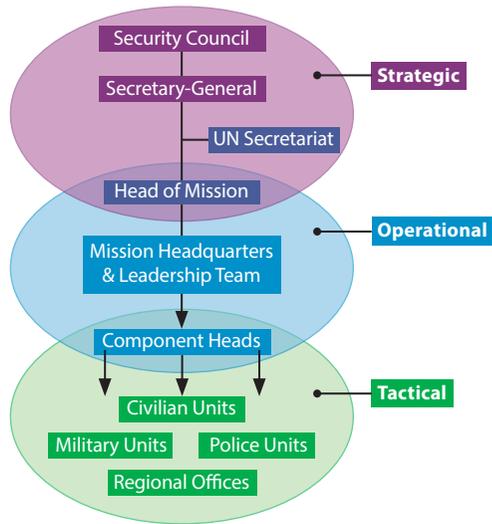


FIGURE 3: Levels of United Nations Peace Operations. [Source: Department of Peacekeeping Operations/ Department of Field Support, *Mission Start-up Field Guide for Mission Managers of United Nations Peace Operation* (2010)]

3.3 TRAINING FOR MISSION COMPONENTS

Child protection staff are primarily responsible for providing child protection training and briefings to the police, military, and civilian mission components. Training may range from shorter core training to longer, more specialized training. Regardless of the target audience and duration, training always requires adequate preparation and follow-up. If done well, it offers valuable opportunities to amplify the mission's reach and the impact of child protection actions.

3.3.1 Child protection basic training

Child protection staff can use the standard "child protection module" included in core pre-deployment training by the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support to develop a basic training for uniformed and civilian peacekeeping personnel.¹⁵ Child protection staff should also share other relevant in-mission guidance (if any) and practical tools for civilian, military and police personnel.¹⁶ Training should include the following essential information:

- Definition of a child
- An explanation of child protection and why it is essential for the mission's success
- The need to adhere to and abide by the highest international norms and standards reflected in the body of the law and guidance on children's rights
- The impact of armed conflict on children, including the 'six grave violations'
- Actions that trainees are expected to take as members of the mission/component, with real examples and scenarios

¹⁵ See <https://research.un.org/revisedcptm2017/Module2, lesson 2.7>.

¹⁶ Including but not limited to Force Commander's and Police Commissioner's Directives on Child Protection.

- Reporting and referral procedures
- Dos and don'ts when interacting with children
- Contact details of child protection staff, including CPFPs

Although trainees may be familiar with some aspects of the training, child protection staff should still revisit the training materials after their deployment to ensure that they have fully grasped the content.

3.3.2 Training needs assessment

Before designing more specialized training courses or programs, child protection staff should gather information to better understand the background, capacities and training needs of the target audience.

Suggested questions for a training needs assessment include:

- **Previous knowledge/experience:** What is the target audience's current level of knowledge on child protection issues? Has the target audience ever participated in child protection training? If so, which one(s)?
- **Competencies/skills:** What are the core skills/competencies of the trainees (e.g., information gathering, analysis, advocacy/persuasive communication)? Which additional skills are needed to fulfil the responsibilities of the trainees under the child protection mandate?
- **Expectations:** What expectations does the target audience have for the training? Are they realistic?
- **Needs:** What are the perceived and actual needs of the target audience to address child protection concerns?
- **Costs:** How many trainees are there? What resources are available for the training (e.g., facilitator, venue)? Is it worth conducting a training of trainers? Would it be beneficial to collaborate with another mission component/actor on the training?

It is important to assess training needs before delivering training sessions. Some tools for assessing training needs include surveys, self-assessments, tests, focus group discussions, individual interviews, and observations from the field.

3.3.3 Training development

The training needs assessment allows child protection staff to develop learning objectives and content that meets the distinct needs of the target audience. To support this process, the Department of Peace Operations has developed training materials on child protection for United Nations police and military personnel. Besides information on the normative framework, the training proposes concrete actions that United Nations uniformed personnel can take to implement the child protection mandate in United Nations peace operations. See table 2 for an overview of these training modules.

Child protection staff members can use these presentations and practical exercises when preparing training materials based on the training needs assessment. They can also draw on them to develop guidelines and checklists for United Nations uniformed personnel and other field staff and share them during training.



MINUSCA military received UN DPO protection pocket cards in Bria, Central African Republic, 2021

TABLE 2: Overview of existing United Nations training materials on child protection for the United Nations Police and military¹⁷

| TARGET AUDIENCE | LEARNING OBJECTIVE | LEARNING CONTENT | TRAINING MATERIALS |
|--|--|---|--|
| United Nations Police ¹⁸ | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introduce United Nations police officers to child protection concepts 2) Promote a better understanding of mission child protection mandates 3) Understand the role of child protection actors in the mission area 4) Understand the contribution of the United Nations Police | Modules 1-9 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children in peacekeeping context 2. Normative framework for child protection 3. Safeguarding children 4. Coordination with child protection actors 5. Monitoring and reporting 6. Prevention and diversion measures 7. Arrest, apprehension, and detention 8. Interviewing a child from the United Nations Police perspective 9. Dos and don'ts for United Nations Police | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint presentation • Trainers' guide and exercises • Short quiz for each module and final quiz |
| United Nations Military ¹⁹ | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introduce United Nations peacekeepers to child protection concepts 2) Provide child protection mission-specific tactical situations 3) Promote better understanding of child protection mandate, and related actors inside and outside the mission | Modules 1-3 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conceptual framework 2. Legal framework 3. Operational framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint presentation • Trainers' guide and exercises , including scenario-based exercises • Training film |

3.3.4 Training implementation and evaluation

Child protection staff should invest time and energy in refining training methods and facilitation skills. Owing to high staff turnover in missions, implementing training is often an ongoing process. Child protection staff should take the lead in training on child protection, in partnership with CFPs and the integrated mission training centres. As well as a means of sharing information and imparting knowledge, training is also an opportunity for child protection staff to form valuable working relationships with mission staff from all components.

¹⁷ For training materials for United Nations Police, see <https://research.un.org/stm> and for United Nations Military, see <https://research.un.org/stm/Military>.

¹⁸ The training is primarily designed for pre-deployment training of individual police officers but may also be used for personnel already deployed in-mission, once adapted to their specific needs. The training is currently (September 2022) being updated and a revised Reinforcement Training Package on Child Protection for the United Nations Police will be released in 2023.

¹⁹ The training is primarily designed for pre-deployment training of United Nations military personnel and formed police units, but it can be used for personnel already deployed in-mission, once adapted to their specific needs.

Here are some practical tips for child protection staff on delivering presentations as part of a training activity:

- **Structure the presentation.** Start the presentation with a brief overview of the module's main points and conclude with a summary.
- **Contextualize content.** Share facts, trends and experiences from the specific mission context and the region where trainees are deployed.
- **Tailor content to the audience.** Talk about their specific roles in child protection and how child protection connects to their everyday work.
- **Involve the audience.** Be interactive, ask participants about their views and encourage them to contribute their own experiences; use interactive exercises and methods, particularly for longer sessions.²⁰
- **Use visual aids.** Multimedia and visual aids (e.g., photos, films, graphs, whiteboards, etc.), reinforce key points and illustrate complex concepts.
- **Prepare handouts.** Include key information related to the presentation (e.g., trends, guidelines, checklists) and contact details of their CFPF.
- **Coordinate with relevant colleagues.** Invite colleagues working on protection or human rights issues to join the training.

Child protection staff should always evaluate training to improve future activities. To evaluate trainees' reactions, child protection staff should observe their body language during the session, ask them directly about their experience, and use evaluation forms (see annex 2). Assessing changes in trainee behavior²¹ is harder to measure but is essential for determining additional training needs. Monitoring and evaluation plans should be used to gather this information (see chap. 8).

3.4 ORGANIZATIONAL REFORM

Organizational reforms are designed to empower relevant mission staff to apply child-sensitive approaches by themselves with limited guidance from child protection staff. Child protection staff can help the mission set up systems for this purpose by creating focal points within mission components, preparing mission-wide plans and strategies, and developing mission-specific policy and guidance documents related to child protection. Organizational reform is also important for building the organization's institutional memory.

3.4.1 Focal points

Establishing CFPFs involves training and supporting a few select individuals to assume certain responsibilities within their components (e.g., training, information-sharing, capacity-building). These individuals serve as an interface between their colleagues and child protection staff (see fig. 4). Focal points can also act as advocates for child protection issues within their component (civilian, military or police).

20 For example, simulations, role plays, and small group discussions with debriefing.

21 Such as whether the knowledge and skills from the training are applied on the job.

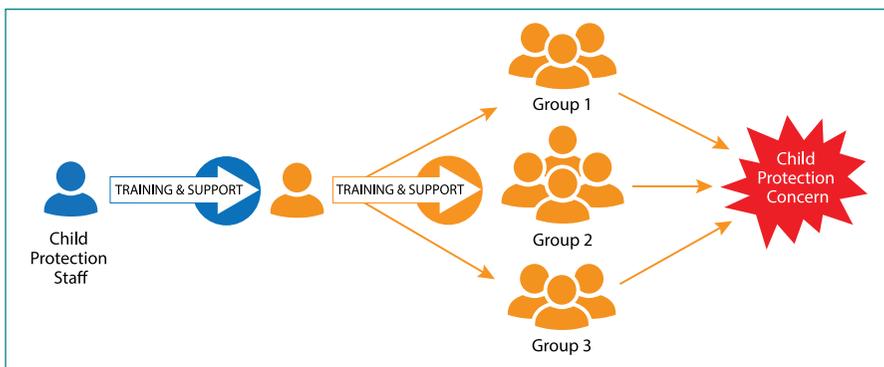


FIGURE 4: Focal points

The 2020 *United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual* and the 2017 *Child Protection Policy* require United Nations military contingents to appoint CPFs at mission headquarters, within United Nations battalions and within company headquarters. Similarly, United Nations Police components should designate a police CFPF at mission headquarters and in field offices. Child protection staff have also helped set up focal points or teams of focal points within military observer units as well as other civilian sections, in particular human rights, civil affairs, and DDR. Having focal points requires agreement with the relevant unit, clear terms of reference and regular communication between the child protection team and the designated focal point(s). Annex 3 provides a few sample terms of reference for CPFs within mission components.

3.4.2 Mission-wide plans

To develop mission-wide plans, child protection staff need to motivate and support other mission components to collaborate on child protection issues (see fig. 5). Even in cases where working relationships already exist, discussing and formalizing these issues is likely to increase the commitment of the parties involved. Developing and implementing mainstreaming plans requires child protection staff to agree with relevant mission components — as a group or bilaterally — on objectives, specific actions each partner is willing to take, support needed from the child protection team and methods for monitoring and evaluating progress.

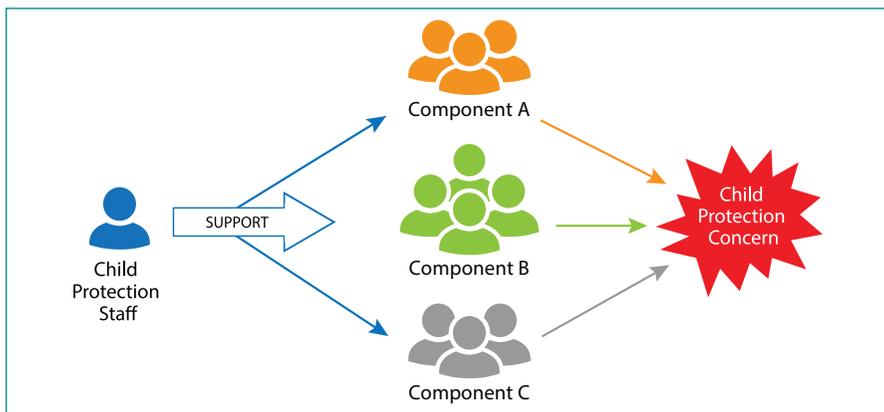


FIGURE 5: Mission-wide plans

Mainstreaming plans can focus on child protection overall or specific thematic issues relating to child protection (e.g., fighting against the impunity of perpetrators of grave violations against children or prevention of attacks against schools by parties to conflict). Annex 4 provides guidance and a template for developing a mission-wide plan to implement the 2017 *Child Protection Policy* that covers child protection concerns in a specific mission area, along with the related roles and responsibilities of mission components for addressing them.

TABLE 3: Sample of mission-wide plan relating to child protection

| CP Issue | Objective(s) | Partners | Partner's Actions | Support Required from child protection staff | Monitoring Progress |
|---|---|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Unlawful detention of children formerly associated with armed forces/groups | No children formerly associated with armed forces/groups unlawfully detained by national police | United Nations Police | Training of national police | Technical support for United Nations Police's child protection trainings | Check-in once per week |
| | | Justice/RoL/ Corrections/ Human Rights | Notify child protection team if children spotted during prison visits; Coordinate with Child Protection for further action. | Guidance on information as necessary | Check-in once per month |
| | | Head of Office | Raise issue with local authorities | Memo or briefing with key points | Debrief following each meeting |

3.4.3 Guidance documents

Developing policy or guidance documents for missions is one of the most enduring ways to bring about organizational change (see fig. 6). It involves drawing on the highest international norms and standards reflected in the body of the law and guidance on child rights, as well as aspects of the 2017 *Child Protection Policy*, and applying them to the specific mission context.²²

Possible mission-specific guidance documents on child protection issues include:

- **Directives**, e.g., Force Commander's directives on child protection (see annex 5)
- **Standard operating procedures**, e.g., standard operating procedures for United Nations Police or United Nations military observers relating to child protection, including reporting templates and guidance on reporting channels and referral procedures, with an updated list of contacts
- **Terms of Reference**, e.g., requirement for including CPFPs in the terms of reference of joint protection or human rights missions
- **Guidelines**, e.g., appropriate conduct during interactions with children and prevention of all forms of child exploitation and child labor

22 For a list of relevant international laws and standards on child rights, see the 2017 Policy on Child Protection, annex H, pp. 17–18.



FIGURE 6: Policy or guidance

Child protection staff usually work with the relevant mission component(s) on appropriate content and language during the adoption or approval of guidance. Once they are approved, the mission leadership or the head of the relevant mission component²³ is in charge of disseminating and ensuring implementation of such guidance documents, as well as follow-up. In addition, child protection staff should use field visits, training activities and appropriate meetings to share the materials and verify their effective implementation throughout the mission area. If possible, mission-specific guidance should include a system for measuring their impact on attitudes and practices of mission staff (e.g., surveys).



UNMISS-facilitated training on preventing and ending child rights violations in Lankien, Jonglei, South Sudan, June 2022

3.5 EXERCISES

Child protection staff can use the following exercises to apply some of the knowledge and skills developed in this chapter.

1. Which of the five practical tips in section 3.2 do you believe is most effective in increasing in-mission attention and support for child protection? Why?

²³ For example, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Force Commander and/or the Police Commissioner.

2. Use the following template to develop a mainstreaming plan for a specific child protection concern relevant to your mission. This plan can involve advocacy within the mission, training, establishment of focal points, development of policy and guidance, and other strategies. For a sample mainstreaming plan, see table 3 above.

| Child Protection | Objective(s) | Partners | Partner's Actions | Support Required from child protection staff | Monitoring Progress |
|------------------|--------------|----------|-------------------|--|---------------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

3.6 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- United Nations, *E-Guide for Staff supporting the UN Peace and Security Pillar* (2021), which provides information on the various components of multidimensional peace operations and their functions, available at <https://resourcehub01>.
- For mandates, reports and other resources of United Nations peacekeeping operations, see <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en> and to access relevant resources for United Nations special political missions, see <https://dppa.un.org/en>
- For United Nations peacekeeping guidance documents, see Peacekeeping Resource Hub: <http://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community> and the Policy and Practice Database: Policy and Practice Database - Home (sharepoint.com)
- Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, *United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual* (2020), available at [2020.01 UNIBAM Infantry Battalion Manual_JAN 2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacekeeping/2020.01-UNIBAM-Infantry-Battalion-Manual-JAN-2020.pdf) (windows.net)

Training

- Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, *Core Pre-deployment Training Materials for United Nations peacekeeping operations*, available at <http://research.un.org/revisecptm2017>
- Department of Peace Operations, *Reinforcement Training Package on Child Protection for the United Nations Military* (2022), available at <https://research.un.org/stm/Military>
- Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Specialized Training Materials on Child Protection for United Nations Police* (2016), available at <https://research.un.org/stm>

4

Monitoring and Reporting

Learning objectives

At the end of this chapter, learners will be able to:

- Work with different mission components on monitoring
- Explain appropriate techniques for interviewing children
- Assess when a report is considered 'verified'
- Revise reports based on a series of quality criteria
- Prepare for common challenges in co-managing country task forces on monitoring and reporting

Chapter contents

- Focus of monitoring and reporting
- Monitoring
 - Monitoring by other mission components
 - Verification
 - Interviewing children
- Analysis and information management
 - Child-sensitive analysis
 - Information management
- Reporting
 - Types of reports
 - Quality reports
 - Co-management of country task forces on monitoring and reporting
- Exercises
- Additional resources

4.1 FOCUS OF MONITORING AND REPORTING

Monitoring and reporting violations perpetrated by armed forces and armed groups against children in armed conflict are essential, and central responsibilities of child protection staff. Rigorous monitoring and reporting also provides the foundation for sound analysis and informed recommendations, establishing child protection staff as credible advocates for children. Most importantly, systematic data collection and analysis support national and international response, accountability and prevention activities associated with the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children.

Child protection staff are responsible for monitoring and reporting on:

- Six grave violations committed against children during armed conflict. These are:
 - Killing and maiming
 - Recruitment or use of children by armed forces and groups
 - Rape or other grave forms of sexual violence
 - Abduction
 - Attacks against schools or hospitals
 - Denial of humanitarian access for children

- Additional child protection priorities identified by the United Nations peace operation and/or Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR)²⁴
- Protection issues for children related to United Nations peace operations²⁵
- Progress made in the development and implementation of action plans and commitments made by parties to the conflict (e.g., command orders) to end and prevent grave violations against children, where relevant.

As part of monitoring and reporting, child protection staff have a duty to refer cases to appropriate service providers for the necessary follow-up.

4.2 MONITORING

In situations of armed conflict, the United Nations uses the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) to systematically gather accurate, timely, objective and reliable information on grave violations committed against children – as well as in other situations of concern as determined by the Secretary-General. Child protection staff contribute MRM data by monitoring grave violations themselves and encouraging others to do so, particularly those within the mission.²⁶

4.2.1 Monitoring by other mission components

Child protection staff can utilize capacities within the mission to help them gather and analyze information about the situation of children. Several mission components, including human rights and civil affairs, collect this information as part of their daily work in the field,



MONUSCO Child Protection Adviser holds coordination meeting with the military Gender and Child Protection Officer, Goma, North Kivu, April 2021

²⁴ For example, trafficking of children, detention of children for actual or alleged association with armed forces or armed groups. Please note that decisions on identifying additional child protection priorities for the MRM would need to be taken jointly with UNICEF, the co-chair of the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting.

²⁵ For example, use of child labour by United Nations peacekeeping personnel, impact of United Nations military operations on children.

²⁶ For further information and guidance on the MRM, see <https://www.mrmtools.org/>.

or could do so, given adequate guidance or training (see sect. 3.3). Child protection staff may also draw upon existing conflict, human rights and gender analyses and assessments from other components and/or focal points to gain a better understanding of the context.

Regular engagement and information-sharing with other mission components makes it easier for child protection staff to request information or ask for disaggregated data (e.g., disaggregated by age, sex, region). It also allows them to meet with colleagues within the mission to explain reporting needs, provide them with reporting templates or designate focal points to collect and share relevant information.

Suggested strategies for harnessing the mission's monitoring capacities include:

- **Conducting field missions (individual/joint)**, particularly to remote or dangerous areas where humanitarian organizations have limited access, to verify information on child rights violations.
- **Requesting specific, technical, or statistical information** from other components,²⁷ such as analysis of the security situation in a particular geographical area, information on armed forces and groups, statistical data on civilian casualties disaggregated by age and sex.
- **Reviewing public and internal reports** from human rights, gender, civil affairs, United Nations Police, the peacekeeping force. (Signing up for email distribution lists may be required).
- **Making arrangements** with human rights, civil affairs, United Nations Police, military units, women's protection advisers, DDR and other relevant components to alert child protection staff of alleged grave violations against children and to collect relevant information for follow-up by child protection staff.²⁸
- **Networking** by asking relevant mission components to help identify and reach other organizations working on issues related to child protection (see chap. 7).
- **Requesting support from Mission leadership**, which is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all components with a protection or monitoring mandate contribute to child protection, particularly to the MRM.

4.2.2 Verification

The presence of child protection staff in the field increases the ability to verify alleged violations against children. The verification process involves five steps:

- 1) **Establish the source type (primary or secondary source of information)**. A primary source is a testimony from the victim/survivor, perpetrator, or direct witness. A secondary or supporting source includes testimony from an indirect witness²⁹ or materials.³⁰

27 E.g., political affairs, DDR officers, Joint Mission Analysis Centres (JMACs) or offices with equivalent functions, rule of law, gender, human rights.

28 For example, child protection staff can participate regularly in coordination and communication meetings within the mission, especially daily security/planning briefing held by the military component.

29 For example, persons who have not witnessed the violations, including relatives, lawyers, community leaders, local human rights activists.

30 For example, medical reports and certificates, photographs, videos, police reports, report of an independent investigation. Media reports can provide alert of possible violations, but child protection staff should not use them as sources.

- 2) Evaluate the reliability of the source(s).** This usually involves a process of triangulation. Interviews with primary sources should include questions on the details of the incident and assess the consistency of the testimony.³²
- 3) Determine the need for additional sources.** Child protection staff should strive for one primary source and two secondary sources to verify an alleged incident, while always giving priority to the ‘best interests of the child’ and the ‘do-no-harm’ principles when deciding if and how to approach sources.³³ In some situations the CTFMR may require additional sources or adapt the criteria according to special circumstances.³⁴
- 4) Declare the verification status of the incident.** Child protection staff and other designated members of the CTFMR determine if and when an incident is considered ‘verified’. Staff should also indicate in reports if they were unable to complete the verification process by clarifying where incidents are ‘alleged’ or ‘subject to verification’, indicating where possible the reasons for the lack of verification.
- 5) Seek endorsement by the CTFMR co-chairs.** As a final step, co-chairs of the CTFMR³⁵ should officially approve the information.

The decision-making diagram in figure 7 provides a basic overview of the steps involved in the verification process. The standards of the MRM verification should ideally apply to all monitoring conducted by child protection staff and should be consistent with the *MRM Field Manual*, which is available at www.mrmtools.org/mrm/.

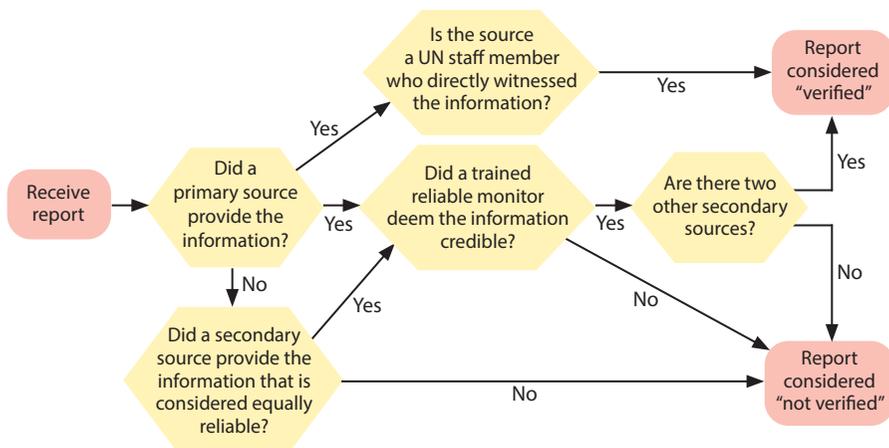


FIGURE 7: Verification in the context of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

32 For example, whether the testimony is plausible, how the person knew what happened.

33 For example, risks of retaliation against primary sources, exposure to re-traumatization or stigma. Please refer to the *MRM Field Manual* (available at www.mrmtools.org/mrm/) for more details.

34 For example, admitting police and medical reports as primary sources in lieu of testimony by the child victim/survivor, particularly in sexual violence cases. See the checklist in section 4.2.3. In particular, check if the child was already interviewed and if coordination with partners is possible.

35 Usually the SRS, DSRSG/Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)/Resident Coordinator (RC) and UNICEF country Representative.

4.2.3 Interviewing children

As part of their monitoring activities, child protection staff should interview children using techniques that avoid causing any additional harm, while attempting to elicit complete and reliable responses. Child protection staff should be prepared to interview children in a manner that is:

- **Age-appropriate:** Consider the child's age and developmental level when preparing the interview and asking questions. This may involve using easy-to-understand language, using tools to elicit information (e.g., drawing paper and crayons, games, toys), having a trusted adult at the interview, etc.
- **Gender-sensitive:** Pay attention to the influence of gender, particularly in terms of who is conducting the interviews, with whom and the type of questions asked. For example, some children may prefer to be interviewed by a person of the same gender, depending on the violation to be discussed.
- **Disability-informed:** Pay attention to the specific needs of children with disabilities. Establish conditions that allow children, irrespective of their possible disabilities, to communicate comfortably. It is important to note that disabilities may not be visible and that children or their caregiver may not disclose any disabilities due to stigma or because they may not even be aware of them.
- **Trauma-informed:** Recognize that children may have experienced trauma and use approaches that avoid re-traumatizing them. This may include recognizing and responding to the signs and symptoms of trauma, providing emotional support and compassion where needed, and phrasing questions in a way that does not put pressure on the child or assigns guilt or responsibility.

Table 4 summarizes some essential guidance on interviewing children. Child protection staff should periodically participate in training to improve their skills in this area. Only staff trained in child-sensitive interviewing techniques (e.g., civilian child protection officers in the mission or UNICEF staff) should interview children. Staff not trained in child-sensitive interviewing techniques should interview children only as last resort and should seek guidance from trained staff prior to the interview to avoid causing additional psychological harm to children. Child protection staff should also work with relevant partners to make psychosocial and other support available where needed.

TABLE 4: Checklist for interviewing children

CHECKLIST FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

1. Assessing the situation

- Will the interview cause the child/family unnecessary harm or risks?
- Is the interview essential? For example, has another organization already interviewed the child? If so, can you use this information instead? (Note: If the child was already interviewed and you are unsure whether the information is sufficient, obtain a copy of the first interview and check with your supervisor before proceeding with a second interview.)
- Has the child received the necessary support (e.g., medical, psychosocial, legal)?

CHECKLIST FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

2. Preparing the interview

- Have you obtained informed consent for the interview from the child? If necessary, have you obtained the informed consent of the family/caregiver? (Be aware of potential conflicts of interest and protection problems). Have you informed the child/family/caregiver of possible risks and benefits, and that the interview will not necessarily improve the child's individual situation? What security precautions have you and others taken? Are these sufficient?
- Is the selected location safe and comfortable for the child and does it respect confidentiality?
- Do you need an interpreter? How will that or the presence of other people help/disturb the interview? If an interpreter is needed, have you adequately briefed that person, for example, on confidentiality and security matters?
- Are the interview space and methods used accessible to children with disabilities, where needed?

3. Conducting the interview

Introducing yourself and the purpose of the interview

- Have you introduced yourself, explained your mandate and the interview's purpose in plain language that a child can understand? (Note: Avoid raising the child/caregiver's expectations about participating in the interview, such as prospects for criminal prosecutions for the perpetrator(s), DDR benefits, remedies, etc.).
- Have you explained what will happen with the information, for example, that the information will remain confidential except if informed consent is provided? Have you asked the child/family/caregiver for consent to use the information for reporting purposes and/or share the information for advocacy and case management/referral purposes? (Note: Written consent is generally preferable; however, the interviewer may, in some cases, take note of the consent). Have you explained to the child/family/caregiver that they may withdraw consent at any time during the interview?
- Are you explaining everything you are doing (e.g., taking notes)?

Asking about the violation

- Are you asking the child primarily open questions, allowing the child to tell his/her story (e.g., "Tell me about ...")? (Note: Avoid closed questions, which require one-word answers, or leading questions that prompt answers).
- Are you allowing the child enough time to answer questions?
- Are you closely watching the child's body language for signs of distress, distraction, or tiredness? What actions will you take if the interviewee becomes distressed?

Closing the interview

- Have you given the child an opportunity to ask questions and tell you about something that you have not asked, including protection concerns that the child may have and possible actions to respond to these?
- Have you thanked the child for sharing the information?
- Do you know how to reach the child/family/caregiver in case further information is needed? Do they know how to reach you?
- Have you offered referrals and decided on next steps with the child/family/caregiver, or person the child trusts?
- Have you asked what the child/family/caregiver hopes to achieve by taking part in the interview and addressed any unrealistic expectations?

CHECKLIST FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

4. Following up on the interview

- Have you documented the interview, making sure to use relevant forms? Have you safely stored the interview forms, including the informed consent received?
- Have you shared essential information with relevant actors according to the informed consent received? (Note: Make sure to maintain the confidentiality of the survivor/victim. This means sharing only what is absolutely necessary to those involved in the survivor/victim's care and with the permission of the child/family/caregiver.)
- Have you made all necessary referrals for the child/family/caregiver, according to the informed consent received?
- How are you following up on information?
- Are you periodically giving feedback to the child/family/caregiver, as appropriate?



Goma, North Kivu, DRC. MONUSCO Child Protection Section documenting cases of children pulled out of armed groups and referring them to psycho-social care and social reintegration structures. August 2020

4.3 ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

4.3.1 Child-sensitive analysis

Data analysis is used to explain individual incidents and their connections within the larger context, including an armed conflict. Robust analysis makes it possible to provide appropriate responses for victims/survivors and allow decision makers to take concrete steps to prevent future violations as well as address those that have already taken place.

In evaluating data, child protection staff focus on children as a category or group ('child-sensitive analysis'). The analysis should be intersectional and take into account a combination of factors that make up a child's identity and experience, including age, sex, disability, socio-economic status, and ethnic or religious background. Some of the questions child protection staff should explore are:

- What grave violations are parties to conflict committing against children? How are they committing these violations?
- Why do parties commit grave violations (or a specific type of violation) against children? What are their motivations and driving forces?

- What factors affect children’s vulnerability to grave violations? What role does their age, sex, ethnic or religious background, location and other factors play?
- What effects do grave violations against children have on the dynamics of the ongoing armed conflict and related violence?
- How does the presence of an armed conflict impact children living in the country/ concerned area?
- Is the situation of children affected by armed conflict improving, remaining the same or worsening? What is the basis for this assessment? Have any United Nations or non-United Nations interventions changed this trend and why/why not?

Quick tip: In some cases, having thematic focal points within the child protection team for centralizing and analyzing specific types of information can be effective. This could include focal points for juvenile justice, violations committed by a specific party to conflict, children associated with armed forces and armed groups, and/or abductions. For example, a juvenile justice focal point could centralize the information on justice received from United Nations Police and write a weekly justice briefing and biannual analytical juvenile justice report. Talk with your supervisor about appointing thematic focal points relevant to your context.

4.3.2 Information management

Monitoring and reporting requires child protection staff to set up and employ systems for managing and analyzing a lot of data, including sensitive data. These systems should enable child protection staff to:

- Store and retrieve physical and electronic data
- Ensure data security and confidentiality
- Receive and share information
- Analyze data based on various criteria
- Use data for MRM and mission-related purposes

Child protection staff usually need electronic spreadsheets and/or more sophisticated database management software or information management systems to store, organize and retrieve information on reported cases. A strong information management system allows staff to retrieve information by various criteria (e.g., name, type of violation, perpetrator, date of occurrence). It is also essential to ensure proper follow-up on individual cases. An effective system allows staff to identify and illustrate patterns and trends by sorting data in different types of categories and using statistical analysis. In some cases, child protection teams may find it helpful to designate focal points for the information management system to help develop and implement guidelines for inputting and retrieving data.

Child protection staff should use the MRM information management system (MRM-IMS+), a secure, open-source, web browser-based global information management system for grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict, where available and feasible.³⁶ At the global level, UNICEF worked with the MRM Technical Reference Group – co-chaired

³⁶ Note that the Department of Peace Operations recognizes the MRM-IMS+ as the preferred tool for the storage of MRM data.

by UNICEF and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and composed of several UN entities, including the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and of Peace Operations — to develop this standardized information management system for use in countries where the MRM is activated.

Information and analysis on children affected by armed conflict should also feed into mission-related systems, including the mission's threat analysis, gender-responsive conflict analysis, and early warning systems (see chapter. 8). Child protection staff should be aware of other database systems used by the Mission, including but not limited to SAGE and the human rights global database. Additionally, they should establish ways to regularly share non-confidential data related to grave violations against children so that they are reflected in mission-wide statistics and analysis.

Quick tip: In some cases, child protection staff can take advantage of the information management system of other mission components or those of partners for retrieving data on grave violations committed against children in armed conflict. For example, it may be possible to use existing civilian casualty tracking systems to retrieve data on child casualties if properly collected and disaggregated. If appropriate, explore the possibility of your team using the information management system of other mission components and/or partners.

4.4 REPORTING

Child protection staff use reports to record and analyze monitoring activities and to advocate on behalf of children (see chap. 5). Reporting should follow immediately after the completion of monitoring activities to ensure that reports are timely and relevant.

4.4.1 Types of reports

Reporting requirements for child protection staff depend on the mission and the staff member's specific function. They usually include:

- **Internal reports**, for example, daily reports, weekly updates or field mission reports, inputs to quarterly and annual workplans and results-based budget reports, as well as inputs to the reports of other components and contributions to the mission's daily situation reports/weekly reports.
- **Drafts of/inputs to reports of the Security Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict through the MRM**, for example, confidential quarterly reports known as the Global Horizontal Note; the Secretary-General's annual global and country-specific reports on children and armed conflict; the Secretary-General's quarterly/periodic mission reports.³⁷

In addition to these mandatory reports, child protection staff can leverage the information gathered during regular monitoring activities to contribute to other types of reports. These may include:

- **Thematic reports to public/select actors**, including relevant human rights reports on urgent child protection concerns in the mission context or a specific region (e.g., challenges in identifying girls associated with armed forces/groups, attacks against schools, exploitation, and abuse of children during elections).

³⁷ Note that Security Council resolution 2225 (2015) reiterated the Council's requests to the Secretary-General to "ensure that in all his reports on country-specific situations, the matter of children and armed conflict is included as a specific aspect of the report."

- **Periodic reports to public/select actors** highlighting trends over time (e.g., progress on implementation of action plans, trends on grave violations).
- **Submissions to other reporting bodies/mechanisms**, such as human rights treaty bodies, special procedures, universal periodic reviews, commissions of inquiry, the monitoring, analysis, and reporting arrangement, if applicable).
- **Other forms of public or internal reporting** (e.g., briefing notes, flash reports, press releases and other media products, two-pagers, infographics, integration of child protection concerns in reports prepared by human rights components).

Public reports can raise awareness of the positive impact of child protection capacity on the ground, thereby raising the profile of child protection staff and providing a valuable tool for advocacy.

4.4.2 Quality reports

As part of MRM work, the Security Council requests child protection staff and partners to provide “timely, accurate, reliable and objective” information on grave violations committed against children in armed conflict. The same standard also applies to other forms of reporting by child protection staff. Table 5 provides a list of questions that child protection staff can use as a quality-control checklist for preparing reports. In addition, child protection staff should work closely with counterparts in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF, the Child Protection Team in the Department of Peace Operations and the Child Protection Focal Point in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs at headquarters on reports to the Security Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

TABLE 5: Quality checklist for reports

| CRITERIA | QUESTIONS |
|---------------------|---|
| Overall | <p>Does the report contain clear findings tailored to the specific target audience?</p> <p>Is the report logically structured? Is it easy for the audience to follow? Is it clear how the report reaches its conclusions?</p> <p>Where relevant, does the analysis account for the findings of the previous report(s) and build on its recommendations?</p> |
| Completeness | <p>Does the report include all requested information? <i>Check templates, previous reports and other guidance received.</i>³⁸</p> <p>Does the report include all relevant information on violations mentioned in the report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What happened? Who are the victims (e.g., anonymized information disaggregated by age and sex, as well as any other pertinent variables)? Who are the perpetrators (e.g., anonymized information identifying the structure(s) to which they belong, with as much detail as possible on their chain of command). Where were the violations committed? When did they happen? How were they committed (e.g., modus operandi, weapons)? Why were they committed? ■ Profile of victim and alleged perpetrator (e.g., age, sex). |

³⁸ Some templates for MRM-related reports are included in the MRM Field Manual, Annex 10, available at http://www.mrmtools.org/mrm/files/MRM_Field_Manual_Annexes.pdf.

| CRITERIA | QUESTIONS |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Completeness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whether violation(s) are reported or verified by the United Nations or others, including any comments on credibility of sources and constraints in verification process? ■ Have the violations been verified?³⁹ ■ Has information on support/referral been offered to the child? <p>Does the report acknowledge instances in which information is missing (e.g., unknown location)?</p> |
| Methodology | <p>Does the report adequately describe the methods used for gathering and verifying information?</p> <p>Does the report recognize the limitations of the report's findings?</p> |
| Recommendations | <p>Does each recommendation identify its target group(s)?</p> <p>Are the recommendations reasonable?</p> |
| Language/style | <p>Does the report use objective, precise and straightforward language?</p> <p><i>Check if the style is consistent with the previous report(s).</i></p> |
| Security considerations | <p>Does the report avoid using personally identifiable information and other data that risks endangering people (e.g., victims, survivors, witnesses, communities, monitors)?⁴⁰</p> |
| Technical | <p>Are all terms clearly explained?</p> <p>Are names and titles of people spelled correctly?</p> <p>Has the report been adequately cleared before being submitted?</p> |

4.5 CO-MANAGEMENT OF COUNTRY TASK FORCES ON MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and UNICEF – with support from the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict – jointly implement the MRM in the field and share responsibility for managing CTFMRs in-country. The co-management of country task forces requires a high level of coordination and communication between the co-chairs of the CTFMR (i.e., UNICEF and the highest-ranking United Nations representative in the country) at the principal level, and between UNICEF and the mission's field-based child protection staff at the technical level. Good coordination creates positive synergies and allows partners to share tasks efficiently.

Table 6 summarizes some of the most common challenges relating to the co-management of CTFMRs and provides recommendations for child protection staff — working closely with UNICEF counterparts — for addressing them.

39 For all MRM-related reporting, reports need to indicate what information is verified by the United Nations.

40 Child protection staff should include anonymous (i.e., non-personalized) information in reports to the Security Council to protect victims/survivors, sources of information and others. However, it is essential for the organization providing the information to have more detailed information (e.g., name/contact information) for possible follow-up.

TABLE 6: Addressing common challenges in CTFMR co-management

| CHALLENGE | SUGGESTED ACTIONS |
|--|--|
| Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Advise mission leadership to develop and sign a memorandum of understanding with UNICEF on roles and responsibilities for the co-management of the MRM, covering coordination, information-sharing, and engagement with external partners (see annex 8). ▶ Share the memorandum of understanding with incoming child protection staff. ▶ Work with UNICEF on developing a standard operating procedure on the co-management and joint use of the MRM database. |
| Poor quality of data submitted by MRM partners (e.g., MRM incident forms incorrectly or incompletely filled out; delayed submission of forms) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Harmonize and share MRM data collection forms and MRM verification procedures with relevant partners. ▶ Work with UNICEF on a capacity-building plan to retain a critical mass of trained United Nations staff and partners to collect and verify MRM information. ▶ Request periodic training, technical missions and operational support from UNICEF, the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs at headquarters. ▶ Consider jointly hiring, with UNICEF, a dedicated technical person to oversee the quality of monitoring, data collection and verification for the MRM in-mission. |
| Lack of trust from MRM partners and others in MRM data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Share verification responsibilities more broadly among CTFMR members. This might involve assigning a specific grave violation on which to lead, based on mandate and/or presence in the field. ▶ Adopt common standards and procedures for MRM data collection and verification in-mission that are in line with the MRM Field Manual. |
| Limited use of the CTFMR as a platform for advocacy and concrete action on grave violations (beyond MRM reporting requirements) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage members of the CTFMR to work jointly on MRM-related projects, including advocacy on identified issues of concern (e.g., implementation of action plans, military use of schools). ▶ Leverage the organizational priorities of the members of the CTFMR ▶ Systematically provide updates on the MRM at relevant coordination meetings. |
| The transfer of responsibilities to the UN Country Team due to downsizing/ withdrawal of the UN peace operation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consider additional staff and funding needs of United Nations agencies to absorb a transfer of responsibilities. ▶ Consider a staged transfer of MRM-related responsibilities to members of the CTFMR. ▶ Work with OHCHR to include monitoring, documenting and reporting on grave violations in the training of national human rights NGOs to ensure long-term sustainability. |



MINUSMA Child Protection Team delivering a training to national partners involved in the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms (MRM) process, Mali, 2021

4.6 EXERCISES

Child protection staff can use the following exercises to apply some of the knowledge and skills developed in this chapter.

1. Which strategies are you and your colleagues using to maximize the impact of the mission's monitoring capacities? What suggestions do you have for improvement? (See sect. 4.2.1).

| STRATEGIES | REGULARLY | SOMETIMES | NEVER | SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT |
|---|-----------|-----------|-------|-----------------------------|
| Reviewing internal reports | | | | |
| Making arrangements with relevant components | | | | |
| Conducting field mission(s) | | | | |
| Networking | | | | |
| Requesting specific, statistical, or technical information | | | | |
| Requesting mission leadership support to increase contributions from other components | | | | |

2. Use the quality checklist for reports (see table 5) to evaluate a recent child protection report. What changes would you recommend making it more effective?

3. Are the roles and responsibilities of UNICEF and child protection staff in co-managing the MRM clearly delineated in your mission area? What are the practical challenges? How would you suggest resolving these?

4.7 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The United Nations MRM tools, including the guidelines, field manual, training toolkit and best practices, available at www.mrmtools.org/mrm/
- OHCHR, *Manual on Human Rights Monitoring* (2011, revised edition), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/policy-and-methodological-publications/manual-human-rights-monitoring-revised-edition>
- United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Best Practice on the Documentation of Sexual Violence as a Crime or Violation of International Law*, by Sara Ferro Ribeiro and Danaé van der Straten Ponthoz (2nd edition: 2017), particularly chapter 16 (pp. 244-262) on sexual violence against children, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-protocol-on-the-documentation-and-investigation-of-sexual-violence-in-conflict>
- OSRSG-CAAC, *The Six Grave Violations Against Children During Armed Conflict: The Legal Foundation, Working Paper No. 1* (2009, updated 2013), available at <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/>
- OSRSG-CAAC, *Guidance Note on Abduction* (2022), available at <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2022/07/abduction-of-children-in-armed-conflict-new-guidance-offers-tools-for-monitors-to-better-address-one-of-the-most-complex-grave-violations-of-childrens-rights/>
- Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict/Fordham University Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs, *Denial of Humanitarian Access for Children: Legal, Policy and Operational Challenges*, <https://watchlist.org/publications/denial-of-humanitarian-access-for-children-legal-policy-and-operational-challenges/>
- DPPA, Women, Peace and Security Policy, (2019) https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/190604_dppa_wps_policy_-_final.pdf

Gender-sensitive analysis

- OSRSG-CAAC, *Gender Dimensions of the Grave Violations against Children in Armed Conflict* (2022), available at https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/UN_Gender-Dimensions-Grave-Violations-Against-Children-WEB-2.pdf
- Save the Children, *Gender, Age and Conflict: Addressing The Different Needs of Children*, by Nidhi Kapur, 2020, available at <https://www.savethechildren.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SC-Gender-Age-and-Conflict-report-final.pdf>
- DPPA, *Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies* (2017), available at <https://dppa.un.org/en/guidance-gender-and-inclusive-mediation-strategies>
- Department of Peace Operations, *Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security Resource Package* (2020), available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/gewps19_respack_v7_eng_digital_4.pdf



Bria (Eastern CAR) – MINUSCA Child Protection Unit trains members of local protection committees on child protection as part of the “Act to Protect Children Affected by Conflict” campaign, December 2020

Learning objectives

At the end of this chapter, learners will be able to:

- Create SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) advocacy objectives
- Select a primary and secondary target audience
- Compose clear and strong advocacy messages
- Assess existing resources for advocacy
- Prepare a comprehensive advocacy plan

Chapter contents

- What is advocacy?
- Elements of an advocacy strategy
 - Goals and objectives
 - Target audiences and allies
 - Key messages
 - Activities
 - Resources
 - Monitoring and evaluation
- Preparing an advocacy plan
- Exercises
- Additional resources

5.1 WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

For child protection staff, advocacy is the process of influencing the host State's levels of government, armed groups, United Nations entities, NGOs, donors, and other actors to support and implement actions to advance the rights, well-being, and protection of children. Through advocacy, child protection staff use evidence gathered from monitoring and reporting to encourage decision makers to bring about real change for conflict-affected children and their communities. As child protection staff members in United Nations peace operations are not directly in charge of policies or programs, it is their effectiveness in influencing others to make changes that ultimately determines their success.

In addition, child protection staff advocate within their mission to ensure effective mainstreaming of child protection concerns (see chap. 3). Some of the tools discussed in this chapter also apply to in-mission advocacy.

For both types of advocacies, child protection staff can leverage other actors, mechanisms and tools associated with the Security Council's children and armed conflict agenda (see fig. 8). For example, the country-specific conclusions of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict can include information to help validate findings and recommendations

from child protection staff. Table 7 highlights some of these mechanisms, actors, and tools, and how they can reinforce the advocacy efforts of child protection staff.⁴¹

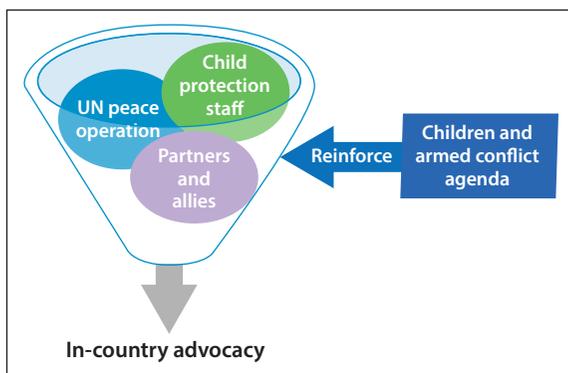


FIGURE 8: Leveraging the Security Council's CAAC Agenda for in-country advocacy

TABLE 7: Possible support mechanisms/actors/tools for in-country advocacy

| MECHANISM/ ACTOR/TOOL | HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT IN-COUNTRY ADVOCACY |
|--|--|
| Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High-level and political advocacy by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, including with the Security Council, the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict, the General Assembly's Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee), the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Member States, and regional organizations ■ Mission leadership video-conferences, Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict field visits to mission area, and side events |

41 For consolidated missions, see the 2016 Guidance Note on the Consolidation of Protection Functions, annex 1, more specifically, part III, "Roles and responsibilities/political space".

**MECHANISM/
ACTOR/TOOL****HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT IN-COUNTRY ADVOCACY****Special Representative
of the Secretary-
General for Children
and Armed Conflict***continued*

- Findings and recommendations of the Secretary-General's annual/country-specific reports related to mission area (note: excerpts from these documents may be useful for events and meetings)
- Public statements, media coverage and advocacy campaigns involving mission area
- Technical advice on advocacy strategy and tactics by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
- Relevant publications and technical resources by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

**Security Council
Working Group
on Children and
Armed Conflict⁴²**

- Findings and recommendation of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict conclusions
- Actions of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, such as field trips to mission areas, public statements, letters from Security Council President, etc.⁴³

**Group of Friends
on Children and
Armed Conflict⁴⁴**

- Political/financial/technical/logistical support through the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict (or members of the group). (Note: child protection staff should consider creating such a group in their mission area if it does not already exist)

**Other international
norms and standards
related to children and
armed conflict⁴⁵**

- Relevant norms and standards (e.g., Geneva Conventions (1949) and their Additional Protocols (1977); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000); the International Labor Organization Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (1999); Paris Commitments and the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated With Armed Forces or Armed Groups,⁴⁶ Safe Schools Declaration,⁴⁷ and the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment of Child Soldiers⁴⁸)
- Findings and recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, for instance, with regard to the country reports on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.⁴⁹

42 For more information, see <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/subsidiary/wgcaac>.

43 Options for possible action by the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict toolkit (S/AC.51/2007/2) of 16 May 2008, available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/AC.51/2007/2.

44 A group of Member States that regularly meets in New York to discuss issues related to children and armed conflict, and to advocate on their behalf. Similar groups also exist in other contexts, such as Amman, Bogota, Geneva, Khartoum, Kinshasa and Manila.

45 See also Section H of the 2017 *Child Protection Policy*.

46 For more information on the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (February 2007), see <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/our-work/paris-principles/>.

47 For further information on the Safe Schools Declaration and current endorsements, see <http://www.protectingeducation.org/guidelines/support>

48 For more information on the Vancouver Principles, operational guidance and current endorsements, see https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes.aspx?lang=eng.

49 For more information on the Committee on the Rights of the Child, see <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx>. For more information on the Optional Protocol to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, see <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/mandate/opac/>.

5.2 ELEMENTS OF AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY

An advocacy strategy is a road map for staff, guiding them on how to achieve their advocacy goals and objectives. Having a plan is essential for ensuring that their work is well thought out, strategic and feasible. Elements of an advocacy strategy include:

- **Goals and objectives:** What does the strategy aim to achieve?
- **Target audiences and allies:** Whose actions does the strategy primarily aim to influence? Which actors can help support advocacy efforts?
- **Key messages:** What are the core messages of the strategy? How can staff adapt core messages to different audiences?
- **Activities:** How can staff engage their target audience? What are possible activities?
- **Resources:** What resources (e.g., staff, funding, capacity) are available to support advocacy plans?
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** How and when can staff assess whether the strategy is working?

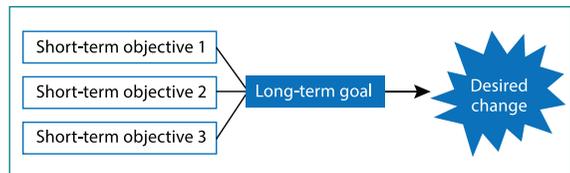
5.2.1 Goals and objectives

Child protection staff should begin by setting long-term advocacy goals, as well as shorter-term advocacy objectives to reach this goal. The long-term advocacy goals of child protection staff are generally to protect children from conflict-related violations, tackle impunity and prevent future violations. Shorter-term advocacy objectives define the changes in policies and practices that are needed to achieve those long-term goals, as shown in figure 9.

Child protection staff can employ various techniques and tools to develop advocacy objectives. For example, they can use a 'problem tree analysis' to identify solutions by breaking down the problem into its

causes and effects.⁵⁰ Alternatively, they can use discussions with local stakeholders and experts to fully grasp the causes of a problem and ask them for possible solutions and options. Advocacy objectives may change over time, requiring staff to review and adapt them on a regular basis.

FIGURE 9: Goals and objectives



According to the problem tree analysis tool, objectives should be SMART:⁵¹

- ✓ **S**pecific (identifying a target audience/action)
- ✓ **M**easurable (defining criteria for measuring progress)
- ✓ **A**chievable (given the current situation, time, and resources)
- ✓ **R**elevant (given the mission's/child protection mandate)
- ✓ **T**ime-bound (including the date of completion)

⁵⁰ See Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Planning Tools: Problem Tree Analysis. Toolkits (2009), <https://www.odi.org/publications/5258-problem-tree-analysis>. Other recommended tools include the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs–Department of Peace Operations course tool (please email dpa-policy@un.org for access) and the Integrated Assessment Planning Handbook, available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/integrated-assessment-and-planning-handbook>.

⁵¹ Note that in the Conflict Analysis and Strategic Assessment course tool participants are encouraged to conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threat) analysis.

Table 8 illustrates the differences between SMART and non-SMART objectives, based on a few examples.

TABLE 8: Examples of SMART and non-SMART advocacy objectives

| NON-SMART OBJECTIVE | SMART OBJECTIVE |
|---|---|
| <p>EXAMPLE 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Convince donors to increase their support for reintegration programs for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups. <p><i>Why is this objective not SMART?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Specific: Yes, action identifies target and action. ✗ Measurable: No, it does not state desired funding increase. ✓ Achievable: Yes, possibly. ✓ Relevant: Yes, reintegration is a priority. ✗ Time-bound: No, it does not set the date of completion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Obtain commitment by donors to increase support for reintegration programs for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups by at least 10 per cent during the country's upcoming donor conference. <p><i>Why is this objective SMART?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This objective is measurable and time-bound because it indicates by how much donors should increase their funding (i.e., by at least 10 per cent of their current funding) and by when (i.e., during the country's upcoming donor conference). |
| <p>EXAMPLE 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stop schools from being used for military purposes. <p><i>Why is this objective not SMART?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Specific: No, it does not specify target audience or proposed action. ✗ Measurable: No, it does not state desired degree of change. ✗ Achievable: No, given government's current lack of commitment. ✓ Relevant: Yes, protection of schools is a priority. ✗ Time-bound: No, it does not set the date of completion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ By the end of year 1, persuade the host government to adopt a new law to protect schools from being used for military purposes, in accordance with the Safe Schools Declaration's "Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict". <p><i>Why is this objective SMART?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This objective specifies the proposed target audience/action (i.e., influencing the host government to adopt a new law), indicators for measuring progress (i.e., adoption of new law) and a time frame (by the end of year 1). These parameters also render the objective achievable. |

5.2.2 Target audiences and allies

Child protection staff should carefully select primary and secondary target audiences for advocacy purposes. Primary targets are entities that have the power to bring about the desired change, such as government authorities, non-State armed groups, donors and programming implementing agencies. Secondary targets include entities that have the access and capacity to influence the primary targets and/or can act as messengers, such as NGOs, community leaders and diplomatic missions. It is crucial for staff to examine their own mission context to determine who their primary and secondary targets are (and be prepared to change targets over time as needed).

Some questions that can help staff identify, select and influence advocacy targets are:

- **Power/influence:** Which actors are technically in charge of children in armed conflict issues? And which ones have the decision-making power to bring about the desired change? Who can influence them?
- **Access:** Are child protection staff able to directly access this actor? Which actor(s) could facilitate contact?
- **Knowledge/attitude:** How much does the actor know about the issue? What is the actor's known level of interest in this issue? Is the actor supportive of/opposed to the issue(s)?
- **Motivation:** What are the actor's motivations and pressure points? Who is the actor accountable to?
- **Allies:** Child protection staff rarely act alone when conducting advocacy. Staff should consider a small number of allies that can bring added value to their advocacy efforts. For example, diplomatic missions in-country may have political or financial influence over the host country, or local leaders may have direct contact with a host government that may be wary of 'foreign influence'. Likewise, possible collaboration with other United Nations entities should be explored, as it can also provide additional leverage at the national or international level. When selecting allies, it is important to make sure that they share similar or compatible interests and values and are able to make a valuable contribution (e.g., resources, knowledge/technical expertise, credibility).

Quick tip: Child protection staff and partners have supported the establishment of inter-ministerial committees on children and armed conflict. Such committees often create valuable advocacy opportunities as well as building a sense of joint ownership among members. They usually include high-level representatives of relevant government ministries and bodies (e.g., ministries for children and family affairs, justice, defense, foreign affairs) and meet on a regular basis. Some governments use the committees to demonstrate commitment to child protection and improve internal communication and coordination.

Check whether such a committee exists in your mission area, or any similar committee where child protection issues could be raised. What is the team's relationship to the committee? If such a committee does not exist, do you think creating one is feasible in your mission area? Could that be an advocacy objective?

5.2.3 Key messages

A strong advocacy message both engages the target audience and clearly states how it can help improve child protection. There is a need to leverage monitoring and reporting work to guide and inform the development of key advocacy messages, through analysis of patterns, scope, intensity, and trends. It is often useful to develop a primary or key message that applies to all audiences while tailoring secondary messages to specific targets. Child protection staff can build on language from foundational documents, such as Security Council mandates, Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict conclusions, and the *2017 Child Protection Policy*, when developing messages. At a minimum, messages should be consistent with the language from such key United Nations sources.

The primary message should be simple, direct, and appealing to the primary target and broader audience. To create the primary message, child protection staff can follow three steps:

1) Start with a compelling statement.

Example: "Armed forces and groups must release children without delay."

2) Give evidence of the problem.

Example: "The United Nations documented X cases of forcible child recruitment in A, B and C provinces in the last six months. Armed force A conducted more than half of the recruitments and armed group B conducted the others. Documented evidence by the United Nations shows that both groups are using children as combatants, messengers, informants, and cooks."

3) State the desired change.

Example: "All armed forces and groups should immediately release all children and work with the United Nations to develop action plans aimed at ceasing all future recruitment of children."

A secondary message aims to influence a particular target audience by making a specific request. Child protection staff should prepare secondary messages to all actors they consider as the primary target audience, as well as other important stakeholders.

To create a secondary message, child protection staff can follow three steps:

1) Start with a statement that relates to the audience's particular interests.

Example: "The Government is on track to meeting the terms of the agreement"; or "The United Nations Secretary-General may soon remove the armed forces from the sanctions list."

2) Give evidence of specific problem(s) and how it concerns the audience.

Example: "The recent signing of the action plan is an important step. However, the United Nations has verified X cases of recruitment of children by armed forces in province A in the last six months."

3) Make a request to the audience.

Example: "The Government must strengthen the armed forces' screening and documentation procedures to ensure that no further child recruitment takes place."

Quick tip: In some cases, you may decide that other actors are better placed to deliver an advocacy message because they may have an existing relationship with the target audience, specific technical expertise, personal experience, or other qualities that are likely to increase the impact of the message. Possible messengers include traditional chiefs, parents, teachers, commanders, diplomats, or celebrities. Such actors are considered to be 'secondary target audiences'. You may also consider using several messengers for one target audience to convey the message from different angles. If you decide that somebody else should be the messenger, make sure that they are comfortable talking to the audience, and help them prepare. This may involve providing them with 'talking points' and materials for distribution.

5.2.4 Activities

Advocacy activities can consist of bilateral meetings, organized negotiations, media events, training sessions, published reports and awareness-raising campaigns. Child protection staff should plan activities to influence target audiences and should also prepare for unforeseen advocacy opportunities, for example, an unexpected side conversation with a member of the target audience at a public event.

Here are some points for consideration when preparing advocacy activities:

- **Timing:** Are there any planned or upcoming events/occasions that would help engage the advocacy target on child protection (e.g., visits of high-level United Nations officials; international days; or release of United Nations reports, particularly those relating to children and armed conflict)?
- **Format:** What format is the advocacy target most likely to respond to (e.g., small private meeting, large public event, reading a published report)?
- **Messenger(s):** Who should speak/convey the key messages (see sect. 5.2.2)? (Note: It may be useful for child protection staff to consult with public information officers regarding media engagement at public events).
- **Resources:** Which resources within the mission or externally are available for advocacy (e.g., staff, funding, capacity)? What additional resources are needed (see sect. 5.2.5)?

Quick tip: Training and technical advice are effective strategies for influencing your advocacy targets and changing their attitudes and behaviors. In coordination with the United Nations rule of law units and other partners, child protection teams have participated in training involving a wide range of external actors such as local chiefs, judges, parties to conflict, police officers, prison staff, social workers, journalists, teachers, and members of State legislatures. Such training can also be used to build relationships with local actors and help gain support for advocacy.

5.2.5 Resources

An assessment of existing resources (e.g., number of staff, funding, capacity) for advocacy will determine whether the strategy is feasible. Child protection staff should assess their own resources, as well as the resources of the United Nations peace operation and partners/allies.

Table 9 outlines some criteria for child protection staff to consider when assessing existing resources.

TABLE 9: Criteria for assessing existing resources for advocacy

| RESOURCES | ASSESSMENT CRITERIA |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Child protection staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Number/location(s) of child protection staff available for advocacy■ Level of expertise/experience in advocacy generally/with selected advocacy target(s)■ Reputation/relationship with first and secondary advocacy target(s)■ Existing networks (e.g., contacts, committees, platforms)■ Financial resources for advocacy |

RESOURCES

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

United Nations peace operation

- Availability/personal motivation/suitability of Mission leadership for advocacy
- Support with rooms, transport, security and logistics
- Support from other mission components for technical expertise, contacts, logistics, etc. (e.g., human rights for accountability of perpetrators of child rights violations, public information officers for media coverage, United Nations Police for advocacy with the local police, civil affairs for community-based campaigns)
- Potential for linking child protection advocacy with other mission efforts, in particular advocacy on protection and prevention

Partners/allies

- Support with resources (e.g., funding, technical expertise, logistics, media)
- Reputation among/relationships with first and secondary advocacy target(s)

In areas where the assessment indicates insufficient resources and/or capacities for advocacy efforts, child protection staff can either scale back the effort, pool resources with other mission components or work to develop additional resources

5.2.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Every advocacy strategy needs a monitoring and evaluation plan to measure whether the strategy is actually working. This primarily involves child protection staff developing indicators for measuring the short- and long-term results of their planned activities, and a plan for collecting data on these indicators and reviewing the results on a regular basis (see chap. 9.5).

5.3 PREPARING AN ADVOCACY PLAN

An advocacy plan helps child protection staff members put their strategy into action. The plan factors in all the elements from the advocacy strategy — objectives, targets, allies, messages, activities, and resources — and organizes them into a manageable written format, usually a table (see table 10). The plan should clearly assign staff member roles and responsibilities and time frames for carrying out planned activities. Child protection staff members can conduct a review of the plan to determine whether initial resource assessments for planned advocacy are still valid or need to be adjusted.



MONUSCO/Photo
Jacob De Lange

TABLE 10: Sample advocacy plan (extract)

Objective 1: To influence the host government to adopt a new law to protect schools from being used for military purposes, in accordance with the Safe Schools Declaration. July 1, 2022 – July 1, 2023

| TARGET AUDIENCE | ACTIVITIES | RESOURCES | ASSIGNED TO: | TIME FRAME |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Inter-ministerial committee on children and armed conflict | Presentations at quarterly meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Existing:</i> main presenter • <i>Needs:</i> 1-2 co-presenters | Deputy Senior Child Protection Adviser | 1 July 2022 – 1 July 2023 (every 3 months) |
| Ministry of Defense | Series of bilateral meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Existing:</i> preliminary arrangement with Ministry of Defense; support from military liaison officer • <i>Needs:</i> None identified yet | Senior Child Protection Adviser (support from national officer) | 1 July 2022 – 1 July 2023 |
| Parliament | Presentation on need to adopt new law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Existing:</i> main presenter, contacts in parliament (via Political Affairs) • <i>Needs:</i> knowledge/research on parliamentary process, 1-2 co-presenters (expertise on national law) | Deputy Senior Child Protection Adviser | 1 September 2022 – 15 October 2022 |
| UNICEF | Hiring of consultant (drafting new law) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Existing:</i> informal agreement with UNICEF, funding • <i>Needs:</i> formal agreement between the Department of Peace Operations, United Nations peace operation and UNICEF | Senior Child Protection Adviser | 15 October 2022 – 15 December 2022 |
| Diplomatic/donor community | Event on military use of schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Existing:</i> host/sponsor of event, venue • <i>Needs:</i> guest list, speakers | Deputy Senior Child Protection Adviser | 15 October 2022 – 1 January 2023 |

5.4 EXERCISES

Child protection staff can use the following exercises to apply some of the knowledge and skills developed in this chapter.

1a. Prepare a SMART advocacy objective for your mission area.

1b. Identify a primary target audience and two secondary targets that are essential to meet your desired objective.

Primary target audience: _____

Secondary target audiences:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

1c. Write a primary message (i.e., applicable to all target audiences) based on your advocacy objective.

1d. Create secondary messages for each of your selected advocacy targets.

| Target audiences | Message |
|------------------|---------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

1e. Develop two possible activities to achieve your advocacy objective.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

2. How can you better leverage the Security Council's children and armed conflict agenda to achieve your advocacy goals and objectives in your mission area.



Day of the African Child, Mogadishu, Somalia, 2019. UNSOM

5.5 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Jo Becker: *Campaigning for Children: Strategies for Advancing Child Rights* (2017).
- OHCHR's Human Rights Index includes a database for the Committee on the Rights of the Child that allows users to retrieve country-specific information (e.g., concluding observations, reporting status, State Parties (country) reports) on child protection issues, available at <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en>
- Save the Children, *Advocacy and Campaigning Course* (2014), available at <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/save-childrens-advocacy-and-campaigning-course>
- UNICEF: *Advocacy Toolkit. A Guide to Influencing Decisions that Affect Children's Lives* (2010), available at https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit.pdf
- UNICEF, *UNICEF Advocacy Brief on Children Affected by Armed Conflict* (2021), available at <https://www.unicef.org/documents/unicef-advocacy-brief-children-affected-armed-conflict>



UNICEF Photo

6

Engaging with Parties to Conflict

Learning objectives

At the end of this chapter, learners will be able to:

- Decide on parameters for engaging with parties to conflict
- Explain requisites for developing and supporting the implementation of action plans
- Choose an approach for engaging with a party to conflict that reflects its distinct motivations
- Discuss 'dos and don'ts' for supporting the release and reintegration of formerly associated children
- Manage common challenges in engaging with parties to conflict

Chapter contents

- Focus of engagement
- Groundwork for engagement
- Action plans with parties to conflict
- Release and reintegration of associated children
 - Advocacy for the release of associated children
 - Dos and don'ts for the release and reintegration of associated children
- Managing common challenges in engaging with parties to conflict
- Exercises
- Additional resources

6.1 FOCUS OF ENGAGEMENT

The main objectives for child protection staff when engaging with parties to the conflict, including both armed forces and non-State armed groups,⁵² are to:

Child protection staff are responsible for monitoring and reporting on:

- Work with parties to the conflict to develop and implement action plans and other commitments to halt and prevent grave violations against children, as mandated by the Security Council.
- Support the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups.

This engagement may also provide opportunities for more sensitive discussions on both broader violations against children in armed conflict, and more general human rights violations and abuses.

Such engagement does not lessen the accountability of the party or its individual members for violations they have committed. Engagement of child protection staff with non-State armed groups for the purpose of securing the release of children and commitments to halt future recruitment of children does not imply legal status, legitimacy or recognition of the involved non-State armed groups.

6.2 GROUNDWORK FOR ENGAGEMENT

By virtue of Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005), which request the development and establishment of action plans, United Nations child protection actors are mandated — and have the political space — to engage with all State and non-State armed actors involved in child protection violations. Child protection staff often seek out and carefully plan opportunities for engaging with parties to conflict on child protection matters (e.g., the DDR process, meetings with armed forces/groups). However, in some cases, they may engage with parties to conflict on an ad hoc basis and without warning. For example, children may voluntarily seek protection at United Nations mission headquarters or military observer posts after spontaneously leaving an armed force or group. Alternatively, parties to armed conflict may unexpectedly reach out to child protection staff with a view to changing their practices. Understanding the relevant parties and setting basic parameters for engaging with them in advance can help child protection staff navigate these types of situations.

Table 11 summarizes what child protection staff need to know before engaging with parties to conflict. Their preparations should include an analysis of the relevant legal framework, a conflict and stakeholder analysis, and adequate consultations with relevant parts of the United Nations system, including other mission components (e.g., mission leadership, political affairs, JMAC or office with equivalent functions DDR, human rights), relevant UN entities

⁵² Armed forces are “the military organization of a state with a legal basis, and supporting institutional infrastructure (salaries, benefits, basic services, etc.).” A non-State armed group is a group “that has the potential to employ arms in the use of force to achieve political, ideological or economic objectives; is not within the formal military structures of a State, State-alliance or intergovernmental organization; and is not under the control of the state(s) in which it operates.” United Nations, *Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* (2014), p. 46, available at <https://www.unddr.org/operational-guide-iddrs/>.

(e.g., UNICEF, UNCHR and OCHA) and counterparts in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.⁵³

TABLE 11: Preparing for engagement with parties to conflict

| | QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER | WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Background on relevant parties to conflict</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is the applicable legal framework for this party?⁵⁴ ■ What is the party's internal structure? ■ What is the party's formal or informal chain of command (i.e., line of authority along which orders are passed within a military unit and between different units)? ■ Does the party receive support from other States, including, in the case of non-State armed groups, the host State? ■ What are the party's motivations, interests, and core values (e.g., power, public support, money, status)? ■ Which grave violations are they committing against children, or have they committed in the past and why? (See also section 4.3.1 on child-sensitive analysis) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To focus on interlocutor(s) that have de jure (i.e., in accordance with the law) and de facto (i.e., not formally recognized) power to make and implement commitments. ■ To adapt messages and approaches to each party (see sect. 6.4). ■ To assess options for developing and implementing action plans and other commitments to end grave violations against children. |
| <p>Attitudes and policies of the United Nations and its peace operations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the attitudes and practices of the United Nations and mission leadership towards engagement with this party generally and on child protection issues specifically? ■ Do child protection staff need approval by mission leadership before engaging with this party? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To comply with United Nations and mission policies and practices. <p><i>Note: Approval is more likely to be required by mission leadership if this is a first-time engagement with a party to conflict or if this is a significant change in the nature of engagement. There are also special procedures if the party is on the United Nations sanctions list.⁵⁵</i></p> |

53 See the Secretary-General's Executive Committee decision number 2017/59 of 5 May 2017. For conflict and stakeholder analyses, see United Nations Development Group, *Conducting a Conflict and Development Analysis* (2016), available at https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDP_CDA-Report_v1.3-final-opt-low.pdf; *Conflict Analysis Practice Note* (Version: 13 May 2016), available at <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Conflict-Analysis-Practice-Note-13-May-2016-Version.pdf>.

54 Because non-State armed groups are not operating within formal State structures, there are important differences in the applicability of certain provisions of international laws. For an overview, see ICRC, *Legal Protection of Children in Armed Conflict* (2003), available at www.icrc.org/en/download/file/1033/children-legal-protection-factsheet.pdf.

55 Please see DPKO/DPA Aide-Mémoire, in 'additional resources' at the end of this section.

| | QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER | WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Previous experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Has the United Nations peace operation/ its partners/other actors already engaged this party to the conflict on child protection or other human rights or humanitarian issues? What approaches and lessons learned can be used to advance the dialogue on children in armed conflict? ■ What existing channels can be used to strengthen child protection action? How can incoherence due to multiple channels of communication be avoided? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To learn from the experience of and coordinate approaches within the United Nations peace operation and among partners. |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the specific objectives for engaging with this party to the conflict on child protection (e.g., adoption of action plan, release of associated children)? (See sect. 5.2.1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To adapt engagement strategies to meet the specific objectives. |
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What type of engagement would be best suited to meet the objectives (e.g., direct or indirect contact, level of engagement, level of confidentiality)? Do relevant partners agree on this approach? ■ Should negotiators use a staged approach, that is, starting with less sensitive issues before moving to more contentious ones? ■ Are there any ongoing events or processes that child protection staff could leverage to bolster engagement with parties to the conflict on child protection (e.g., ceasefire or peace negotiations, security sector reform meetings, engagement under the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangement)? ■ How can data on grave violations documented under the MRM be leveraged when engaging the party? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To ensure that engagements lead to realistic and productive outcomes that advance child protection. |
| Risks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the perceived risks at country, regional and/or global levels related to engagement with this party (e.g., security risks for United Nations/associates/affected population; risks for relations with the government; repercussions for program delivery by humanitarian partners)? How likely/unlikely are these risks? What would be the impact? ■ What are potential risk mitigation strategies for the presumed risks? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To weigh the value of the engagement against potential risks. ■ To mitigate possible risks. |



Child protection section screening of armed group elements following the commander commitment to release children. North Kivu, DRC, 2022. MONUSCO

6.3 ACTION PLANS WITH PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT

As part of the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, child protection staff take a lead role in the negotiation, development and monitoring of action plans with parties to the conflict.⁵⁶ By signing these “concrete, time-bound and verifiable” agreements, the party to the conflict commits to stopping and preventing specific grave violations against children – parties that commit such violations are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General’s Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict.⁵⁷ Once a party to the conflict has signed an action plan, the United Nations is responsible for monitoring and reporting on progress and for compliance with the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict through the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. If the party fully implements the plan and ceases violations against children for at least one reporting cycle of the Secretary-General’s Annual Report, the Secretary-General removes the party from the list. With the consent of the signatory party, it is recommended that action plans are disseminated widely to increase awareness and strengthen accountability. There should be a common understanding as to whether the document will be made public (see fig. 10).

ACTION PLAN

HOW TO END THE RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT:

ONE Issue military command orders prohibiting the recruitment and use of children

TWO Release all children identified in the ranks of security forces

THREE Ensure children’s reintegration into civilian life

FOUR Criminalize the recruitment and use of children

FIVE Integrate age-verification mechanisms in recruitment procedures

CHILDRENANDARMEDCONFLICT.ORG

United Nations unicef

⁵⁶ For further guidance on action plans, please consult the MRM tools, available at www.mrmtools.org/mrm.

⁵⁷ The following five (out of six) grave violations may result in the Secretary General’s listing of a party: recruitment/use of children; patterns of killing/maiming of children; grave sexual violence against children; abduction of children; recurrent attacks/threats against protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals. Denial of humanitarian access is not currently a trigger for listing.

The co-chairs of the CTFMR (i.e., the highest-ranking United Nations representative in the country⁵⁸ and the UNICEF country representative) spearhead efforts to engage parties to the conflict in order to complete action plans. Child protection staff, along with other members of the CTFMR, provide critical support to these efforts through advocacy, monitoring and coordination, as well as through their advisory function to mission leadership. Essential elements for successfully developing and supporting the implementation of an action plan include:

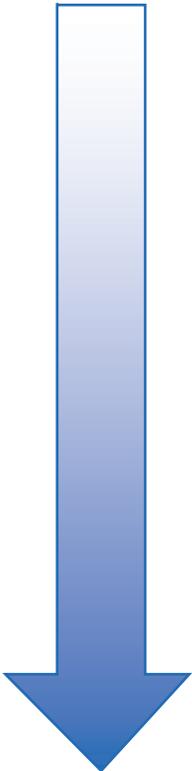
- 
- ✓ Potential signatory parties have a political interest in action plan
 - ✓ Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Head of Mission conducts consistent and repeated advocacy on action plan
 - ✓ Government appoints child protection focal points
 - ✓ Parties to the conflict grant the United Nations unconditional access to their barracks, military training centres, camps, etc.
 - ✓ Country task force co-Chairs on monitoring and reporting coordinate effectively with each other
 - ✓ Consultative process on action plan involves potential signatory parties, the United Nations and other relevant actors (e.g., NGOs, affected communities)
 - ✓ Context-specific action plan developed alongside an implementation plan⁵⁹
 - ✓ Signatory parties fully understand the terms of the agreement
 - ✓ Action plan commitments, once signed, are widely disseminated if signatory parties agree
 - ✓ Financial and other resources are identified and allocated to support signatory parties with action plan implementation
 - ✓ CTFMR regularly monitors action plan implementation

FIGURE 10: Key elements of action plans

Quick tip: After signing action plans, parties to conflict and the United Nations may struggle to maintain the political momentum needed for thorough implementation. To accelerate the implementation of action plans, the CTFMR can work with the party on a ‘road map’ that lists a set of specific measures needed to implement the action plan (e.g., establishment of age assessment procedures, child protection training for the party to the conflict, issuance of presidential orders prohibiting underage recruitment). The purpose of such a road map is to re-energize the implementation process by working with the party through this list of specific tasks.

58 In some instances, his/her delegate.

59 For standard templates of action plans, see MRM Field Manual, annexes 12a–c, which focus on recruitment and use, rape and sexual violence, killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals, pp. 148–168, available at http://www.mrmtools.org/mrm/files/MRM_Field_Manual_Annexes.pdf

6.4 RELEASE AND REINTEGRATION OF FORMERLY ASSOCIATED CHILDREN

The parameters for engaging parties to conflict on the release and reintegration of children fundamentally differ from other negotiations with these actors, such as peace or ceasefire negotiations. Because the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups is illegal, all efforts to negotiate their release must be unconditional and can take place at any time, including during armed conflict. The release of children may be the result of a negotiated agreement (e.g., an action plan or peace agreement), occur as part of a formal DDR process, or happen informally (e.g., spontaneous release, escape or capture of children).

Child protection staff must fully grasp and convey to the parties to conflict and others the conceptual and practical differences between approaches to the release and reintegration of children and to DDR for adult ex-combatants. The United Nations Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards, notably the “Children and DDR” module, and the Paris Principles provide a fundamental set of benchmarks and guidance for child protection staff in this respect.⁶⁰

Some of the responsibilities that child protection staff should prepare for include:

- Advocating for the release of children associated with parties to conflict.
- Pre-identifying, identifying, and verifying the status of children associated with armed forces and groups.⁶¹
- Informing and/or training parties to conflict on the modalities of the release and reintegration process for formerly associated children.
- Monitoring compliance of the release and reintegration process for children with international laws and standards.

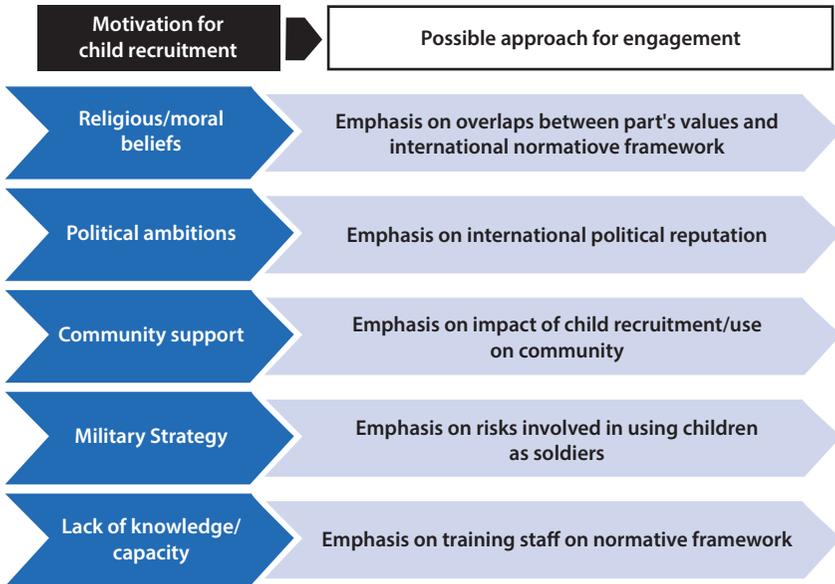
6.4.1 Advocacy for the release of associated children

When carrying out these responsibilities, child protection staff may directly or indirectly engage with parties to the conflict on the release of children. In either case, they should be well aware of their own parameters for engagement. It is important for staff to reflect their analysis of the armed actor’s structure, motivations, and constraints in their engagement approach (see sect. 6.2). For instance, some parties to conflict have no/little knowledge of relevant laws and standards on child recruitment, while others are either not able or willing to respect them. Approaches for discussing child protection with each of these actors differ, as shown in figure 11. However, child protection staff can combine different approaches or choose a novel approach.

60 *Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups* (2007) (Paris Principles), available at <https://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf>; United Nations, *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* (2014), available at <https://www.unddr.org/the-iddrs/>, particularly Module 5.20: “Children and DDR”.

61 The pre-identification and identification process usually involves commanders providing a list of children associated with their armed force or group. The verification process usually involves determining whether the identified are: 1) below the age of 18 (i.e., children); and 2) associated in some capacity with the concerned armed force or armed group as part of a confidential interview between the child protection staff and the presumed child.

FIGURE 11: Links between motivations for child recruitment and possible approaches for engaging parties on the release of associated children.



UNMISS Child Protection Section, together with UNICEF and the National DDR Commission, released 32 children associated with the IO, Mimir, South Sudan, July 2020

6.4.2 'Dos and don'ts' for the release and reintegration of associated children

Although they do not directly manage programs, child protection staff members are involved in almost all stages of the release and reintegration process for children. This can give them a comprehensive and fairly objective perspective when examining the process and its compliance with the international normative framework.

Table 12 presents some 'dos and don'ts' for child protection staff to remember when supporting the release and reintegration of associated children.

TABLE 12: Dos and don'ts for supporting the release and reintegration of associated children

| DOS | DON'TS |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Advocate for inclusion of child protection provisions in peace and ceasefire agreements (e.g., references to action plans/commitments by parties to conflict).⁶² ■ Adapt advocacy messages to each armed force and group (see sect. 6.4.1). ■ Use monitoring activities as an opportunity to engage in dialogue with armed forces and groups on child rights and protection issues. ■ Familiarize oneself with the DDR process for both adults and children. ■ Obtain relevant pre-identification and identification forms for associated children in advance and be able to explain them to others. ■ Designate and train child protection focal points within the armed forces to support the identification/ verification of children and sensitize their assigned units. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Directly tie the release and reintegration of children to peace/ceasefire negotiations or the establishment/implementation of a national DDR process.⁶³ ■ Assume armed forces/groups understand the definition of 'child' or 'child soldier' and/or the relevant international legal framework. ■ Raise expectations among armed forces/ groups regarding benefits in exchange for the release of children.⁶⁴ ■ Presume that the same strategies will result in the release of all children, including girls, from armed forces and groups. ■ Share personal information of the associated or formerly associated children to reduce the risk of stigmatization and possible reprisals.⁶⁵ ■ Forget that the primary responsibility for the release and reintegration of children rests with the host government. |

62 Also see OSRSF-CAAC, *Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict* (2020), available at <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf>.

63 There is a risk that peace/ceasefire negotiations can stall or break down. While it is useful to engage parties to conflict on 'children and armed conflict' as part of these negotiations, child protection staff should advocate for 'parallel negotiation tracks'.

64 See the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/59/695-S/2005/72), in which the Secretary-General explicitly requested the United Nations to engage in dialogue with all entities whose actions have a significant impact on children, without any implications as to their political or juridical status.

65 Respecting children's privacy is particularly important when child protection staff are interacting with the media. See UNICEF's Guidelines for journalists on reporting on issues related to children affected by armed conflict (2003), available at http://www.unicef.org/media/media_tools_guidelines.html.

Quick tip: DDR processes can provide valuable opportunities for child protection staff to work on institutional reforms. This could include reforms related to age assessment procedures for military recruitment, child protection training for armed forces and improvements to vetting procedures for security forces to screen out perpetrators of grave violations against children. You should coordinate with rule of law units to determine whether there is scope for an increased focus on child protection in current or future security sector reform work.

6.5 MANAGING COMMON CHALLENGES IN ENGAGING WITH PARTIES TO CONFLICT

Talking with armed forces and groups about grave violations against children is politically sensitive and, in some cases, even dangerous for child protection staff and others. Tracking and analyzing non-State armed groups may be challenging, partly because of the sheer number, diversity and frequently changing composition of these groups.

Table 13 lists some common challenges in engaging with parties to conflict and suggests actions for addressing them.

TABLE 13: Common challenges in engaging with parties to conflict and suggested actions for addressing them.

| CHALLENGE | SUGGESTED ACTIONS |
|--|--|
| Party to conflict is not accessible (in the case of non-State armed groups) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Emphasize access restraints in reports and advocacy, clearly identifying causes ▶ Identify and support intermediaries/messengers to engage with parties to the conflict, such as NGOs or local leaders (This action requires a risk analysis to identify and mitigate potential harm to those involved.) |
| Fragmentation/weaknesses in party's chain of command and/or splintering of factions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Request support from military staff, political affairs, rule of law units and other mission components to fully understand the party's chain of command and structure ▶ Build relations with leaders of the concerned party, including local leaders, to obtain and follow up on commitments |
| Engaging with parties to conflict designated as 'terrorist' entities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understand the specific parameters for engaging with the concerned party (see sect. 6.2) ▶ Advise United Nations peace operations to encourage governments to sign protocols for the handover of children detained for association with these groups to civilian child protection actors, to safeguard children in accordance with applicable international obligations (see annex 7) |
| Parties to conflict refusing to engage on child protection (e.g., for fear of facing legal repercussions) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establish confidence-building measure (e.g., workshops, training) ▶ Identify and emphasize how engagement may further the party's interests based on analysis of the party's motivations, values, interests (see sect. 6.4.1) |

Quick tip: Child protection staff can advocate with parties to conflict to establish systems to facilitate the release and reintegration of associated children — such as the issuing of command directives to separate/demobilize children associated with armed forces/groups, or for other core child protection concerns — and set up child protection focal points. These focal points can help pre-identify suspected children associated with the armed group/force in question and share this information with child protection staff for age assessments.

6.6 EXERCISES

Child protection staff can use the following exercises to apply some of the knowledge and skills developed in this chapter.

1. Prepare a short analysis of one party to the conflict in your mission area (e.g., structure, chain of command, motivations).

2. List three key parameters for engaging with this party (see sect. 6.2, table 11).

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

3. Based on your knowledge and/or experience, what do you consider to be the main requisites for the successful development and implementation of action plans? Are any of these particularly relevant for your mission area?

4. Which of the “dos and don’ts for supporting the release and reintegration of children” (sect. 6.4.2, table 12) do you believe child protection staff most often neglect? Why?

5. What are the practical challenges of engaging with parties to conflict in your mission area? How can you work to resolve them?



MINUSMA Special Representative of the Secretary-General attends a signing ceremony of an Action Plan against the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations of children's rights by two wings of the signatory armed group Plateforme, 26 August 2021

6.7 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Engaging with Parties to Conflict

- Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, *Aide-memoire, Engaging with non-State armed groups for political purposes: considerations for United Nations mediators and missions* (2017).
- United Nations, *Guidance for Effective Mediation* (2012), available at <https://peacemaker.un.org/resources/mediation-guidance>
- UN Department of Political Affairs, *Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies* (2017), available at https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/1.%20English%20-GIMS_0.pdf
- United Nations (Mediation Support Unit, Policy and Mediation Division), *UN Support to Local Mediation: Challenges and Opportunities* (2020), available at <https://peacemaker.un.org/node/3612>
- International Peace Institute, *Engaging with Non-state Armed Groups to Protect Civilians: A Pragmatic Approach for UN Peace Operations* (2018), by Ralph Mamiya, available at https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/1810_Engaging_with_NSAGs.pdf
- OSRSG-CAAC, *Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict* (2020), available at <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf>
- Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict: *Action Plans to Prevent and End Violations Against Children. A Discussion Paper* (2013), available at <http://watchlist.org/publications/action-plans-to-prevent-and-end-violations-against-children/>

DDR/children associated with armed forces and armed groups

- The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action/Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, *Operational guidance: Negotiating and implementing handover protocols for the transfer of children associated with armed forces and armed groups* (2022), available at <https://watchlist.org/publications/operational-guidance-negotiating-and-implementing-handover-protocols/>
- United Nations, *Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) and Operational Guide to the IDDRS*, particularly "Module 5.20: Children and DDR" (2019), available at <https://www.unddr.org/operational-guide-iddrs/>
- The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, *Technical Note: Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups: Lessons Learnt and Good Practices on Prevention of Recruitment and Use, Release and Reintegration* (2020), available at <https://alliancecpha.org/en/GAAFAG>
- UN University, *Cradled by Conflict: Child Involvement with Armed Groups in Contemporary Conflict* (2018), available at <http://collections.unu.edu/view/UNU:6409>



Release of children, Rumbek, South Sudan, 2021

7

Coordination with External Actors

Learning objectives

At the end of this chapter, learners will be able to:

- Explain why it is essential for United Nations peace operations to coordinate with external actors on child protection
- Identify external actors that child protection staff should coordinate with
- Plan actions to facilitate coordination with external actors on child protection
- Recognize instances where coordination is unnecessary or could be harmful

Chapter contents

- Focus of coordination
- Mapping of relevant actors
- Main areas of coordination
- Exercises
- Additional resources

7.1 FOCUS OF COORDINATION

United Nations peace operations often rely on support from external actors to carry out the child protection mandate, particularly when it comes to programmatic responses. For example, a mission's advocacy with armed forces and groups for the release of associated children relies on child protection systems being in place to provide adequate support for released children. Child protection staff should therefore have a good understanding of the different mandates and roles of other United Nations and external actors (e.g., government, civil society) and establish strong, reliable networks and referral pathways.

As part of their coordination function, child protection staff members should:

- Act as entry points for external actors to engage with United Nations peace operations on relevant child protection concerns.
- Create awareness among mission staff about medical, legal and other services that external actors provide for child victims/survivors of violations, and referral systems.
- Engage with relevant mission components and partners on monitoring, reporting and advocacy activities, including co-managing the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (see chap. 4).
- Work with external experts to provide technical capacity when needed within the immediate operating environment.

The overarching goal of these efforts is for United Nations peace operations to understand and appropriately leverage the comparative advantages of the various actors in the field in order to advance the protection, rights and well-being of children.

While this chapter focuses primarily on coordination with external actors, staff can also take a lead role in coordinating on child protection with other mission components as part of their mainstreaming function (see chap. 3). In addition, staff should coordinate closely with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, which leads the efforts on mainstreaming the concerns of children affected by armed conflict across the United Nations system.

7.2 MAPPING OF RELEVANT ACTORS

Child protection staff typically engage in various forms of coordination with national authorities, United Nations entities, regional and sub-regional organizations, international and national NGOs, civil society organizations and local communities working in the areas of humanitarian assistance, human rights, security, justice and peacebuilding.

To identify relevant actors for potential coordination, it is useful for child protection staff to concentrate on two types of actors.

- 1) **Actors that conduct child protection activities similar to those of the United Nations peace operation** (i.e., monitoring and reporting grave violations committed against children and other civilians in armed conflict and advocating on their behalf). This may include local and international human rights, child rights or women's rights organizations.

2) **Actors that do different but complimentary child protection work to that of the United Nations peace operation** (e.g., providing legal, medical, psychosocial, and other support to children affected by armed conflict; strengthening capacity of national and local institutions; implementing aspects of DDR processes). This may include government entities, as well as international and local organizations.

Table 14 provides examples of compelling reasons for engaging with both sets of actors.

TABLE 14: Reasons for coordination with certain types of actors.

| TYPES OF ACTOR | REASONS FOR COORDINATION |
|--|---|
| <p>Actors that do similar work (primarily human rights actors/mechanisms)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To benefit from different types of access to certain geographical areas, sources of information and advocacy targets ■ To avoid duplicating efforts ■ To avoid re-interviewing victims/survivors/witnesses ■ To strengthen local capacities for research and advocacy on children and armed conflict |
| <p>Actors that do different, complimentary work (primarily service providers)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To ensure that child victims/survivors of violations can access support services ■ To enable service providers to share information with child protection staff for advocacy purposes when appropriate |

Child protection staff members should identify and familiarize themselves with all relevant external actors in their mission area to find potential areas for coordination. This involves an awareness of these actors':

- Mandate or mission and operating principles
- Activities (e.g., thematic focus, geographic presence/focus)
- Level of technical knowledge, resources, and capacities
- Political, religious or other affiliations and views that may impact their child protection work (e.g., biases towards certain ethnic or religious groups, strong connections with community leaders)

In many contexts, child protection staff participate in existing child protection co-ordination structures, such as those established under the international humanitarian cluster system.⁶⁶

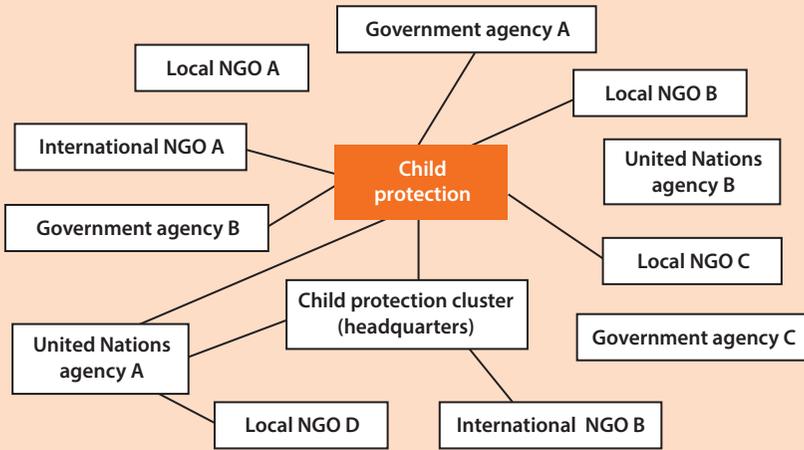
Child protection staff can also work with colleagues in the mission (e.g., human rights, civil affairs, gender, military observers, etc.), United Nations entities (e.g., UNICEF, OCHA, OHCHR, , etc.), ICRC, government counterparts and civil society actors to identify and understand other actors and mechanisms related to child protection and children and armed conflict.

The Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and UNICEF have an established partnership at headquarters level to delineate their distinct scope of work on child protection, which colleagues usually replicate at the field level. Child protection staff are generally responsible for mainstreaming child

⁶⁶ Within the international humanitarian cluster system, UNICEF is the lead agency for the child protection area of responsibility. For further information, see <https://www.cpaor.net/>. Depending on the context, child protection staff may benefit from participating in other coordination structures for information-sharing and advocacy purposes, such as the sexual and gender-based violence sub-cluster or the education cluster.

protection within missions and spearheading sensitive political dimensions of the Security Council’s children and armed conflict agenda. In contrast, UNICEF leads the programmatic and response work. Appreciating their distinct mandates, roles and ways of working helps promote complementarity and coherence, avoid duplication, and facilitate good working relationships among staff working with both organizations in the field.

Quick tip: You can create a map that includes all actors doing similar and/or complementary work in the mission area. You can use lines to mark each actor’s relationship with child protection staff and between each other.



Some questions for analyzing the map include:

- Which external actors are child protection staff primarily interacting with? Should child protection staff reach out to additional actors for coordination because of their technical expertise, geographical reach, or other factors?
- Which gaps in the work of child protection staff could coordination with external actors help address?
- Are there relationships that child protection staff should consider expanding or withdrawing from? Why or why not?
- Should child protection staff do more to facilitate contact between certain actors and other mission components? Why or why not?
- Are relevant actors coordinating effectively among each other to ensure adequate responses and prevent violations? What can child protection staff do to improve their coordination?

7.3 MAIN AREAS OF COORDINATION

Strategies for United Nations peace operation coordination with external actors may differ based on the context, frequency, nature of interaction and partner(s) involved. In some cases, coordination may take place through a formal partnership structured by a memorandum of understanding or terms of reference (see annex 8). In other cases, coordination may be more ad hoc, consisting of sharing information about activities and plans or harmonizing messages for advocacy campaigns.

Child protection staff should not assume that actors outside the mission necessarily understand the role and limitations of child protection staff in United Nations peace operations. For example, external actors may not know that child protection staff assume an important monitoring and advocacy role but are not directly engaged in programmatic work (see chap. 2). Likewise, staff should understand and explain to colleagues within the mission the roles of external actors as appropriate. In general, mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities is an important precondition for successful cooperation.

There are two key areas in the work of child protection staff that require increased coordination with external actors: programmatic responses; and monitoring, reporting and advocacy on grave child rights violations. Table 15 highlights some actions that child protection staff should consider in each of these areas to improve coordination.

TABLE 15: Possible actions by child protection staff to improve coordination

| COORDINATION AREAS | POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY CHILD PROTECTION STAFF |
|--|---|
| <p>Programmatic response (see also chap. 3)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reach out to coordination mechanisms and actors, particularly those working in child protection and gender-based violence, to clarify referral pathways for appropriate assistance and response services to children who have survived violence. ■ Use in-mission training and meetings to inform United Nations staff of their obligation to refer victims/survivors to appropriate child protection actors and services and relevant referral pathways. ■ Ensure that Force headquarters covers child protection through directives, tactical aide-memoires, and standard operating procedures, including guidance on required actions when encountering children in armed forces/groups or during military operations. ■ Encourage battalion commanders to reach out and establish communication with child protection actors in their area of responsibility to exchange information and build trust. ■ Reach out to United Nations Police components to ensure that they integrate child protection into their work, including by advising the host State's police and juvenile justice system on referral pathways. |
| <p>Monitoring, reporting and advocacy on child protection</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure effective coordination between the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, when it exists, and human rights mechanisms, and with those providing services to victims/survivors.⁶⁷ ■ Closely assess which actors to engage as allies for advocacy activities and ensure that messages are mutually reinforcing (see chapter 5.2.2). ■ Consult with child protection and other partners to identify issues to raise with senior mission leadership at the State and HQ level (e.g., humanitarian access concerns, reported violations). |

⁶⁷ Standard 1 of the Child Protection Minimum Standards, available at https://alliancecpa.org/en/CPMS_home. For further guidance, see MRM tools, available at www.mrmtools.org and section 4.5 of this *Handbook*.

| COORDINATION AREAS | POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY CHILD PROTECTION STAFF |
|--|---|
| <p>Monitoring, reporting and advocacy on child protection</p> <p><i>continued</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agree on information-sharing procedures at coordination meetings (e.g., using bilateral or smaller meetings for sharing information on particularly political or sensitive issues, or issues that may put people at risk). ■ Support the efforts of UNICEF and other partners to strengthen capacities of local organizations for monitoring and reporting grave violations against children and advocating on their behalf. Such local capacities are particularly needed in cases where access is difficult, or mission draw-down is imminent. |



UNSCOM Child Protection Officer strengthening the capacities of members of civil society organizations on monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children in Mogadishu, March 2022.

Quick tip: Coordination is indispensable in ensuring a coherent and effective protection response. However, in some instances, coordination may hinder or delay progress in achieving goals. You should therefore constantly evaluate the benefits of coordination against the costs or potential risks. To do this, you should establish clear criteria for participating or not participating in coordination mechanisms. Criteria may include:

Alignment with priorities: Does participation in this mechanism advance child protection staff priorities? (Note: Check the coordination mechanism’s terms of reference and workplan, if possible.)

Contact with stakeholders: Do child protection staff interact with key stakeholders (e.g., high-level government officials) in this mechanism who would otherwise be difficult to meet with?

Valuable contribution: Do child protection staff provide a valuable contribution to this mechanism (e.g., facilitation role, information-sharing, knowledge/expertise)?

Feasibility: How much time and resources do child protection staff need to invest to make participation in the mechanism worthwhile?

7.4 EXERCISES

Child protection staff can use the following exercises to apply some of the knowledge and skills developed in this chapter.

1. What are the three key reasons why United Nations peace operations should coordinate with external actors on child protection?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

2. Which external actors are doing similar and/or complementary work in your mission area?

2a. Could increased coordination help address gaps in the work of child protection staff? Which gaps?

2b. Should child protection staff members reach out to additional actors for coordination because of their technical expertise, geographical reach, or other factors?

2c. Should child protection staff members do more to facilitate contact between some of these actors and other mission components? Why/why not?

3. What coordination mechanisms are child protection staff in your mission area engaging in? How beneficial is this engagement?

7.5 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Minimum Standards on Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2019), featuring Standard 1: Coordination, pp. 53-61, available at https://alliancecpha.org/en/CPMS_home
- Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility, Handbook for Coordinating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Emergencies (2019), available at <https://gbvaor.net/>
- Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action provides resources, guidance and tools for child protection actors, including on coordination aspects, available at <https://alliancecpha.org/en>
- The Sphere Project, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (2018), available at <https://spherestandards.org/handbook-2018/>
- UNICEF child protection program, overview of strategy, activities and partners, available at <https://www.unicef.org/child-protection>
- For general information on humanitarian coordination, see ReliefWeb, available at <https://reliefweb.int/>



Prevention

Learning objectives

At the end of this chapter, learners will be able to:

- Explain their specific roles and responsibilities related to prevention
- Identify threats and risks to children in a mission area
- Describe how to leverage and contribute to a mission's early warning systems
- Effectively communicate with parties to conflict and local communities on prevention

Chapter contents

- Defining prevention
 - Monitoring by other mission components
 - Verification
- Identifying threats and risks to children
- Leveraging missions' early warning systems for child protection
- Engaging with parties to conflict on prevention
- Sensitizing local communities on prevention
- Exercises
- Additional resources

8.1 DEFINING PREVENTION

8.1.1 What is prevention?

In the context of child protection in United Nations peace operations, prevention aims to identify and address threats and risks of grave violations against children *before* they occur. In this *Handbook*, a threat is defined as a clearly identified risk that is likely to occur in the near future; in contrast, a threat that is latent (i.e., exists but has yet to be realized) can also be called a risk. Given the specific vulnerabilities of children and the severe and long-term harm these violations can cause to children, families and communities, the United Nations considers the prevention of grave violations against children a strategic priority for United Nations peace operations.⁶⁸ Additionally, these serious violations against children “can be an early indicator of a descent into conflict or escalation of conflict, as well as a consequence thereof”.⁶⁹ More generally, an increasing number of United Nations peace operation mandates include specific references to prevention and early warning.

Yet, because of the broad nature and comprehensive scope of ‘prevention’, it can be a challenge for missions to translate these commitments into tangible actions. To devise practical strategies, it is useful to distinguish between short- and long-term prevention approaches based on different types of threats or risks:

⁶⁸ Notably, UNSCR 2427 (2018) added a series of measures to strengthen mechanisms to prevent violations against children in conflict. Prevention is also a strategic priority of the Secretary-General (<https://www.un.org/sg/en/priorities/prevention.shtml>), who called for more investment in prevention and peacebuilding in his recent report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (A/76/668-S/2022/66, para. 3).

⁶⁹ UNSCR 2427 (2018), para. 7. See also UN Secretary-General's report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (A/76/668-S/2022/66, para. 3), in which the Secretary-General highlights the need for the United Nations system to work more closely together to take early action, prevent conflict and protect rights in times of crisis

- **Short-term approaches** involve identifying and addressing *specific, identified* threats to children that are ongoing or likely to occur in the near future. For example, if an armed force or group is setting up new military barracks near a school, short-term prevention approaches would be needed. This could include, among others, engaging with the armed force or group (or their political/military leadership) to encourage them to abstain from the action, increasing patrols in the vicinity, warning local communities of the identified threat and/or closely monitoring early warnings in the area.
- **Long-term approaches** involve identifying and addressing factors that can increase latent threats (risks) to children. For example, if there is a heightened risk of recruitment and use of children by armed forces/groups due to ongoing insecurity, public messaging by local leaders and/or a lack of educational opportunities, longer-term prevention approaches might be needed. These could include working with parties to conflict on strategies to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children, ensuring that the mission’s early warning mechanisms account for these risks, and/or working with protection partners to increase access to educational opportunities.

Peace operations have a range of options for proactively engaging on prevention of grave violations against children in the short- and long-term, as outlined in table 16. All prevention efforts — both short- and long-term — require coordination within the mission, and engagement with relevant external actors such as parties to conflict, national authorities, United Nations entities, regional and subregional organizations, international and national NGOs, civil society organizations and local communities.

TABLE 16: Short- and long-term prevention actions

| TIME FRAME | TYPE OF THREAT | POSSIBLE ACTIONS (EXAMPLES) |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Short-term prevention | Threat is clearly identified and likely to occur in the near term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engage in political dialogue, including high-level political dialogue with parties to conflict (which can also include host country authorities) and/or other influential actors, who may be able to prevent or mitigate violence against children ■ Warn national authorities, local communities, protection actors and/or others of imminent threats and identify protection needs ■ Rapidly deploy specialized teams, including child protection experts, joint protection teams, community-oriented policing, etc. ■ Increase mission patrols at specific times and in locations relevant to the identified threat⁷⁰ ■ Expand presence of uniformed personnel in area(s) relevant to the identified threat⁷¹ |

70 For peacekeeping operations only.

71 *Ibid.*

| TIME FRAME | TYPE OF THREAT | POSSIBLE ACTIONS (EXAMPLES) |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Long-term prevention</p> | <p>Latent threat (i.e., underlying factor that could pose a risk in the future)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure that existing early warning mechanisms are functioning and that they gather information and produce analysis on grave violations against children ■ Support the development and implementation of action plans and other commitments with parties to conflict to end and prevent grave violations ■ Advocate for the inclusion of child protection issues in ceasefires, mediations, and peace processes⁷² ■ Advocate with national, regional, and international authorities for accountability and justice for perpetrators of conflict-related violations committed against children⁷³ ■ Strengthen capacities of parties to conflict, the host government, local communities, civil society organizations and/or other actors to prevent violations and protect children ■ Support vetting mechanisms for security forces to exclude those responsible for grave violations against children from serving in senior positions in the defense and security forces and/or law enforcement agencies of the host country.⁷⁴ ■ Advocate with host governments to criminalize grave violations against children, including recruitment and use of children, and attacks against schools and hospitals, in their domestic laws and military codes. ■ Promote international commitments (e.g., ratification of OPAC;⁷⁵ endorsement of Paris Principles, Vancouver Principles and Safe Schools Declaration) |

72 See also OSRSG-CAAC, *Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict* (2020), available at <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf>.

73 Accountability for grave violations against children is closely related to prevention. Judicial and non-judicial accountability actions can contribute to prevention by deterring potential perpetrators and addressing underlying grievances. However, accountability also involves providing remedies and redress for the children and their communities for past violations. For more information, please see Conflict Dynamics International (CDI), *Children in Accountability Framework. A Framework for Advancing Accountability for Serious Violations against Children in Armed Conflict*, June 2015, available at https://www.cdint.org/_files/ugd/9e460a_5e6630ce04f04790a83b28ccb473a343.pdf.

74 This may include national military, paramilitary, police, intelligence services, border-control and similar security forces.

75 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

8.1.2 Prevention roles for child protection staff in United Nations peace operations

Child protection staff play a key role in guiding and supporting the mission and its partners in recognizing threats and risks to children and addressing them in a timely matter, in accordance with their specific mandate. The prevention-related responsibilities of child protection staff cut across all their five core functions, often overlapping with efforts to protect children and respond to violations committed against them (see fig. 12). For instance, as staff monitor and report on grave violations, they also identify potential threats and risks to children (see section 8.2). As they engage with parties to conflict, they also work with them on building or strengthening policies or systems to prevent grave violations from occurring in the future (see section 8.4). Likewise, awareness-raising, training, advocacy, and coordination activities provide opportunities for child protection staff to reduce risks and threats for children in the mission area.

To make the most of prevention opportunities, child protection staff can use and adapt the approaches and recommendations in the following sections, which are designed to reinforce and complement the guidance and practical tools outlined in chapters 2-7 of this *Handbook*.

FIGURE 12: Key elements of action plans





UNMISS Deputy Special-Representative of the Secretary General attends Child Protection Training for national armed forces, Juba, Sept 2021

8.2 IDENTIFYING AND MITIGATING THREATS AND RISKS TO CHILDREN

The number, diversity and fluid nature of threats and risks to children in conflict settings means that it is essential that staff pursue a targeted approach to risk analysis. In line with their other monitoring and reporting work, staff should prioritize threats and risks that are likely to result in:

- a) Any of the six grave violations against children
- b) Other conflict-related child protection priorities identified by the United Nations peace operation and/or the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) (e.g., detention of children for alleged or actual association with armed forces and armed groups, trafficking of children)
- c) Protection issues for children related to United Nations peace operations (e.g., use of child labor by United Nations peacekeeping personnel, impact of United Nations military operations on children)

When developing prevention and risk mitigation strategies for their mission area (or a specific location), child protection staff may find it useful to consider the different types of risks that children face. Risks may relate to armed forces or groups, the mission and its personnel, the local context, and/or the specific vulnerabilities of children (e.g., their ethnic, religious or linguistic background; gender, disability status, geographic location, etc.). In some cases, children may be exposed to multiple types of risks. For example, they could be at risk of recruitment because of an armed group/force's disregard for children's rights, which may be exacerbated by separation from their families. Table 17 applies these risk categories to help identify risk factors and potential prevention or mitigation strategies that child protection staff — working with the mission and/or external actors — could take in response. Child protection staff can use the table as a framework for conducting risk assessments in their mission area. This would build upon and complement their needs assessment and analysis (see sect. 8.2).



A joint MONUSCO Child Protection, UN and Uvira territory administration agencies mission to Kitoga, Uvira highlands, South Kivu, DRC, March 2022

TABLE 17: Identifying child protection-related risks and potential prevention or mitigation strategies

| TYPE OF RISKS | RISK FACTORS (EXAMPLES) | POTENTIAL PREVENTION OR MITIGATION MEASURES |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Risks related to armed forces or groups</p> <p><i>(Note: These risk factors and measures can be disaggregated by specific armed actor)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Refusal or negligence of members to abide by international laws, norms, and standards on child protection ■ Limited supervision of members' conduct by political/military leadership and/or impunity for violations committed ■ Absence of/weak laws, policies and procedures on child protection and related areas (e.g., human rights, protection of civilians (POC), conflict-related sexual violence) ■ Weak and/or corrupt justice/rule of law institutions ■ Lack of knowledge or awareness among members of relevant international/national child protection norms and standards and/or how to apply them ■ Specific strategic reason for armed force or group targeting children for recruitment, e.g., need for covert intelligence capacity, easy to indoctrinate, low cost of support, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engage with political/military leadership of armed force/group to obtain high-level commitment on child protection, and conduct oversight and monitoring to ensure compliance ■ Advocate with political/military leadership and other influential actors to hold perpetrators accountable (see chap. 5) ■ Advocate with host government to establish a legal framework that is in line with relevant international laws and standards on child protection, including with regard to minimum age of recruitment ■ Engage with political/military leadership of armed force/group to adapt their policies and procedures to strengthen the protection of children, including by institutionalizing accountability mechanisms ■ Train members on child protection, and support the appointment and training of designated child protection focal points within the armed force or group (see sect. 1.4.1) ■ Work with other mission components (e.g., human rights, political, civil affairs etc.) to ensure that prevention/early warning/monitoring efforts are targeted, strategic, and non-duplicative. |
| <p>Risks related to the mission and its personnel (e.g., military and police operations, detention, child labor)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of knowledge and/or neglect of duties under the 2017 Child Protection Policy and other relevant guidance ■ Limited supervision of the conduct of personnel and lack of accountability for misconduct | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure all personnel receive child protection training, including on mandatory reporting obligations ■ Follow up and investigate potential misconduct of personnel affecting children |

| TYPE OF RISKS | RISK FACTORS (EXAMPLES) | POTENTIAL PREVENTION OR MITIGATION MEASURES |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Risks related to the mission and its personnel (e.g., military and police operations, detention, child labor) <i>continued</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of organizational procedures on child protection for specific mission context ■ Ineffective early warning prevention and response mechanisms, including lack of proactive deployment in cases of verified alerts or imminent threats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide technical assistance, oversight and monitoring for mission components and operations ■ Develop and update Force Commander's and Police Commissioner's directives on child protection and related guidance to account for the specific mission context ■ Dissuade the mission from taking actions with a high risk of harm for children (e.g., unsupervised interactions with children, military use of schools) ■ Participate in development of mission-wide early warning prevention and response procedures and mechanisms |
| <p>Risks related to children (i.e., increased vulnerabilities)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of awareness among children of their rights or how to report concerns ■ Increased vulnerabilities of some children to violations or abuse due to age, gender, sexual orientation, separation from parents/caregivers, socioeconomic exclusion, disabilities and/or other factors ■ Social and economic exclusion ■ Lack of education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult with children, families, and communities, including at-risk groups, to identify risks and mitigation measures, including child-led or community-based protection strategies ■ Analyze vulnerabilities of different children at-risk and devise targeted mitigation strategies ■ Raise awareness among children of their rights and how to report concerns, violations or abuses |
| <p>Risks related to local context (i.e., mission area or specific location)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Limited possibilities for monitoring, oversight, and investigations (e.g., remote or difficult to access, limited services for victims/survivors, fragile security situation) ■ Local authorities and communities accept or condone harmful practices towards children (e.g., children carrying out household chores for armed force/group in exchange for food or money; child marriage and early pregnancies) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve monitoring and oversight in the location (e.g., field missions, collaboration with human rights/child protection partners, patrols by mission's uniformed personnel) ■ Raise awareness among children and their communities of children's rights, including the six grave violations, and how to report concerns (e.g., workshops, posters) (see sect. 8.5) |

| TYPE OF RISKS | RISK FACTORS (EXAMPLES) | POTENTIAL PREVENTION OR MITIGATION MEASURES |
|---|--|---|
| Risks related to local context (i.e., mission area or specific location) <i>continued</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Local communities are highly militarized or politicized ■ Weak justice and rule of law institutions; impunity and corruption ■ Ongoing fighting and insecurity ■ Local tradition/custom (e.g., bacha bazi)⁷⁶ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Advocate with host government, parties to conflict and other actors to strengthen laws, policies and systems on child protection, and reinforce the rule of law |

As indicated in the table above ('risks related to children'), the risks may not be the same for all children, but differ depending on age, gender, sexual orientation, separation from parents/caregivers, disabilities and/or other factors. Child protection staff should factor these distinctions into their analysis and portrayal of the issues. A more nuanced approach can help improve prevention and mitigation strategies while avoiding actions that inadvertently exclude or discriminate against some groups of children.

Importantly, child protection staff should pay attention to gender considerations when assessing risks. They should ask themselves: Does the child's gender (i.e., the socially constructed roles and characteristics of girls and boys) affect their risks? If so, how? Gender can influence the types and levels of risks children face in their communities, as the following examples illustrate:

- **Different levels of mobility.** Boys, who are usually freer to move around outside the home, may be at higher risk of being killed or maimed (e.g., by landmines and unexploded ordnances), and recruitment and use by armed forces or groups; whereas girls, whose movements tend to be more restricted, may be at greater risk of abduction or sexual violence when carrying out domestic work – for example, when gathering food, water or fuel around their home.
- **Different social demands.** Boys (and men) may be under increased pressure to join armed forces or groups to defend their communities, while girls (and women) may become associated for other reasons, for example in an attempt to escape sexual exploitation and discrimination in their communities.
- **Different perceptions of gender roles.** Boys are more frequently seen as potential security threats and targeted for detention, whereas girls may be overlooked in release and reintegration efforts due to their perceived lack of official association with the armed force or group, especially if serving in support functions. In addition, girls might also come across restrictions in getting access to education opportunities.

In order to create a more accurate risk analysis, child protection staff should ensure that those involved in monitoring and early warning processes, including other mission components, members of the CTFMR and local communities, are diligent about disaggregating protection data (at least by age and sex), and share the information they receive in an accurate and timely manner.

76 The practice of bacha bazi is a form of sexual abuse against boys.



Children in the Wardak province of Afghanistan are reflected in a pool of water.

8.3 LEVERAGING MISSIONS' EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Missions are increasingly using early warning (EW) systems and protocols as a prevention tool. EW systems are designed to gather, verify, share, and trigger responses to information on any “serious and credible threat from non-state armed groups... and/or State authorities” that may “put at risk the physical integrity of civilians”, including children.⁷⁷ By systematically tracking indicators of underlying threats (i.e., risks), the mission can mobilize partners and resources to prevent impending violence in a timely manner.

Child protection staff can engage with such EW systems by:

- **Contributing** to information gathering through their monitoring and reporting activities. This includes the monitoring of grave violations against children already committed (as a potential indicator of increased levels and/or other forms of violence), as well as the detection of imminent threats of grave violations against children.
- **Leveraging** the data and analysis shared through EW systems to prevent or mitigate grave violations from being committed against children.

EW systems operate differently in each mission context and sometimes even within the mission area. Usually, missions have systems set up to receive alerts of potential threats from different sources (e.g., mission components, local communities, humanitarian organizations, etc.). Alerts normally need to be verified through additional sources to establish their credibility and qualify as an ‘early warning’ – which would then trigger a rapid response by the mission (see fig. 13). Missions have developed a range of systems to monitor, verify and distribute alerts in a centralized manner and ensure a rapid response, including setting up 24/7 early warning centres or real-time alert distribution mechanisms, which use social media or specially designed UN apps. Early warnings are also recorded in the mission’s information management systems and tools (such as SAGE⁷⁸) to better understand patterns in alerts and rates of effectiveness and inform future prevention and response actions by the mission.

⁷⁷ *The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Handbook* (2020), p.202 https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpo_poc_handbook_final_as_printed.pdf.

⁷⁸ SAGE is an integrated field operational and situational awareness tool that allows mission components to efficiently collect, validate, store, search, retrieve, analyze and share critical situational information across mission components, across multiple missions, and with HQ.

FIGURE 13: Early warning system



EW systems often work with local communities to capitalize on their innate knowledge and access to real-time information, particularly in remote and conflict-affected areas. For example, in some missions the civil affairs section deploys Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) — national staff deployed in the field, usually alongside uniformed mission components — to improve the mission’s engagement with communities. Missions can also establish Community Alert Networks comprised of community members who receive training and, in some cases, equipment (e.g., phones) to share alerts with the mission and help with the verification process. Additionally, missions may use other mechanisms and tools to enhance their early warning capacities, such as Joint Protection Teams (JPTs),⁷⁹ Joint Assessment Missions⁸⁰ and Community Protection Plans.⁸¹

Child protection staff can engage with such EW systems by:

- **Liaising and sharing alerts with mission components that manage or support EW systems in their mission area** (e.g., POC, civil affairs, human rights, Joint Operations Centre). To report information consistently and rapidly — in line with United Nations policies and guidance, including mission-level guidance — child protection staff should request access to information, documents and technologies used for the mission’s early warning system (e.g., SOPs, templates, reports).
- **Identifying a set of early warning indicators for the six grave violations** (disaggregated by age, sex, and other factors) that are relevant to the specific mission context (see ‘quick tip’ below). For example, early warning indicators may include unusual absence/presence of children in a location; movement of armed forces or groups into location(s) frequently visited by children, and planned recruitment drives by armed forces or groups (see annex 10).
- **Gathering and sharing relevant data and analysis** from ongoing monitoring and reporting activities – including non-confidential MRM data on grave violations against children — with those managing the early warning systems (in line with the mission’s policies and procedures). This may include uploading relevant information on threats and child protection developments on SAGE and/or other data-driven tools used in the mission. Protection working groups, such as the CTFMR, the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangement (MARA) working groups and other coordination meetings, are also an important avenue for sharing information on early warning.

79 JPTs are comprised of civilian and uniformed peacekeepers. They are deployed to hotspots to assess and analyze threats and find solutions to protection issues, including child protection.

80 JAMs are field missions usually conducted by mission civilian personnel and humanitarian/development actors (e.g., UN Country Team, NGOs) that assess both protection threats and the humanitarian/development situation and recommend responses.

81 CPPs are managed by CLAs and local protection committees. They provide information on how the population and protection actors can address imminent protection risks in their communities.

- **Providing strategic advice to mission leadership on potential responses to early warnings**, especially for threats involving children.
- **Participating in mission responses to early warnings** (e.g., JPTs, joint investigation teams, briefing patrol units before they are deployed (in collaboration with military information staff/operations staff), field monitoring missions, temporary operating bases), as needed and feasible.
- **Enabling child protection partners** (e.g., CTFMR, local child protection networks, women's/youth organizations) and local communities, including children, to participate in EW systems in a meaningful and safe way. This could involve, for instance, sharing and verifying alerts of identified threats to children and responding to early warnings.⁸²
- **Including information and guidance on early warning for the six grave violations in training and sensitization on child protection** for other mission components and relevant external actors, particularly for those directly involved in the early warning system (e.g., CLAs, Community Alert Networks, military peacekeeping intelligence officers).
- **Emphasizing the importance of age- and sex-disaggregated data and the need for child- and gender-sensitive analysis when considering threats** in advocacy, training and sensitization activities.

As previously noted, some United Nations missions have their own standard operating procedures or other formal guidance or mechanisms on early warning prevention and response. It is critical that child protection considerations are mainstreamed into these. All child protection-related prevention efforts should be consistent with these mission-wide standards and systems and must abide by 'do-no-harm' standards.

Quick tip: Child protection staff can use different methods to develop a set of early warning indicators for the six grave violations (disaggregated by age, sex and other factors). Here are some options:

- Analyze trends and patterns of previous cases of grave violations against children in the mission area to find out where and when children are most at risk and what actions or behaviors by parties to conflict, local communities, and the affected children themselves directly preceded the incidents.
- Consult with local communities, including children, in conflict-affected areas to gather their views and experiences on early warning indicators relevant to child protection: What types of situations would make them fear for the (physical) protection of their children? How do they know something is wrong?
- Use the mission's existing early warning indicators as a basis for identifying early warning signs (or indicators) that are specifically relevant for children in the mission area.
- Talk to the Senior POC and Senior Women's Protection Advisors to learn about and build on their early warning indicators and resources (e.g., country-specific early warning lists, hotspot matrix), where relevant.

⁸² Note that child protection components can also develop their own network of focal points who are trained to identify and share child protection alerts with the missions, as long as these alerts also consistently feed into the mission-wide early warning mechanisms.

8.4 ENGAGING WITH PARTIES TO CONFLICT ON PREVENTION

8.4.1 What is prevention?

Engagement with parties to conflict is one of the most effective means of preventing grave violations against children. There are multiple options for child protection staff to integrate prevention approaches into their ongoing engagement with parties. Many of these efforts are geared towards instituting more sustainable, long-term actions that remain in place even after the mission's departure. This could involve:

- **Training armed forces and/or armed groups on child protection and their related roles and responsibilities:** This requires adapting the training content, language, and messages to the specific armed actor, based on a thorough analysis of their structures, motivations, needs and record of previous child rights violations. In addition to sharing knowledge, it is important to clearly communicate during training what counterparts are expected to do (differently) when it comes to their interactions with children and provide them with practical examples and scenarios.
- **Establishing child protection focal points (CPFPs) within specific armed forces and groups:** Similar to uniformed CPFPs within the mission, child protection staff can also encourage armed forces and groups to designate a member(s) within their ranks to assume responsibility for helping to prevent violations against children, such as assisting with the release of associated, abducted or detained children or the evacuation of occupied schools. The responsibilities of CPFPs may include sensitizing other members on their obligations to protect children and prevent violations; monitoring and reporting alleged misconduct; coordinating the response to cases; and serving as a contact point for the armed force or group on child protection matters. To prepare CPFPs for this role, child protection staff — possibly with support from the mission's uniformed CPFPs — would provide them with tailored training and ongoing support.



*Child Protection briefing to new recruits within the FARDC (DRC armed forces) on the prevention of grave violations and child protection principles during military operations, Goma, North Kivu, DR Congo – 2022
Photo MONUSCO*

- **Supporting the development and implementation of action plans or other forms of commitments⁸³ by parties to conflict to end and prevent grave violations against children** (see section 6.3): In addition to remedial actions (e.g., release of associated, abducted or detained children, evacuation of occupied schools, etc.), these documents also set out specific prevention and mitigation measures for the concerned party, such as criminalizing or issuing command orders prohibiting grave violations against children; strengthening birth registration systems and integrating age verification mechanisms in recruitment procedures; and holding those who commit grave violations to account (e.g., investigations and prosecutions, sanctions and reprimands). Formalizing these measures can help child protection staff and partners to clarify the obligations and expectations for armed forces and groups, track progress and hold them accountable.

8.4.2 Tips for working with parties to conflict on prevention

To end and prevent violations against children, parties to conflict need to recognize and acknowledge behaviors and practices they may not always have considered to be dangerous or harmful. However, parties may be concerned about the potential legal or political repercussions of admitting to wrongdoings and may therefore try to withhold information from child protection staff. Building a trusting relationship with parties to conflict is vital for overcoming these challenges.

Here are six practical tips for building trust and strengthening engagement with parties to conflict on prevention:

- ✓ **Come prepared.** Thorough preparation for any engagement with parties to conflict, including for sensitization and training activities, is essential for maximizing outcomes. In terms of prevention, this involves a good understanding of the unique risks the party poses to children, as well as an awareness of any previous actions the party has already taken to protect children, if any.⁸⁴
- ✓ **Be respectful and listen.** In early meetings, child protection staff can set the tone for a robust relationship with the party by treating its representatives with courtesy and politeness. These are also opportunities to get to know counterparts better and to learn more about their perspectives on child rights and protection. In other words: *listen more; talk less*. This is important as there may be misunderstandings due to language, cultural, gender-related, personal, and other barriers. Active listening can help child protection staff adapt their messaging on child protection to the specific commander and situation.
- ✓ **Find allies.** A shortcut to building trust with a party to conflict is to work through others who have pre-existing relationships with the respective party. This may include the party's own CPFs, other mission components (e.g., DDR, civil affairs, human rights, uniformed components), other UN entities (e.g., UNICEF, OCHA, OHCHR) or community leaders (e.g., local authorities, religious and traditional leaders, women and youth leaders). These actors may have better access to the armed actor (especially very localized armed groups), and – if they are local/national staff or actors – may be able to speak

⁸³ It is important to note that parties can only be delisted from the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict if they have fully implemented an action plan; other forms of commitment are insufficient.

⁸⁴ For a guide to preparing for engagement, see section 6.2, Table 11.

with the party's representatives in their native language. When involving civilians, it is essential for staff to apply a 'do-no-harm' approach and assess the potential impact of their participation in the security and risk assessment before the engagement to avoid unintended harmful consequences.

- ✓ **Be transparent.** Openly sharing information on potential threats, risks or reported incidents with the relevant party may be the most effective way to prevent or end violations. For example, parties may not always be aware of the negative impact that their actions have on children and communities. They may also believe that the repercussions of sharing information on potential child rights violations with child protection staff outweigh the costs of withholding information. It is therefore critical to let parties know that it is in their best interest to work with child protection staff on verifying and following up on potential threats and alleged violations against children.
- ✓ **Be helpful.** Child protection staff bring a high level of specialized technical expertise and networks that armed forces and groups can benefit from. Based on the analysis of why violations are happening (see risk table above), staff can work with armed actors on practical solutions to address the risks to children posed by the systems or behaviors of armed forces/groups. For example, child protection staff can work with other mission components and partners to offer sensitization/training sessions, age assessment workshops, regular monitoring visits, support for vetting procedures, help with mainstreaming child protection in military guidance, etc. By acting in this advisory and capacity-building role, child protection staff can encourage armed actors to take ownership of the process, making it clear that it is the responsibility of the armed force or group to end and prevent violations against children.
- ✓ **Build long-term relationships.** Changing an armed actor's organizational culture and systems with a view to ending and preventing grave violations against children takes time and often requires repeated engagements. It is therefore important to avoid accusatory, aggressive language and stick to the facts. Child protection staff should always make sure to honor their commitments, just as they would expect parties to conflict to honor theirs. As part of establishing trust, child protection staff can also engage in high-level dialogue with the party's senior political or military leadership — with the support of other mission components and senior leadership as relevant and appropriate – to help facilitate staff interactions with armed actors at the operational level.

In all these efforts, it is critical for child protection staff to ensure that their work is coordinated and coherent with the mission's broader advocacy and engagement with parties to conflict and is compliant with relevant mission-specific policies and procedures.

8.5 SENSITIZING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Children may be at risk because of local communities ignoring or condoning harmful behavior towards children in the mission area. For example, some parents may want their children to join an armed force or group to defend their community; or they may consider the armed actor's use of a school in their village acceptable as part of the ongoing conflict. A lack of information or misconceptions about the harmful effects of these types of behavior may make children and communities more vulnerable to violations.

Child protection staff can help reduce threats and risks to children by addressing the lack of awareness through sensitization activities, especially in locations where communities are heavily involved in the conflict (e.g., self-defense forces, inter-communal conflicts). Here are some key actions that staff should take when planning and implementing sensitization activities with local communities:

- **Assess the level of awareness among local communities of the six grave violations and identify the most suitable way to address any gaps.** Some of the questions to explore, in consultation with local communities and people working with them, include:
 - What are the most common violations against children (or specific groups of children) in the community?
 - What do local communities know/not know about the six grave violations? What are the common misconceptions about these issues?
 - What are some of the ways in which communities seek to protect children and prevent or end violations? What positive or negative coping mechanisms do children, families and communities employ to protect children?
 - What challenges do communities face in protecting children and preventing violations? How could better information help them?
 - Who should lead the sensitization activities and for which groups? Is there a need for separate consultations with certain groups due to power or gender inequalities (e.g., girls, women, youth), marginalization and/or other factors?
 - Which communication channels (e.g., face-to-face, radio, social media) would work best for different target audiences?
- **Develop a plan and prepare for the engagement.**⁸⁵ This involves defining the objective, target group(s), activities, and messages/themes for sensitization activities, as well as planning resource needs (including partners and materials), risks and mitigation strategies for all those involved in the process, and monitoring and follow-up (see section 5.2 and 5.3 for more details on steps involved in developing such a plan). During the planning process, it is important to keep in mind that sensitization efforts generally require repeated engagement with target communities to test messages, gain traction and assess impact. To ensure such recurring interactions, child protection staff could consider working with other mission components (e.g., civil affairs, DDR) or external partners, such as international NGOs or civil society organizations.
- **Conduct sensitization activities that promote two-way engagement with the audience.**⁸⁶ While sensitization typically involves some form of information-sharing, local actors are more likely to absorb new information and stay engaged if they play an active role in the activities. This could entail, for example, inviting the audience to share questions or views on a topic or asking them about their initial response to a situation or

⁸⁵ When participating in sensitization activities led by other mission components or organizations, child protection staff should try to gather basic information about the audience in advance so that they can adapt their presentation and maximize impact.

⁸⁶ There may be some exceptions. For example, the child protection component may use community radios operated by the DDR component to remind armed actors of the need to release any associated children. In these cases, simple one-way messages may be more suitable.

scenario. Table 18 outlines some options for including participatory elements in sensitization activities. In addition to improving learning outcomes, this approach also enables presenters to hear from communities themselves about their perceptions of local child protection risks and potential solutions.

TABLE 18: Participatory elements in sensitization activities

| TYPE OF SENSITIZATION ACTIVITY | POSSIBLE PARTICIPATORY ELEMENTS |
|--|--|
| Community meetings/ dialogues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ask community members to submit questions or comments in advance ■ Involve community leaders as speakers or facilitators ■ Ask communities/community leaders for help in solving a specific problem/issue |
| Competitions (e.g., poems, songs, quizzes), especially among children and youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include community members in juries ■ Enable contestants/winners to publicly share their submissions |
| Plays/workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Let the audience interact with the actors/presenters (e.g., stopping a scene to ask the audience “What should X do?” and acting out proposed responses) ■ Let authorities and/or community members play roles to test options for how to respond in certain situations and come up with solutions (‘role play’) |
| Radio broadcasts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage community members to call in on radio programs ■ Invite community members for radio broadcast discussions on child protection ■ Invite children, youth and/or other community members to interview child protection staff on broadcasts |
| Social media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Post social media messages advocating for child protection ■ Circulate best practices of child protection via social media platforms ■ Post important information on child protection, e.g., political/military leaders’ public statements or messages in support on child protection activities |

- **Always follow up on feedback/requests from communities.** During sensitization activities, communities may ask questions or make specific requests to child protection staff, the mission or partners that presenters are not able to address immediately. In these cases, it is essential to return to communities with answers to avoid eroding trust and credibility. In cases where the UN is not able to respond to threats or risks, child protection staff should clearly communicate this to communities and encourage them to seek alternative protection strategies, including through partners.

- **Use local language(s) and tailor communication to target audience(s).** It is crucial to communicate with children and communities in their local languages using simple, non-jargonistic language, particularly when dealing with sensitive issues. If possible, it is also a good idea to prepare child-friendly versions of materials, so that children themselves are aware of the risks and can play an active role in their own protection.⁸⁷ Child protection staff must also ensure that posters and other visual materials communicate messages clearly and effectively (see checklist below).

Checklist for posters or graphic materials to prevent grave violations against children

- Content:** The materials address identified knowledge gaps and misconceptions that keep communities from taking action to prevent violations against children.
- Necessary:** Child protection staff have checked within their mission and with partners to find out whether existing materials on the same topic that could be adapted for this purpose already exist or whether new ones need to be created.
- Language:** The text used is simple and direct (i.e., no jargon or abstract terms) and available in the local languages spoken by the target audience; child-friendly versions are available.
- Images:** The materials include images that are clear and easy to understand, including for children and people who are illiterate or visually impaired (e.g., process of action, comparing right and wrong behavior, using ticks and crosses).
- Informative:** The materials include important information to prevent the six grave violations that address identified knowledge gaps and misunderstandings on the issue.
- Motivating:** The materials inspire people to take action to protect children and prevent violations against them.
- Attractive:** The materials are designed in such an appealing way that people want to keep them up or use them for a long time (e.g., children's artwork, pledge for people to sign).
- Tested:** Child protection staff have tested the materials with community members to ensure they understand the messages conveyed by the text and images and that the materials are appropriate for the target audience/the context/etc.

⁸⁷ For further guidance, see: Save the Children, *How to write a child-friendly document*, by Laura Lundy, 2022, available at <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/how-to-write-a-child-friendly-document/>.

8.6 EXERCISES

Child protection staff can use the following exercises to apply some of the knowledge and skills developed in this chapter.

1. How do child protection staff currently engage on prevention in your mission area? Looking at their roles and responsibilities, what else could they do to reduce risks for children?

2. In your own words, describe how the early warning system(s) in your mission area works and what actions you can take to integrate child protection into early warning:

3. Use the following template to conduct a risk assessment of your mission area. You can list risks related to armed forces/groups by specific actor. To guide the identification of potential risk factors and mitigation strategies, see section 8.2, table 17.

| TYPE OF RISKS | RISK FACTOR(S) | POTENTIAL PREVENTION OR MITIGATION MEASURES |
|---|--|--|
| Risks related to armed forces/groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ |
| Risks related to the mission and its personnel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ |
| Risks related to children (i.e., increased vulnerability) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ |
| Risks related to local context (i.e., mission area or specific location) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ |

4. Which of the practical tips in section 8.4.2 do you believe is most effective in engaging parties to conflict on prevention? Why?

5. Use the checklist for posters and visual materials (section 8.5) to review some of the most recent materials produced by your mission or its partners related to child protection. What aspects do you think are most effective? What do you think is missing or inadequate? What improvements would you suggest?

8.7 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Prevention

- Security Council resolution 2427 (2018) available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/216/81/PDF/N1821681.pdf?OpenElement>
- Government of Canada, *Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers* (2017), particularly Principles 3 (Early Warning) and 8 (Prevention) and related *Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles* (2019), available at https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes.aspx?lang=eng
- The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, *Primary Prevention Framework for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action* (2021), primarily focuses on ‘primary prevention’ (i.e. addressing root causes of violations), available at https://alliancecpha.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/primary_prevention_framework_for_child_protection_in_humanitarian_action_1_0.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=47151
- The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Technical Note: *Girls associated with armed forces and armed groups. Lessons learnt and good practices on prevention of recruitment and use, release and reintegration* (2020), see pp. 12-16 on risk factors, available at <https://alliancecpha.org/en/GAAFAG>

Gender analysis and prevention

- OSRSG-CAAC, *Gender Dimensions of the Grave Violations against Children in Armed Conflict* (2022), available at UN Office of the SRSR for Children and Armed Conflict https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/UN_Gender-Dimensions-Grave-Violations-Against-Children-WEB-2.pdf
- Save the Children, *Stop the War on Children 2020: Gender Matters* (2020), available at <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/stop-war-children-2020-gender-matters/>

Early warning systems

- UN Department of Peace Operations, *POC Handbook* (2020), pp. 95-100, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/dpo-poc-handbook>
- United Nations, *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes: A Tool for Prevention* (2014), available at https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/publications-and-resources/Genocide_Framework%20of%20Analysis-English.pdf
- United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Matrix: Early Warning Indicators of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence* (2012), available at https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/MatrixEarlyWarningIndicatorsCSV_UNAction2011.pdf
- Center for Civilians in Conflict, *Early Warning and Rapid Response Takes Root in UN Peacekeeping*, by Daniel Levine-Spound (2021), available at <https://civiliansinconflict.org/early-warning-and-rapid-response/>
- Child Soldiers and Early Warning Systems, by Laura Cleave and William Watkins, in *Allons-y Journal of Children, Peace and Security*, Volume 4 (March 2020), available at <https://doi.org/10.15273/allons-y.v4i0.10084>

- Observatoire Boutros-Ghali du maintien de la paix, *Peace operations and child protection: turning early warning into early detection*, by Claire Kupper & Liza Young (2021), available at <https://www.observatoire-boutros-ghali.org/publications/peace-operations-and-child-protection-turning-early-warning-early-detection>

Sensitization of local communities

- International Peace Institute, *Community Engagement in UN Peacekeeping Operations: A People-Centered Approach to Protecting Civilians*, by Harley Henigson (2020), available at <https://www.ipinst.org/2020/11/community-engagement-in-un-peacekeeping-operations-a-people-centered-approach-to-protecting-civilians>
- Oxfam, *Guidance on community-led sensitization* (2021), available at <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/guidance-on-community-led-sensitization-621214/>

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Learning objectives

At the end of this chapter, learners will be able to:

- Assess existing child protection needs in the mission area
- Create a mission-specific strategy and work plan
- Prepare a basic monitoring and evaluation plan

Chapter contents

- Work cycle
- Needs assessment and analysis
- Elements of a strategic plan
- Work plan and implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Exercises
- Additional resources

9.1 WORK CYCLE

There are four interlinked but distinct aspects of a child protection team's work cycle (see fig. 14):

- Needs assessment and analysis
- Strategic planning
- Implementation and monitoring
- Evaluation

The work cycle enables child protection staff members to direct their resources to the most urgent needs and in the most effective and efficient manner. It also encourages a culture in which staff members reflect and learn from past actions and adjust their approaches accordingly.

The work cycle for child protection staff is usually closely tied to the mission's planning process, in particular the 'mission concept'.⁸⁸ Moreover, the main source of funding for child protection staff comes from United Nations Member State contributions, the annual budget of the United Nations field mission or a results-based budget.⁸⁹

FIGURE 14: Work Cycle



⁸⁸ The mission concept articulates a strategic direction for mandate implementation in support of the political objectives of a mission.

⁸⁹ The results-based budget captures the high-level goals of the mission, and often combines the work of more than one component under one expected accomplishment. For more information on the results-based budget and overall mission planning, see additional resources.

9.2 NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

A needs assessment and analysis provides the child protection team with the basis for selecting priorities, objectives, and strategies in the mission area. It enables staff to gain an understanding of current child protection needs and provides a baseline against which to measure progress. The assessment also makes it easier for new staff members to understand the rationale for the existing child protection strategy in the mission area.

Child protection staff can use various methods to assess protection needs of children in armed conflict.⁹⁰ The key is for the analysis to go beyond a simple description of what is taking place and explore why child rights violations are happening.

Key aspects of a needs assessment and analysis are:

- Threats and violations against children due to conflict
- Specific vulnerabilities of children
- Impacts of violations on affected children and communities
- Presence/performance of protection mechanisms for children and other civilians, including accountability mechanisms
- Operational environment

Table 16 provides some questions for staff members to explore as part of the context-specific assessment and analysis. In responding to these questions, child protection staff should consider the diverse needs and experiences of children to enable a more nuanced approach to prevention and response efforts. Staff should also build on existing assessments and consult a variety of sources, such as:

- Previous and current internal mission reports
- Public and informal reports from United Nations entities, international and local NGOs, the national government, academic and research institutes, and media outlets
- Information received from key stakeholders and experts, including affected children and communities, through meetings, interviews, coordination mechanisms, etc.

TABLE 19: Sample questions for needs assessment and analysis

| AREA OF ANALYSIS | POSSIBLE QUESTIONS |
|---------------------------|---|
| Threats/violations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the main violations/threats children face? Are there any patterns of violations? Where are these violations primarily occurring? Why are these violations occurring? ■ Who are the main perpetrators of grave child rights violations? What are the known or presumed motivations and capacities of perpetrators for committing the violations? ■ Which actors (e.g., commanders, government authorities) bear indirect responsibility for violations? For armed forces/groups, what is the chain of command and how well does it function (see also sect. 6.2)? ■ Do United Nations peacekeepers or other United Nations mission staff pose a threat and/or cause harm to children? Do peacekeepers or other United Nations mission staff commit violations against children and if so, why? |

90 For more on analysis tools and methods, see additional resources, section 9.7.

| AREA OF ANALYSIS | POSSIBLE QUESTIONS |
|--|---|
| Vulnerabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What personal or communal characteristics or environmental factors increase children's vulnerability to violations (e.g., age, sex, disability, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, race, culture, class, previous recruitment into armed forces/groups, displacement, family separation, geographical location)? |
| Impacts of violations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the immediate and long-term consequences of specific violations (e.g., physical, psychological, socioeconomic)? |
| Presence/performance of protection mechanisms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are there any relevant formal and/or informal mechanisms (local, national, regional, international) that protect children and prevent grave violations? How effective are they? ■ Are there any community-based mechanisms to protect children? How effective are they? Are they linked to outside assistance/formal services? |
| Operational environment (see also analysis of operational environment in sect. 2.2.2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the political, cultural, socioeconomic, and other challenges and opportunities for protecting children from conflict-related violence in the mission context (e.g., inclusion of child protection provisions in peace accords, access restrictions, security situation, gender relations, funding availability)? ■ Which national and international laws and standards are in place to protect children? ■ Who are the main stakeholders that could positively or negatively influence the protection of children in armed conflict? What are their interests? (Note: For information on different aspects of a stakeholder analysis, see sect. 5.2.2 and sect. 6.2) |

9.3 ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGIC PLAN

A strategic plan helps child protection staff to set out priorities, objectives, and activities in the mission areas for the next three to five years. The plan can guide teams in deciding how to allocate their limited resources to achieve their goals. The plan is also a useful tool for obtaining mission buy-in and internal/external support, as well as for creating institutional memory. The following is a step-by-step guide for developing the key elements of a strategic plan.

Step 1) Identify priorities

The needs assessment and analysis are likely to point to a large and seemingly overwhelming number of problems and issues concerning children in armed conflict. At this stage, child protection teams must focus in on areas where they believe they can make the biggest contribution. For example, priorities may revolve around behaviors or practices (e.g., impunity for violations), types of violations (e.g., attacks against schools), and/or a specific set of actors (e.g., police, parties to conflict, government authorities). The strategic plan should clearly explain the rationale for choosing certain priorities over others.

Here are some criteria that staff can use to identify priorities:

■ **Significance of issue**

- Likelihood of the violation/threat occurring (e.g., pattern of violations)
- Severity of the violation/threat
- Impact of the violation/threat

■ **Expected results**

- Expected change resulting from involvement of child protection staff
- Identified gap that child protection staff are uniquely placed to fill

■ **Mission's (child protection) mandate/priorities**

- Alignment with mission's mandate and priorities
- Relevance to the mission's child protection mandate
- Significance for advancing the global children and armed conflict agenda

■ **Feasibility**

- Availability of resources (e.g., technical, staff, capacities)
- Operational environment (e.g., security, political environment, access to target audiences/victims/influencers)

Step 2) Define Objectives

Child protection staff should produce three to five specific and measurable objectives to address the identified priority issue(s) (see sect. 5.2.1). These objectives should aim to bring about tangible changes that improve the protection of children affected by armed conflict in the mission area, including through the prevention of grave violations against children.

The types of objectives could include:

- ✓ **Behavioral objectives:** Objectives that are geared towards changing the behavior of a specific person or group of people, such as government authorities, parties to conflict, communities, victims/survivors (see also sect. 5.2.2)
- ✓ **Institutional objectives:** Objectives aimed at bringing about institutional reforms (e.g., laws, policies, action plans with parties to the conflict and other long-term commitments)
- ✓ **Process objectives:** Objectives that aim to create the conditions for achieving lasting behavioral or institutional outcomes (e.g., access to an interlocutor, establishment of partnerships).

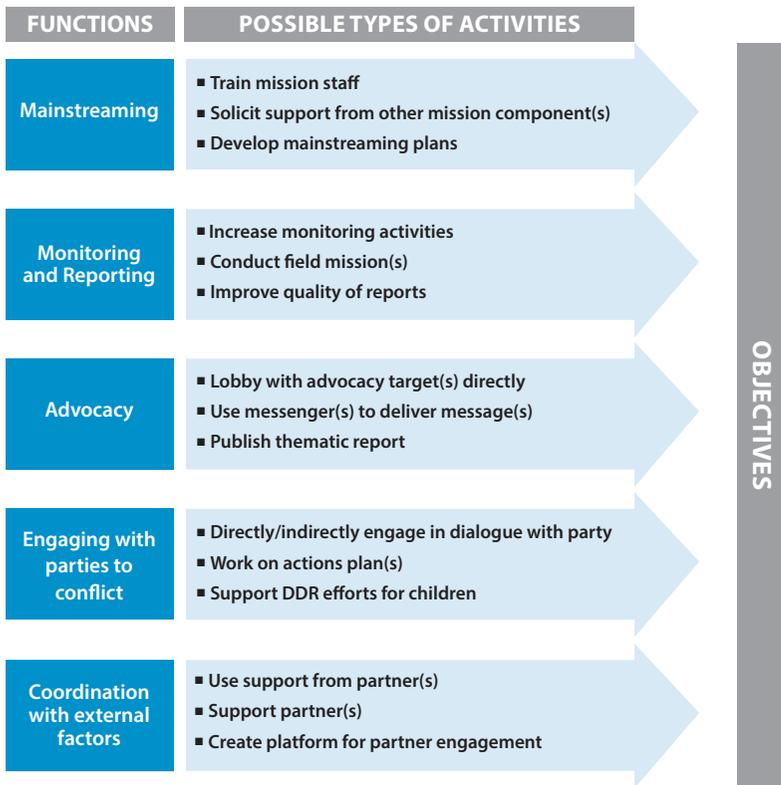
As an example, a behavioral objective for a child protection component in a mission area where recruitment and use of children are identified as a core issue could be:

By 2024 (when?), reduce by 20 per cent (how much?) the number of children recruited or used by parties to the conflict (what?).

Step 3) Define Activities

Child protection staff can use their core functions – mainstreaming, monitoring and reporting, advocacy, engagement with parties to conflict and coordination with external actors – to identify different types of activities they will undertake to achieve their objectives. Figure 15 provides a number of activities that staff could draw on in each of these functional areas. Staff are likely to employ multi-pronged strategies to achieve an objective. They should also look at their current set of activities to see how they can adapt them to achieve evolving objectives.

FIGURE 15: Possible types of activities for child protection staff in each functional area



Step 4) Plan allocation of resources

Once objectives and activities have been identified, child protection staff should look again at whether available resources are sufficient to successfully implement their plan. This includes a review of available staff capacity, as well as funding and support through other mission components and partners. Taking time to plan resources also makes it easier for child protection staff members to justify or redirect resources in case of budgetary cuts.

Senior child protection advisers (or officers with equivalent function) should pay close attention to their human resource needs. Child protection teams need to have a diverse range of competent members to carry out the sensitive, complex core aspects of their work. For example, international staff normally depend on the support of national staff for conducting age assessments and interviewing children. In contrast, some engagements with parties to conflict or high-level authorities may require international staff to take the lead (for example, to avoid exposing national staff to harm).

Here are some criteria that senior child protection advisers (or officers with equivalent functions) should consider when planning staff resources:

- Technical skills and field-based experience in child protection
- Balance of national and international staff
- Gender balance

- Placement of child protection staff within United Nations mission hierarchy
- Geographical coverage (e.g., direct access to volatile areas)
- Possible limitations of human rights and other mission colleagues in assuming certain responsibilities of child protection staff (e.g., engagement with parties to conflict)

United Nations peace operations with a mission-specific Security Council mandate on child protection must have dedicated child protection staff in accordance with the *2017 Child Protection Policy*. United Nations peace operations must recruit child protection staff from the Department of Peace Operations and Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs child protection rosters.

Senior child protection advisers (or officers with equivalent function) should communicate anticipated resource needs, including the estimated costs of planned activities (e.g., workshops, travel, consultancies) to the budget officer for inclusion in the results-based budget through the established coordination mechanism in each mission.

Quick tip: In order to achieve their objectives, child protection teams may need to improve the knowledge and skills of their members. Possible capacity-strengthening activities could include:

- Training on roles and responsibilities of child protection staff
- Periodic workshops or training on thematic issues or to learn specific skills (e.g., interviewing children, humanitarian negotiations)
- Management training/mentoring
- Mission exchanges/visits and regional workshops to share best practices

Depending on identified needs, child protection staff can either draw on internal resources or request support from others within the mission (e.g., funding, operational support) or the Child Protection Team within the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training, Department of Peace Operations and the child protection focal point in the Policy and Mediation Division, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs – in cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF and other relevant entities.

Step 5) Consider risks

Senior child protection advisers (or officers with equivalent function) should assess possible risks and identify ways to mitigate them. This may include security risks, access to target audiences/victims/influencers, budget cuts and delays in staff recruitment. Depending on the likelihood and impact of the risk, staff members may need to make adjustments to their strategy.

9.4 WORKPLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION

A child protection team's workplan translates the multi-year strategic plan into concrete activities and outputs for its area of responsibility. The plan specifies activity timelines, resources, partners and assigned staff for each objective; it usually runs from April to March (see table 17 for an extract of a sample workplan). Senior Child Protection Advisers (or officers with equivalent function) should consult with the Child Protection Team in the Department of Peace Operations or the Child Protection Focal Point in the Department of Political and

Peacebuilding Affairs at headquarters, and their respective office heads, as well as other relevant staff or components (such as human rights or political affairs) at field level to ensure the plan aligns with national/regional strategies or objectives and the child protection mandate. They should also seek approval where needed. Staff can use the team's workplan to develop individual workplans, which would then be used as the basis for annual performance evaluations.

During the implementation phase, child protection teams should monitor progress against their plans and make adjustments as needed (see sect. 9.5).

TABLE 20: Sample in-mission child protection team workplan (extract)

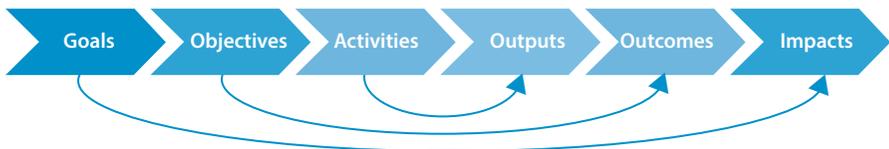
| Objective 1: To eliminate reported incidents of child labour in United Nations peace operations. April 2018 – March 2019 | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Note: The Child Protection team selected this as a priority due to the drastic increase of reported child labour incidents in the mission area. | | | | |
| ACTIVITIES | RESOURCES (incl. Partners) | ASSIGNED TO: | TIME FRAME | INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT |
| Support development of a Force Commander's directive on the prohibition of child labour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing: Agreement by Force Commanders, designation of one military child protection focal point for assignment, technical advice by Office of SRSB for Children and Armed Conflict Needs: Samples from other United Nations peace operations (through the Department of Peace Operations focal point at Headquarters) | Deputy Senior Child Protection Adviser | April – September 2021 (weekly meetings) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Force Commander's directive on the prohibition of child labor |
| Dissemination of Force Commander's directive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing: Commitment of military component to take the lead in dissemination Needs: Agreement with military component regarding possible contributions of the child protection team to dissemination activities, if any | Senior Child Protection Adviser | October 2021 – March 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Of copies of Force Commander's directive distributed |
| Deliver child protection training sessions to all mission staff, with increased emphasis on the prohibition of child labor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing: One Child Protection Adviser, two national child protection officers, two military child protection focal points Needs: n/a | Senior Child Protection Adviser | April 2021 – March 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Mission staff who completed new child protection training Percentage of trainees able to identify incidents of child labor by United Nations peace operation and report them to the appropriate channel (post-training quiz) |

9.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation helps to improve the effectiveness of child protection interventions. It allows child protection staff to assess whether they are making progress towards their objectives. It can help them learn from their experiences and use the lessons learned as the basis for adapting and refining their current approaches and to inform future planning. It is also essential for promoting internal accountability.

The strategic plan provides the foundation for monitoring and reporting. Based on the plan, staff members develop indicators that help them measure the results of their activities ('outputs'), objectives ('outcomes') and goals ('impacts') (see fig. 16). This also provides an opportunity for child protection staff to scrutinize selected objectives to ensure that they are really measurable.

FIGURE 16: Monitoring and Evaluation



9.5.1 Basic monitoring and evaluation framework

To create a monitoring and evaluation framework, child protection staff need to develop indicators at three levels:

- **Outputs** are the direct result of activities performed by child protection staff. Measuring outputs indicates whether they have completed activities as planned. Examples of child protection staff outputs may include:
 - Number of field missions conducted to separate children from armed forces and groups
 - Number of monitoring missions conducted to verify allegations of grave child rights violations
 - Number of advocacy meetings held with counterparts in the justice system to advocate for prosecution of crimes against children
 - Number of child protection briefings conducted
- **Outcomes** are the medium-term changes that occur as a result of achieving outputs, for example, the release of children (outcome) as a result of advocacy meetings with parties to conflict (output). Measuring outcomes indicates whether progress has been made towards achieving desired longer-term changes (e.g., elimination of child recruitment/reduction of number of children associated with armed forces/groups). Examples of outcomes include:
 - Number of children released from armed forces or groups as a direct result of advocacy by child protection and partners
 - Command order issued by party to conflict's leadership to prevent the recruitment and use of children and other grave child rights violations
 - Grave violations against children are monitored in compliance with the MRM Field Manual

- Percentage of child protection-specific mandated missions with Security Council resolutions that include information on the protection of children affected by armed conflict
- Number of mission staff members who have completed child protection training
- **Impact** is the long-term effect the intervention(s) seeks to achieve. While the most impressive sign of success, direct impact is often difficult to measure because child protection staff members work alongside other actors who are contributing to progress on the same issue. In some cases, it is not always feasible for staff to measure impact because of the amount of resources and time it requires. Examples of child protection staff impact are:
 - Change against baseline value of estimated number of children currently associated with armed forces or armed groups
 - Improvement in children's perceived sense of protection from grave violations

Child protection staff must then select data sources for each indicator (e.g., monitoring data, feedback surveys, self-assessments, key informant interviews, perceptions surveys) and provide definitions and clarifications for indicators as needed.

Baseline and targets: After defining the indicators, child protection staff should measure the baseline and set targets. The baseline indicates the starting measure for each indicator, using the appropriate definition and data sources. The target is the desired measure that the team is seeking to achieve at a particular moment in time. For example, if a planned activity is to provide briefings on child protection to new mission staff, the baseline would be 'zero' at the outset. Staff members could then set a monthly target of briefings based on expected staff arrivals.

Assumptions: The monitoring and evaluation framework should contain some critical assumptions about the project. These are factors outside the control of child protection staff but which can determine the success or failure of a plan. For example, assumptions could include unimpeded access to certain actors/sites, the continued presence of the United Nations peace operation, a fully staffed child protection team, or willingness of parties to conflict to engage in dialogue with the United Nations. Highlighting and monitoring such assumptions can alert teams to possible disruptions to the project that other project indicators do not reflect.

9.5.2 Implementation

Once the monitoring and evaluation framework is established, child protection staff should set up a system for implementing it. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation enable staff to reflect on progress, identify new challenges and adapt plans as needed. Such frameworks are also an important means of maintaining internal accountability, providing feedback for child protection teams, and boosting staff motivation.

Implementing a monitoring and evaluation framework usually involves collecting and analyzing data on specific indicators, as well as tasks and timelines for implementation. In the case of child protection, staff measure outputs (e.g., number of monitoring visits, workshops) as they are being implemented. Child protection teams are advised to review outcomes at least once a year as part of their annual report. The biennial child protection adviser retreats, as well as child protection staff retreats within the mission, also provide valuable opportunities for collective general assessments.

If funding allows, child protection staff may also consider an external evaluation. These may look at the child protection work overall or specific aspects of the programming, such as impact of training or advocacy.

9.6 EXERCISES

Child protection staff can use the following exercises to apply some of the knowledge and skills developed in this chapter.

1. Develop some key elements of a strategic plan.

1a. Pick one priority area for your mission area

1b. Select one objective in the selected priority area. Make sure this objective is SMART (see sect. 5.2.1).

1c. Create two activities to achieve this objective.

1) _____

2) _____

1d. Consider what resources you would need to achieve this objective.

2. Develop some key elements of a strategic plan.

2a. Pick one priority area for your mission area

1) _____

2) _____

2b. What are some key assumptions of your monitoring and evaluation framework?

9.7 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Analysis and assessments

- Global Protection Cluster, Child Protection Working Group. *Child Protection Rapid Assessment toolkit* (2012), available at http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/tools_and_guidance/info_data_management/CPRA_English-EN.pdf
- United Nations Development Group, *Conducting a Conflict and Development Analysis* (2016), available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/conducting-conflict-and-development-analysis-tool>
- United Nations, *United Nations Conflict Analysis Practice Note* (2016), available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-conflict-analysis-practice-note>
- United Nations Sustainable Development Group, *Good Practice Note: Conflict Sensitivity, Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace* (2022), including conflict analysis and other tools for ensuring conflict-sensitive activities, available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/good-practice-note-conflict-sensitivity-peacebuilding-and-sustaining-peace>
- UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, *Framework for Gender Political-Conflict Analysis* (2019), available at <https://peacemaker.un.org/node/3575>

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

- Department of Peace Operations, *Protection of Civilians Handbook* (2020), chap. 5, pp. 42-57, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/dpo-poc-handbook>
- *Integration Mission Planning Process Guidelines for the Field* outlines the standards for integrated strategy, planning and coordination at the country level. Accessible via the Policy and Practices database on the POINT intranet, available at <http://ppdb.un.org>
- UNICEF, *Child Protection Resource Pack. How to Plan, Monitor and Evaluate Child Protection Programmes* (2015), available at <https://data.unicef.org/resources/child-protection-resource-pack/>
- International Peace Institute, *The Management Handbook for UN Field Missions* (2012), available at http://www.ipinst.org/images/pdfs/handbook/management_handbook_linked.pdf

Annexes



ANNEX 1: Roles and Responsibilities of Mission Components for Child Protection

| MISSION COMPONENTS | ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MISSION COMPONENTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION (as specified in the 2017 Child Protection Policy) |
|---------------------|---|
| SRSG/HoM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Overall responsibility within the mission for child protection planning, mainstreaming, training, coordination, monitoring and reporting, and dialogue with parties to conflict. ■ Direct leadership and personal involvement, alongside UNICEF representative, on key issues (e.g., establishment of the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, action plans, political démarches at the country level). |
| Civilian sections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identification and implementation of specific child protection actions in accordance with their respective roles and functions. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation/Political Affairs/Civil Affairs: Account for child protection concerns and child protection normative framework in conflict analysis and mediation efforts and ensure that child protection considerations are part of the mission's overall mediation and national reconciliation efforts. • DDR/Security Sector Reform/Justice and Corrections/Human Rights: Ensure that mission and national strategies include provisions on release and reintegration of children from armed forces and groups and screening mechanisms for preventing the enrolment of children in security institutions. • Rule of Law/Justice and Corrections/Human Rights: Account for the rights of children in contact with the law, the criminalization of violations and abuses against children, and advocacy on legal protection for children. • POC Advisors/Community Liaison Assistants/Joint Protection Teams/Joint Operations Base/JMAC: Include child protection within the broader protection efforts of the mission (e.g., early warning mechanisms, community alert networks, conflict and threats analysis, unarmed approaches to protection). |
| Military components | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Roles and responsibilities in accordance with the <i>UN Infantry Battalion Manual</i> (2012), the <i>UN Force Headquarters Handbook</i> (2014) and the <i>Protection of Civilians Implementing Guidelines for Military Components of UN Peacekeeping Missions</i> (2015). This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force Commanders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Include child protection guidance in all strategic and operational documents for military personnel. – Ensure that military personnel under their command receive in-mission induction briefings and ongoing training on child protection. – Designate a military CFPF at mission headquarters. • Battalion Commanders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Appoint a full-time child protection officer within each battalion Command Group. |

Military components
continued

- **Company Commanders:**
 - Designate a CFPF within company headquarters.
- **Commanding Officers**, under the guidance of the Force Commanders:
 - Inform parties to the conflict about the consequences of violations and abuses against children.
 - Liaise between the mission and non-United Nations national and/or international military forces.

Police components

- Identification and implementation of specific child protection actions in accordance with their respective roles and functions. This includes:
 - **United Nations Police components:**
 - Integrate child protection in advising and capacity-building efforts for host State police and juvenile justice system.
 - Apply child-sensitive interviewing techniques.
 - Monitor child protection concerns and compliance with international norms and standards.
 - **Heads of United Nations Police components:**
 - Ensure that all United Nations Police officers are trained in, apply and integrate international norms and standards on children's rights into their work.
 - Issue appropriate guidance to inform the actions of United Nations Police officers in relation to the protection of children.
 - Designate a police CFPF at mission headquarters and police CFPFs in field offices.

ANNEX 2: Training Evaluation Form

| TRAINING EVALUATION (location, date) | | | |
|--|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| NAME OF WORKSHOP: _____ | | | |
| NAME (optional) _____ | | | |
| Note: All responses are confidential and will not be attributed to any individual or organization. | | | |
| Circle the number that indicates where your opinion lies. Thank you. | | | |
| 1. How would you rate the training overall? | Poor | 1 2 3 4 5 | Excellent |
| 2. Was there sufficient time to discuss the ideas presented at the training? | Insufficient | 1 2 3 4 5 | Sufficient |
| 3. Did you find the facilitator(s) effective? | Ineffective | 1 2 3 4 5 | Very effective |
| 4. How important are child protection concerns for your daily work? | Not important | 1 2 3 4 5 | Very important |
| 5. How likely are you to recommend the training to a colleague? | Unlikely | 1 2 3 4 5 | Very likely |
| <p>1. What were the most valuable aspects of this training?</p> <p>2. What aspects of the training did you find of little or no value and why?</p> <p>3. What additional content would you suggest?</p> <p>4. Will you use the training to inform your work? If yes, how? If no, why not?</p> <p>5. Additional comments:</p> | | | |

ANNEX 3a: Sample Terms of Reference for Child Protection Focal Points

1. Background

Pursuant to the 2017 Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations, and in application of relevant Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict, the [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Child Protection Section (CPS) is mandated to carry out the following activities:

- Ensure the integration, coordination and follow-up on issues related to children and armed conflict throughout the United Nations system and, in coordination with UNICEF and other stakeholders, engage in dialogue with the parties to conflict.
- Monitor and report on grave child rights violations committed by the parties to conflict and contribute to the fight against impunity.
- Mainstream child protection concerns throughout the work of mission components, and train uniformed components to prevent and respond appropriately to child rights violations.
- Liaise with the protection of civilians (POC) unit and uniformed components to support prevention activities, in order to strengthen the protection of children in armed conflict.
- Advocate with national and local authorities and raise awareness among governmental institutions, communities and civil society on child rights and child protection.

In order to ensure that all components of the mission integrate child protection concerns in their activities, particularly the military component, it is critical that a network of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military child protection focal points (CPFPs) be established to ensure that child protection concerns are considered at all stages of the planning and process and in operational activities at the force headquarters level, as well as at sector and contingent levels.

The role of the focal point will be to:

- Serve as an interface between the CPS and [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military component.
- Facilitate collaboration between the CPS and the [ARMED FORCES].
- Represent child protection in areas where a CPS is not deployed.
- Mainstream child protection concerns through the work of the military component to better protect children.

2. Summary of the role

Assuming the function of child protection focal point/officer (CPFP/O) will be an additional role for the military gender and protection officer at Force headquarters. That officer will be guided and supported by the mission Senior Child Protection Adviser (CPA), who is mandated to provide substantive leadership and support to ensure child protection concerns are integrated into military planning processes and activities.

The Senior Child Protection Adviser and Force headquarters CPFP/O will coordinate and work together when required to develop relevant standard operating procedures and terms of reference for the Force.

3. Key responsibilities of the Force headquarters child protection focal point

- Work with the Senior Child Protection Adviser to strengthen advice provided to the [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force Commander, senior military leadership, Force headquarters staff and commanders on all issues related to the protection of children.
- Liaise with and train military CFPFs at the sector and unit level to ensure implementation of child protection measures at the tactical level (battalion and company level).
- Establish/strengthen an alert system to transmit information received on any of the six grave violations and other child protection concerns through the chain of command and the CPS, as well as information on threats that could cause displacement, human rights violations, and so on.
- Oversee the implementation of specific directives including standard operating procedures on the handover of children associated with armed groups/national security forces captured in operations or those who have surrendered to the peacekeeping force.
- Develop guidelines on children's issues, including appropriate conduct during interaction with children and prevention of all forms of child exploitation and child labor.

4. Key responsibilities of the sector headquarter child protection focal point

- In collaboration with the sector-level Child Protection Officer/team leader, advise the sector commander on all issues related to the protection of children within the sector area of responsibility.
- Act as a liaison between sector child protection team and the sector headquarters, providing two-way communications between the Force and the civilian child protection teams.
- Follow up on the training of contingent CFPF/Os to ensure implementation of child protection measures at the tactical level (battalion and company level).
- Handle all issues related to child protection concerns within the Force at sector level, in collaboration with the civilian child protection sector-level team.
- Obtain referral mechanisms from the child protection team at the sector level for all military CFPFs within the area of responsibility, to address sexual violence, children separated from armed groups, unaccompanied children, and others, and continuously consult the child protection team about response and protection activities. Ensure that all military CFPFs are adequately informed about referrals.
- Inform the civilian child protection team of all child protection concerns taking place at sector level, including sharing of grave child rights violations.

5. Key responsibilities of the battalion command group child protection focal point

- Advise the Battalion Commander on all issues related to the protection of children.
- Act as a liaison between child protection actors and the battalion.
- Handle all issues related to child protection violations, including establishment of an alert system to transmit through command channel and also to the child protection unit/section, pertaining to information received on any of the six grave violations, especially the recruitment or use of children by armed forces or armed groups, the killing or maiming of children, sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abductions of children and the denial of humanitarian access.

- Coordinate with military CPFP at Force/mission headquarters.
- Develop and oversee the implementation of specific standard operating procedures on the handover of child soldiers captured in operations or those who have surrendered to the peacekeeping Force.
- Develop guidelines for the battalion on children's issues including detention, conduct during the interaction with children and prevention of all forms of exploitation against children including child labor and sexual exploitation.

Note: At the United Nations infantry battalion level, the responsibility for "gender and child protection" will be performed by a single officer, under the supervision of the Executive Officer/ Second in Command.

6. Monitoring and Reporting

The CPFP will work closely with the Child Protection Section within the area of responsibility and transmit information on violations to the section using established information-sharing protocols and taking into account confidentiality and sensitivity of dealing with children's issues. All reports shall be monitored by the Force headquarters focal point.

ANNEX 3b: Sample Job Description for United Nations Police Child Protection Focal Point

Job description for positions requiring official secondment from national governments of Member States of the United Nations Organization

| | |
|---|---|
| Post title and level | Police adviser – Family and Child Protection Officer, seconded (non-contracted) |
| Organizational unit | TBD |
| Duty station | Within the mission area according to the operational requirements |
| Reporting to | Police commissioner through the established chain of command |
| Duration | 12 months (extendable) |
| <i>United Nations core values: integrity, professionalism, and respect for diversity</i> | |

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Under the authority of the direct supervisor within the organizational structure of the United Nations Mission Police component and within the limits of delegated authority, the Family and Child Protection Officer will be responsible for, but not limited to, the performances of the following duties:

- Maintain close liaison with all stakeholders including United Nations agencies, international/national NGOs and other partners to deal with gender and child protection issues/matters.
- Coordinate with military headquarters training unit to conduct training, workshops and seminars for local police and mission Gender and Child Protection officers.
- Supervise and guide all subordinates in the unit as well as in sectors, team sites and at the Community Policing Committee (CPC) level.

- Coordinate with United Nations Police Personnel Unit on the issues of deployment of female and male police advisers to the Gender and Child Protection units in various sectors, team sites and CPCs.
- Coordinate and give professional guidance and support to the criminal investigators, if needed, at military headquarters, sectors, team sites and CPCs.
- Keep records and maintain an appropriate filing system in the unit, i.e., daily situation report and weekly, monthly, quarterly, biannual and annual gender reports.
- Ensure that all the reports are accordingly compiled and sent to R&R and other related units.
- Visit sectors, team sites and CPCs to ensure effective and efficient performance of the unit pillars on the ground.
- Perform any other duties/tasks as delegated by the R&R Coordinator within the framework of mandate implementation.

COMPETENCIES:

Professionalism: Shows pride in work and achievements; demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines, and achieving results; is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; remains calm in stressful situations. Possesses practical proven experience and outstanding expert knowledge in the technical field of work in general and in the specific areas required for the particular posts; demonstrates good judgment in the context of assignments given; able to plan own work and manage work/task priorities. Ability to apply technical expertise to resolve police-related issues and challenges. Strong organizational skills. Takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work.

Planning and Organizing: Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies; identifies priority activities and assignments; adjusts priorities as required; allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work; foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning; monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary; uses time efficiently.

Communication: Speaks and writes clearly and effectively; listens to others, correctly interprets messages from others and responds appropriately; asks questions to clarify and exhibits interest in having two-way communication; tailors language, tone, style and format to match audience; demonstrates openness in sharing information and keeping people informed. Demonstrates ability to draft/edit a variety of written reports.

Teamwork: Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals; solicits inputs by genuinely valuing others' ideas and expertise; is willing to learn from others; places team agenda before personal agenda; supports and acts in accordance with final group decision, even when such decisions may not entirely reflect own position; shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility for team shortcomings. Displays ability to establish and maintain effective partnerships and working relations in a multicultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Education: Graduation from Police College or Academy or other recognized law enforcement educational institution is required. Specialized training in the area of child/family protection, domestic violence investigation, community policing, victim protection or relevant is highly desirable. University degree in related field (law, law enforcement, security, criminology, sociology etc.) is desired.

Work Experience: A minimum of 5 years of active experience in national law enforcement is required in one or several following areas: police management; community policing; juvenile delinquency; investigation of Sexual and Gender Base Violence (SGBV) and domestic violence; victim protection. Training and mentoring experience in the above areas is highly desirable. Peacekeeping or other international experience in the UN or other organizations is an advantage.

Languages: English and French are the working languages of the UN. For the post advertised, fluency in oral and written English is required. Knowledge of a second official UN language is an advantage.

Assessment for Mission Service: All candidates should be cleared through an Assessment for Mission Service (AMS) either by a Selection Assistance and Assessment Team (SAAT) deployed to a Member State or on the basis of an in-mission AMS upon arrival of the candidates. Failure to pass the in-mission assessment will result in candidate's repatriation. All repatriation related expenses in this case are to be borne by the Member State. Therefore, the Member States are strongly encouraged to request a SAAT to conduct an AMS in the Member State prior to the police personnel deployment.

Preference will be given to equally qualified women candidates.

Date of Issuance:

UN Police | United Nations Peacekeeping

In accordance with the Policy on Human Rights Screening of UN Personnel, all individuals who seek to serve with the United Nations, are requested to make a "self-attestation" that s/he has not committed any serious criminal offences and has not been involved in violations of international human rights or international humanitarian law. The exact wording of the self-attestation is outlined in para. 5.2 of the above-mentioned Policy. The final decision on the selection of an individual to serve with the United Nations will also be subject to human rights screening.

ANNEX 4: Implementation Matrix for Child Protection: Guidance and Template for United Nations Peace Operations

Introduction

- **Purpose:** The implementation matrix is a strategic mission document that is designed to support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG)/Head of Missions (HOM) and other relevant mission components in fulfilling their respective roles to implement the 2017 Child Protection Policy. The implementation matrix allows these mission components to prepare their plans to advance the child protection mandate of UN peace operations in specific mission settings, monitor progress towards achievement of these plans and make adjustments as needed. It thus provides a vital tool to strengthen missions' child protection response and promote accountability.
- **Roles and responsibilities:** The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG)/Heads of Missions (HOMs) bear overall responsibility for managing and overseeing the development, operationalization and annual review of the implementation matrix in their respective mission areas. Fulfilling their crucial role in implementing the child protection mandate, Child Protection Advisers will provide technical advice to the SRSGs/HoMs related to the matrix and coordinate inputs from relevant mission components. Each mission component will work closely with CPAs to determine what actions they must take in their mission area to comply with the 2017 Child Protection Policy.
- **Timing:** The implementation matrix should span a 3-5-year period and be reviewed annually.

References

- Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support/Department of Political Affairs, *Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations* (2017)
- Department of Peace Operations/Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, *Handbook for Child Protection Staff in UN Peace Operations* (2023)

| Name of Mission: | | Date of Completion: | | | | Comments (Essential analysis, e.g., progress, challenges, additional data/information) |
|------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| | | Planned Action(s) (2-3 specific, time-bound actions for each mission component) | Indicator(s) of Success | Indicator (Measurable markers of progress) | Baseline (Starting point for implementation) | |
| Example 1: UN Military | Develop and implement Force Commander's directives on child protection | Force Commander's directive issued Increase in # of child protection alerts issued by the UN military | Agreement by Force Commander (Jan 15, 2022) 6 alerts (Jan 16-Dec 31, 2021) | Force Commander's directive issued (Jan 10, 2022) 10 alerts/1.25 per month (150% increase) (Jan 1 – Aug 30, 2022) | UN military named high turnover rates among military personnel and lack of financial resources for translating the Force Commander's directive into troop-contributing country languages as some of the main challenges in implementing the Force Commander's directive. | |
| Example 2: UNPOL | Conduct regular training for national police on child-sensitive justice (i.e., biannually) and set up a system for one-on-one coaching with national police's child protection focal points | Percentage of trained police who report applying new learning to work Decrease in number of children illegally detained by national police | n/a 27 reported cases of illegally detained children due to their association with armed forces or groups/2.25 per month (Jan 1-Dec 31, 2021) | 72 per cent of surveyed training participants reported applying new learning to work (online survey) (1 month after training) 15 reported cases of illegally detained children due to their association with armed forces or groups/1.88 per month (16.6% decrease) (Jan 1-Aug 30, 2022) | Training participants cited several specific examples of applying new knowledge, including application of child-sensitive interviewing techniques and referral of children to relevant child protection services. More information on survey results are available upon request. | |
| Example 3: JMAC | Provide relevant data and analysis on the situation of children affected by armed conflict, including profiles of perpetrators and parties to the conflict | Increase in # of mentions of relevant terms (e.g., child, girl, boy) in JMAC reports to senior leadership | 12 mentions/1 per month (Jan 1-Dec 31, 2021) | 3 mentions/0.38 per month (62 % decrease) (Jan 1-Aug 30, 2022) | JMAC also prepared a briefing note on patterns of child recruitment and use by armed forces and groups in mission area (available upon request) | |

92 UN Missions may adapt/add to the mission components listed here as needed.

continued on next page

continued

| Name of Mission: | | Date of Completion: | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| SMSG/HoM | | | |
| DDR | | | |
| Human Rights | | | |
| Civil Affairs | | | |
| Stabilization Unit | | | |
| WPA | | | |
| Political Affairs | | | |
| Justice/Rule of Law Section | | | |
| POC | | | |
| SSR | | | |
| Office of the Chief of Staff Planning | | | |
| Integrated Mission Training Centre | | | |

ANNEX 5a: Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection

Military components of UN peace operations play an important role in protecting children and preventing violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation affecting children in the mission area, including by mainstreaming child protection concerns and activities in all their operations (DPKO-DFS-DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations, 2017).

The successful adoption and implementation of the 2017 Force Commander's Child Protection Directive in MONUSCO (updated in 2021) marked the beginning of a series of Force Commander's Directives on Child Protection in other peacekeeping operations, namely MINUSCA (2018), UNMISS (2019, updated in 2020) and MINUSMA (2020).

A Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection is one of the tools available to support the implementation of the child protection mandate by the military component of a UN peacekeeping operation. The Directive can help ensure that child protection concerns are effectively mainstreamed into all activities and responsibilities of the military component, including through the establishment of a military Child Protection Focal Point system at Force Headquarters, Sector (Brigade) Headquarters, and Battalion Headquarters and sub-unit level, as set out in the policy (paragraph 20.3).

The template for the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection is intended for missions with a sizeable military component and with an explicit child protection mandate and dedicated child protection capacity. Other missions that wish to issue guidance on child protection for military personnel should adapt this template to reflect their mission mandate and deployment, the specific characteristics and size of the military component, and the specific characteristics and size of the child protection component (where present⁹³), among others.

[UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection

Content:

1. Purpose and rationale
2. Scope
3. Plan-Act-Alert-Protect
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. U/G/S1-9 considerations
6. References
7. Implementation
8. Monitoring and compliance
9. Contact

⁹³ UN peace operations with a child protection mandate usually have dedicated child protection capacity. In situations where dedicated child protection capacity is not present, the child protection lead in the mission (often the human rights component) should be involved in the development and implementation of mission-level guidance on child protection for UN military personnel in coordination with the Child Protection Team in DPO or the Child Protection Focal Point in DPPA at Headquarters

Annexes:⁹⁴

- Annex A: Key definitions and legal principles
- Annex B: Reporting and information-sharing chart
- Annex C: Early warning indicators – Reference to annex 9, *DPO-DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations, 2023*
- Annex D: Protection of schools – Reference to annex 5b, *DPO-DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations, 2023*
- Annex E: Child labor – Reference to annex 5c, *DPO-DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations, 2023*
- Annex F: Detention and surrender

1. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

The aim of this Directive is to set out how the military component of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] will implement plans and procedures on how to protect children before, during and after military activities.

[UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] has been mandated by the Security Council to [add ref. to the latest mission mandate, including relevant Security Council resolution (X) and year (X)].

Each military member of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] must be aware of the six grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict and understand the risks children face in the mission area of responsibility (AoR). Grave violations against children are being committed by [LIST PARTIES TO CONFLICT COMMITTING GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN] in the mission AoR. [Listings from the Secretary-General Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict]. [mission specificities]

2. SCOPE

This Directive applies to all [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military personnel. Compliance with this Directive is mandatory.

3. PLAN-ACT-ALERT-PROTECT

[UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force must act robustly and promptly to protect children before, during and after operations, in accordance with the mission mandate and the guiding principles as set out in annex A. Accurate and prompt reporting of violations against children is to be conducted first and foremost for the purpose of ensuring rapid response by [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION], specifically the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit and military forces. Reporting data for monitoring purposes is also important and should take place once the need for immediate action has been addressed.

- Plan.** The Force must take a proactive role in preventing the six grave violations against children. The Force must consider the impact that conflict has on children and put in place effective contingency plans to mitigate risks to children. The Force must also actively plan operations based on early warning indicators to provide protection to children and simultaneously target those seeking to abuse children during conflict.

⁹⁴ This list provides an overview of a set of standardized annexes to the template. The annexes should be tailored to the specificities of each mission.

- b. **Act.** In the event that a child faces a risk of death, serious harm (including maiming and rape or other forms of sexual violence) or abduction, the first duty of a member of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]'s Force is to take immediate action to protect the child, subject to usual operational considerations and the Rules of Engagement (RoE). This may include:
- Use of force in accordance with the RoE to protect the child.
 - Providing basic medical aid if asked or needed, in accordance with current [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] policies on providing medical assistance to civilians.
 - Securing the area until the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit or a humanitarian organization can arrange assistance for the child, if humanitarian assistance is needed or requested; and/or
 - Providing emergency transport to the child in accordance with current [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] policies on provision of emergency transport.
- c. **Alert.** After the member of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]'s Force has provided an immediate response to a grave violation by a party to the conflict, or where such a risk cannot be prevented or is not imminent, he/she must alert the Battalion HQ and other subordinate units' military Child Protection Focal Points (CPFP) in line with the procedure set out in the reporting and information-sharing chart (annex B). In turn, they shall then alert the FHQ military CPFP and the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit. In the absence of a Battalion HQ and/or other subordinate units' military CPFP, the SHQ (BHQ) or FHQ military CPFP must be contacted. The FHQ military CPFP must be informed and will then decide what further actions might be required, in liaison with the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit.
- d. **Protect.** Lessons learned, information about early warning indicators and good practices must be identified and collected on an ongoing basis. An after-action-review must be conducted to ensure future responses to child protection incidents are as effective as possible. This information must be included in tactics, techniques and procedures to improve overall performance. The FHQ military CPFP should incorporate good practices and lessons learned into the mandatory training on child protection (see section 5 below: U/G/S1-9 CONSIDERATIONS).

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Child Protection Section/Unit. The [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Child Protection Section/Unit, based in [LOCATION] Headquarters (HQ) and in [LOCATION] field offices, is the civilian substantive lead on child protection. The Child Protection Section/Unit is tasked with ensuring that the mission's activities prioritize the best interests of children, including through coordination with the Force. The Senior Child Protection Adviser is the principal interface and intermediary between [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] and external partners on child protection concerns, as well as the lead adviser on the implementation of the child protection mandate in the mission. The Child Protection Section/Unit at mission HQ is the primary interlocutor for the FHQ military CPFP; Child Protection staff are present in field offices and are the primary point of contact for the military CPFPs at SHQ (BHQ) level, Battalion HQ and other subordinate units.

Military Child Protection Focal Points. Within the Force, a network of military CPFs, as mandated in this Directive, provides a specialist supporting network and channel for information flow between the Force and the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit. Military CPFs are appointed at each level of the chain of command.

Force HQ – strategic level. The Force Headquarters military CPF⁹⁵ is responsible to the Force Commander for:

- a. Working with the Senior Child Protection Adviser to strengthen advice provided to the [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force Commander, senior military leadership, FHQ staff and commanders on all issues related to the protection of children:
 - Establish and maintain good working relations with the Senior Child Protection Adviser and the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit at mission HQ.
 - Regularly advise the Force Commander, senior military leadership, FHQ staff and commanders on child protection issues.
 - Mainstream child protection considerations into all [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force operations.
- b. Liaising with and training military CPFs at the Sector (Brigade), Battalion and sub-unit levels to ensure the implementation of child protection measures at the operational and tactical levels:
 - Ensure that all subordinate commanders at the Sector (Brigade), Battalion and sub-unit levels are fully informed and understand the need to ensure that the procedures set out in this Directive are observed.
 - Liaise with, advise, and support all Sector (Brigade) and Battalion Commanders as well as SHQ (BHQ), Battalion and sub-unit military CPFs to ensure compliance with the Directive.
 - Organize regular (in-person/virtual) meetings (ideally monthly) with military CPFs to exchange information, provide guidance, discuss the status of implementation of the Directive, etc.
 - In coordination with the U/G/S7, ensure that specific training on the Directive is regularly conducted within the military component of the mission (see section 7 below: IMPLEMENTATION).
- c. Establishing/strengthening an alert system to transmit information received on the six grave violations against children and other child protection concerns through the chain of command and to the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit, as well as information on threats that could cause displacement, human rights violations, etc.:
 - Ensure that information is exchanged rapidly and accurately between the Force and the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit.
 - Report information related to the six grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict to the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit in line with the procedure set out in the reporting and information-sharing chart (annex B).

⁹⁵ Depending on the specificities of each mission, the function of FHQ military CPF can be performed by the military Child Protection Adviser or Focal Point, the military Gender Adviser, the military Protection Adviser, or another staff officer at FHQ designated by the Force Commander.

- d. Overseeing the implementation of specific directives, including standard operating procedures on the handover of children associated with armed forces and armed groups captured during operations or those who surrender to the mission.
- e. Developing guidelines on children's issues, including appropriate conduct during interaction with children and prevention of all forms of child exploitation and child labour.
- f. Ensuring the implementation of this Directive, in consultation with the Senior Child Protection Adviser and civilian Child Protection Section/Unit:
 - Ensure compliance with this Directive by [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force.
 - Systematically monitor and report on progress made in the implementation of the Directive, including good practices and lessons learned.
 - Evaluate and review the Directive on a regular basis, looking at progress in its implementation, its effectiveness, and any problems or gaps arising during its implementation, and formulate recommendations to address them.

Sector HQ (Brigade HQ) – operational level. The SHQ (BHQ) military CPFPP⁹⁶ is responsible for:

- a. Advising the Sector (Brigade) Commander on all issues related to the protection of children within the Sector (Brigade) AoR, in collaboration with the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit:
 - Establish and maintain good working relations with the civilian Child Protection Team Leader and Child Protection Section/Unit at the field office level.
 - Regularly advise the Sector (Brigade) Commander, SHQ (BHQ) staff and commanders on child protection issues within the SHQ (BHQ) AoR.
- b. Acting as a liaison between the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit and the SHQ (BHQ), ensuring two-way communication between the Force and the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit.
- c. Following up on the training of military CPFPPs to ensure the implementation of child protection measures at the tactical level (battalion and company level).
- d. Handling all issues related to child protection concerns within the Force at Sector (Brigade) level, in collaboration with the Child Protection Section/Unit.
- e. Obtaining referral mechanisms from the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit at the Sector (Brigade) level for all military CPFPPs within the AoR, to address sexual violence, children separated from armed forces and armed groups, unaccompanied children, and other issues, and continuously consult the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit about response and protection activities. Ensure that all military CPFPPs are adequately informed about referrals.
- f. Informing the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit of all child protection concerns observed at SHQ (BHQ) level, including information on grave violations against children (see the reporting and information-sharing chart: annex B).

⁹⁶ Depending on the specificities of each mission, the function of the SHQ (BHQ) military CPFPP can be performed by the military Child Protection Adviser or Focal Point, the military Gender Focal Point or Protection Focal Point at Sector (Brigade) level.

- g. Ensuring the implementation of this Directive, in consultation with the Child Protection Team Leader and civilian Child Protection Section/Unit:
- Ensure compliance with this Directive by [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force in the Sector (Brigade) AoR;
 - Systematically monitor and report on progress made in the implementation of the Directive in the Sector (Brigade) AoR, including good practices and lessons learned, any problems or gaps arising during its implementation, and formulate recommendations to address them.

Battalion HQ and sub-units – tactical level. The Battalion HQ and sub-unit (e.g., Company HQ) military CPFPs are responsible for:

- Advising the Battalion Commander on all issues related to the protection of children in the AoR;
- Acting as a liaison between child protection actors and the Battalion/sub-unit.
- Handling all issues related to child protection in the AoR, including sharing information on grave violations against children (see the reporting and information-sharing chart (annex B);
- Coordinating with the military CPFPs at SHQ (BHQ) and FHQ.
- Developing and overseeing the implementation of specific standard operating procedures on the handover of children associated with armed forces and armed groups captured during operations or those who surrender to the mission.
- Developing guidelines for the battalion on children's issues, including detention, appropriate conduct during interactions with children, and prevention of all forms of exploitation against children, including child labor and sexual exploitation.
- Ensuring compliance with this Directive by the [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force at Battalion HQ and sub-unit level.

5. U/G/S1-9 CONSIDERATIONS

U/G/S2 – Military Information Staff Branch.

The Battalion HQ and sub-unit (e.g., Company HQ) military CPFPs are responsible for:

- Identify information in daily reporting that indicates that violations against children are occurring and analyze trends.
- Identify the alleged perpetrators, where applicable.
- Proactively provide early warning of risks of grave violations against children to the FHQ CPFP.
- Maintain, with support from the FHQ CPFP, an ongoing analysis of the prevailing threats against children in the AoR.
- Produce and regularly update risk analysis with respect to grave violations against children in the AoR to inform planning and operations.

U/G/S3 – Operations Staff Branch. During the execution of military operations, the relevant commands are required to assess the likelihood of any grave violations and enact contingency plans accordingly.

- **Contingency Plans and Military Operations.** Operational planning – in conjunction with the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit at HQ, Sector (Brigade) and Battalion level — must include contingency plans (CONPLANS) to protect children who may be affected or involved in the conflict, whether as combatants or as dependents of other combatants. Where there is a difficulty or it is felt that the contingency plans cannot mitigate the risk, then specialist expertise must be sought, and cancellation of the operation considered.
- **Targeting boards.** Where required, all commands are directed to conduct intelligence-led activities based on early warning indicators to isolate and neutralize armed forces or groups committing any of the six grave violations. During targeting boards, provisional planning must consider the safety of children identified at the targeted location.
- **Patrolling.** At the Sector (Brigade) and Battalion level, G/S3 staff are to route an adequate number of patrols near areas where children are more likely to be present (e.g., schools or hospitals), particularly at times when children are at high risk, such as dusk as they return home or, for girls, when they are collecting household supplies. Patrol planning should also include events at which children are likely to congregate (e.g., distribution of humanitarian assistance). Specific early warning indicators in missions must be included in planning to anticipate and mitigate higher risk of violations of children’s rights.
 - a. At FHQ, coordinate operations/responses to crises involving children. In addition, the Military Operations Centre (MOC) Duty Officer must be prepared to receive, forward and respond to reports of violations against children according to the reporting and information-sharing chart.
 - b. At FHQ, Sector (Brigade), Battalion and sub-unit level, staff are to assess the potential risks of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military operations for children, including the likelihood that children:
 - May be harmed directly.
 - May accidentally be detained.
 - May become panicked and lost/separated from their caregivers.
 - May actively seek protection from [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION].
 - May seek to oppose [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] activities (e.g., by throwing stones); or
 - May be forced to participate in acts of violence.
- **Children captured and child surrenders.** If children associated with armed forces and armed groups are captured during operations or surrender to the mission, they must be accepted and protected 24 hours a day, 7 days a week until the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit can assist. This applies to both boys and girls and does not require the child to possess a weapon or prove their age. Children should never be refused access after being disarmed, nor should they be interrogated. No photos should be taken of a child’s face. Immediately report all children to the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit and DDR for extraction. (See also annex F: Detention and surrender).

- **Children participating in combat.** If children are participating in combat against [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION], de-escalation tactics, including verbal encouragement to surrender, should be used to the maximum extent prior to taking offensive action. RoE must be stringently applied, and lethal force used only as a last resort for self-protection. Treat children with the same respect as you would a soldier but acknowledge they are still children.
- **Routine engagement with children.** The Force should focus its activities on the protection of children and not on interactions at orphanages and schools or in responses to poverty. Advocacy for children's rights should take place – through the Senior Child Protection Adviser – with key stakeholders and communities to denounce grave violations against children, including the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups.
- **Protection of schools and/or hospitals.** [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military personnel will not use schools (or other recognizable education facility or learning site) or medical facilities for any purpose in support of military operations, or otherwise interfere with the normal operations of these facilities. [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military personnel must also act to end and prevent the use of schools and/or hospitals by parties to the conflict. (See also annex D: Protection of schools).
- **Child Labor.** The use of children for the purpose of labor (cooks, cleaners, domestic helpers, etc.) is strictly prohibited. Children are not allowed in UN premises to perform any tasks. (See also annex E: Child labor).

U/G/S4 – Logistics Staff Branch. Support tactical units with supplies that will allow them to plan for and respond to the treatment of children who have been subjected to grave violations. In addition, U/G/S4 must be familiar with [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] policy regarding provision of assistance to civilians and assist in equipping patrols to provide approved emergency assistance where it is needed or requested by a child.

Medical Section. Provide CONPLANS for the priority treatment of injured children and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC). CONPLANS should also include medical assistance to be provided to children who were either taking part in hostilities or collateral damage.

Info Operations. The Info Operations cell is an enabler of non-kinetic operations from FHQ. It should conduct influence activities that encourage the identified target audiences to respect the six grave violations against children and persuade actors to protect children's rights in line with international norms and standards by means of:

Key leadership engagement. Through command-led engagement at all levels (strategic, operational, tactical) develop an understanding of the views of key leaders (enemy, civilian and friendly forces) to help shape their behaviour and encourage them to comply with this Directive.

Leaflets. During planning and execution of all operations, Info Operations to liaise with military CPFs to plan the distribution of child protection leaflets that will sensitize the population, the armed groups and national security forces.

Radio/other media. Spreading the key messages on the six grave violations against children through [UNITED NATIONS MISSION] radio, local radio stations and other media platforms requires coordination and information-sharing between the Info Operations cell and the military CPFs and civilian Child Protection Section/Unit.

SU/G/S5 – Plans and Policy Staff Branch. All military operations, including kinetic operations, must consider all the effects they have on children and take mitigating measures to limit the risk to children in the vicinity of the operation. This must be mainstreamed in all operation planning and execution and, where necessary, changes made to ensure the protection of children and to prevent grave violations against children. During all planning, civilian Child Protection staff must be consulted regarding mitigation measures (e.g., preparations for child surrenders).

U/G/S7 – Training Staff Branch. Training of the Force is critical to maintaining the standards that [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] has previously set. The “Reinforcement Training Package on Child Protection for the United Nations Military”⁹⁷ should be made available to U/G/S7 by the FHQ military CPFP and, where possible, tailored to the mission context. In addition, it is essential to incorporate the continuous training into the annual training plan in conjunction with the FHQ military CPFP to ensure training after rotations.

Mandatory training. Each member of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]’s military component will receive training on child protection, including scenario-based training, as part of their induction, as directed by the Force Commander. The FHQ military CPFP, in coordination with the U/G/S7, is responsible for the review of this training and its delivery in liaison with the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit. Contingents conducting their own training will be responsible for including the U/G/S7-approved brief.

Continuous training. The U/G/S7 is to enable military CPFPs to train their own units. CPFPs at all levels of the chain of command are to develop and maintain an awareness of their force’s collective knowledge of child protection. They are to conduct regular training (ideally every three months) with command personnel, and provide remedial training where needed. As a minimum, the continuous training must include the six grave violations, the ‘Plan-Act-Alert-Protect’ approach, the reporting and information-sharing chart, and the early warning indicators of the six grave violations against children.

Remedial training. Training on good practices should be held after a child protection incident. This should identify what went well and what could be done better, applying any changes through a scenario-based activity.

U/G/S9 – CIMIC Staff Branch. All United Nations civil–military coordination activities must consider the potential detrimental impacts on children and enact contingency plans to address them. Quick impact projects, where possible, must look at specific child protection development initiatives.

Liaison Office [ARMED FORCE] conduct of military operations with the [ARMED FORCE] – Effective partnering. Through the liaison cell in the [ARMED FORCE], develop an understanding that child protection increases operational effectiveness and promotes good practice. The key message to the [ARMED FORCE] is that child protection measures enhance operational effectiveness through the lawful conduct of operations. Through effective partnering and mentoring, the Force must influence the [ARMED FORCE] to conduct their operations, where relevant, within the guidelines highlighted in this document.

97 Available at <https://research.un.org/stm/Military>.

DDR/DDRRR Liaison Offices. Within the surrender process, specific plans need to be in place for dealing with children associated with armed forces and armed groups. Staff guidance must detail how the Force deals with such surrenders and provides the correct disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) / **disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration, and resettlement** (DDRRR) measures in conjunction with the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit. Any child surrender must be reported to the FHQ CPF and the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit.

Military observers. Provide information on the ground and report on the six grave violations against children that they witness, in line with the procedure set out in the reporting and information-sharing chart (annex B).

Military Police/Conduct and Discipline Unit. Provide investigation assistance where required or called upon by the child protection/gender and child protection officer/focal points or chain of command. Provide liaison throughout investigations and make recommendations accordingly.

6. REFERENCES

- DPKO-DFS-DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations (2017)
- UN Security Council resolution [XX – UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] mandate
- DPO-DPPA-DSS Standard Operating Procedure on the Handling of Detention by United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions (2020)
- *[UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] specific guidance relevant to this Directive may also be listed here (e.g., the Force CONOPS, mission-level standard operating procedures, etc.).*

7. IMPLEMENTATION

The military CPFs at each level of the chain of command shall be responsible for carrying out the functions specified in this Directive and for monitoring and reporting on its implementation.

Dissemination and training requirements

All branches of the [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force are to begin implementing this Directive upon receipt. All Sector (Brigade), Battalion and contingent commanders are to acknowledge receipt to [FHQ CHILD PROTECTION FOCAL POINT,@un.org] within 2 weeks.

The mission shall take all necessary measures to ensure that this Directive is disseminated and that appropriate training on the Directive is provided to all relevant incoming military personnel.

Quarterly reissue. In coordination with the Office of the Force Commander (FC) and Force Chief of Staff (FCOS), the Directive shall be re-issued on a quarterly basis to ensure that all Force rotations receive the Directive (see suggested distribution list). Under the authority of the Force Commander, the FHQ military CPF shall ensure that all subordinate commanders are fully informed and understand the need to ensure that the procedures set out in this Directive are observed.

Training. Under the authority of the Force Commander, the FHQ military CPF is responsible for ensuring that specific training on the Directive is regularly conducted within the military component of the mission. Commanders are responsible for ensuring that all

those under their authority or command have received sufficient training to understand and apply this Directive. A training session for military CPPFs will be held within one month of publication of this Directive, and every six months thereafter in FHQ [LOCATION]. Attendance is mandatory for all staff branches and military CPPFs from SHQ (BHQ); attendance is encouraged for military CPPFs from Battalion HQ and other subordinate units.

Evaluation and review requirements

This Directive will be evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis – ideally, every two years and each time there is a change in the Mission Concept and Force Concept of Operations (CONOPS) — to assess progress in its implementation, its effectiveness and any problems or gaps arising during its implementation, along with recommendations for addressing them.

At a minimum, the review should include:

- Qualitative survey, distributed to all Force members.
- Quantitative interviews with key stakeholders in the mission.
- Focus group discussion / scenario-based exercises.

8. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

In [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION], the implementation of this Directive is the responsibility of the FHQ CPPF under the authority of the Force Commander, in consultation with the Senior Child Protection Adviser and civilian Child Protection Section/Unit.

Compliance with this Directive is mandatory for all [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force personnel.

9. CONTACT

- Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point [GENERIC EMAIL ADDRESS]
- Child Protection Section/Unit at mission HQ [EMAIL ADDRESS]

(Name, signature)

Force Commander

[UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]

Suggested distribution

- DFC
- FCOS
- DCOS/OPS
- FHQ Section Chiefs
- Sector Commanders
- Sector HQs
- Contingent Commanders
- Relevant civilian components (to be determined by the mission)
- Etc.

ANNEX A: Key Definitions and Legal Principles

Definition of a child

A child is any person (boy or girl) under the age of 18. In cases where there is doubt whether an individual apprehended by UN personnel is below 18 years, a presumption of minority shall be applied, and he/she should be given all the special protections due to children until advised otherwise by the civilian [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Child Protection Section/Unit.

The six grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict

These violations must be reported immediately following the procedure outlined in the reporting and information-sharing chart (annex B).

Recruitment or use of children by armed forces or groups

A child associated with armed forces or groups (commonly referred to as “child soldiers”) refers to any person below 18 years of age who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children (boys and girls) used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies, or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken direct part in hostilities.

“Recruitment” refers to compulsory, forced or voluntary conscription or enlistment of children into any kind of armed force or armed group(s).

“Use of children” refers to the use of children by armed forces or armed groups in any capacity, including, but not limited to, children (boys and girls) used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or collaborators. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken direct part in hostilities.

Killing and maiming

Any action that results in the death of or serious injury to children (shelling, crossfire, landmines unexploded ordnances, suicide bomb, etc.).

“Killing” refers to any action in the context of the armed conflict that results in the death of one or more children. Killing is interchangeable with the term “causing death”.

“Maiming” refers to any action that causes a serious or permanent or disabling or scarring or mutilation injury to a child. This includes the (killing and) maiming of children as a result of direct targeting, crossfire, landmines, cluster munitions, improvised explosive devices or other indiscriminate explosive devices. Torture can also be reported under this category. Maiming is similar to mutilation, which is defined as the disfiguring or permanent disabling of a person by means such as removal of an organ or appendage that is not undertaken as a necessary medical procedure.

Sexual violence against children

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or acts to traffic a child’s sexuality. A violent act of a sexual nature committed against a child such as rape, other sexual violence, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced marriage/pregnancy, forced abortion, or enforced sterilization, etc. Sexual violence might be physical or psychological, such as sexual threats or sexual coercion or blackmail. Girls are especially vulnerable during wartime.

“Rape” refers to an act of non-consensual sexual intercourse. This can include the invasion of a body resulting in penetration, however light, of any part of the body of the victims or of the perpetrator with a sexual organ, and/or of the invasion of the genital or anal opening of the victim with any object or body part. Any penetration is considered rape. Efforts to rape someone, which do not result in penetration, are considered attempted rape.

“Sexual violence” refers to any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or acts to traffic a child’s sexuality. Sexual violence takes many forms, including rape, sexual slavery and/or trafficking, forced maternity, forced abortion, forced pregnancy, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and/or abuse. Sexual violence may also include physical assaults of a sexual nature such as fondling, forced nudity, sexual mutilations, as well as psychological attacks on sexual integrity such as threats of rape, sexual mutilation such as castration, sexual blackmail, or other psychological sexual abuse such as being forced to witness the sexual abuse of others, especially relatives or persons known to the child.

Abduction

The unlawful removal, seizure, capture, apprehension, taking or enforced disappearance of a child, either temporarily or permanently, for the purpose of any form of exploitation of the child. This includes, but is not limited to, recruitment in armed forces or groups, participation in hostilities, sexual exploitation or abuse, forced labor, hostage-taking, or indoctrination. If a child is recruited by force by an armed force or group, this is considered as two separate violations — abduction and recruitment.

Attacks against schools and hospitals

Physical attacks and threat of attacks on buildings (targeted/indiscriminate attacks); attacks or threats against school children, on personnel, doctors, nurses, or teachers (killing, maiming, harassment, coercion, abduction); looting and destruction of buildings. Attacks include the targeting of schools or medical facilities that cause the total or partial destruction of such facilities. Other interferences to the normal operation of the facility may also be reported, such as the occupation, shelling, targeting for propaganda of, or otherwise causing harm to schools or medical facilities or its personnel.

“School” denotes a recognizable education facility or learning site. Education facilities and learning sites must be recognized and known by the community as a learning space and marked by visible boundaries.

“Medical facilities” are places where the sick and wounded are collected and/or provided with health-care services.

Military use of schools. The military use of schools refers to a wide range of activities in which armed forces or armed groups use the physical space of a school in support of any military effort, whether temporarily or for a protracted period of time. The term includes but is not limited to the use of schools as military barracks, weapons and ammunition storage, command centres, defensive positioning, observation posts, firing positions, interrogation and detention centres, training facilities, and recruiting grounds. It also refers to schools that are in session and those temporarily or permanently closed or abandoned.

Denial of humanitarian access

Blocking free passage or timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to persons in need (including children); attacks against humanitarian workers; looting of humanitarian aid; denial of access for service delivery. The intentional deprivation of or impediment to the passage of humanitarian assistance indispensable to children's survival, by the parties to the conflict, including willfully impeding relief supplies as provided for under the Geneva Conventions; and significant impediments to the ability of humanitarian or other relevant actors to access and assist affected children, in situations of armed conflict. The denial should be considered in terms of children's access to assistance as well as humanitarian agencies' ability to access vulnerable populations, including children. There is a need to break down different types of constraints on access and their consequences into specific patterns, to address the restriction (e.g., it is insufficient to report that access is impeded by 'insecurity'; there are many different types of insecurity involving different actors with various purposes and motivations).

Legal Principles

This summary of legal principles is a guide to legal references for [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military personnel when implementing this Directive. Any questions or ambiguity must be referred to the Force LEGAD in the first instance.

Core Principles

Do No Harm

In all actions and decisions concerning children, all efforts shall be made to minimize possible negative effects and maximize possible benefits. It is the responsibility of those engaged with children to protect individuals from harm.

The 'best interest of the child'

As articulated under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 2017 DPKO-DFS-DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations, in all actions and decisions concerning children, the best interest of the child shall be the primary consideration to ensure that the action taken is the most appropriate and favorable to the protection, care, well-being and development of the child. Assessing the best interest of a child means evaluating and balancing all elements necessary to decide in a specific situation for a specified individual child or group of children.

Respect for the views of the child

A child who is capable of forming his/her own views must be afforded the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, with the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. For this purpose, the child shall be provided the opportunity to be heard in any proceedings affecting the child, either directly or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Non-discrimination

All children are equally entitled to all rights accorded to them under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international norms and standards on child protection. No child shall be discriminated based on nationality, race, ethnicity, language, gender, identity or sexual orientation, age, religion, physical abilities or any other characteristic.

Security and confidentiality

Due consideration must be given to the security of children who have suffered violations and their families, and of witnesses and other information providers. Individuals who provide information on violations and victims should be protected with anonymity in public reports and confidentiality in the interview process. Personnel shall limit all exchange of information exclusively to information on their identity, origin and health situation. Interviewing children shall not include any efforts to obtain information on the activities of the armed groups, no child shall be interrogated for intelligence purposes. Under no circumstances should photographs of a child's face be taken. His/her name must be kept strictly confidential and not placed in reports.

Presumption of minority

In the absence of evidence that a person is an adult, the general principle is that in case of doubt the presumption of minority is applicable and the person is considered a child.

Obligations under RoE and the mission mandate

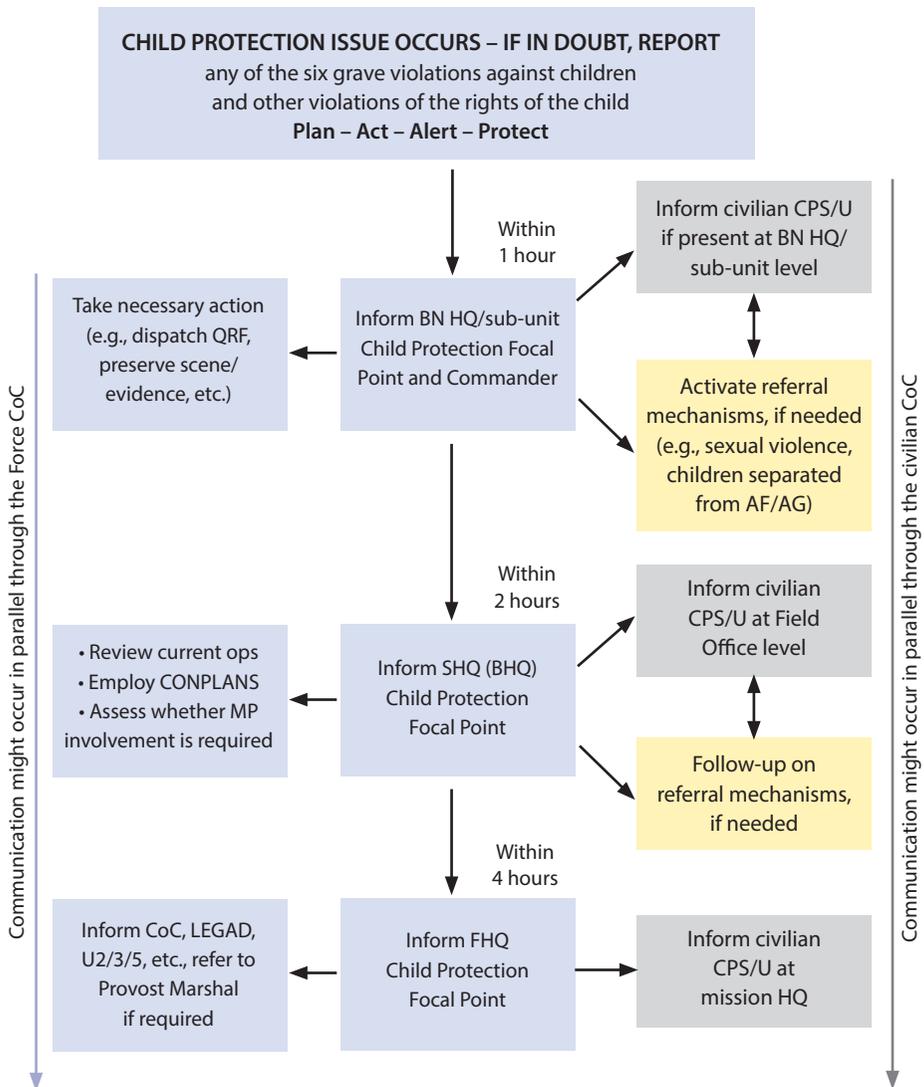
Pursuant to [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]'s RoE, all members of the military component are required to comply with international law, including the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC). This obligation is also found in [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] mandate and in ST/SGB/1999/13. The LOAC provides, inter alia, that during military operations:

- Children should not be the target of attacks.
- Children are entitled to special protection, care, and aid; and
- Children must be evacuated from besieged or encircled areas.

These three core principles must be complied with while planning and conducting military operations.

All members of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military component are required to promote and safeguard the rights of children throughout their work and in interactions with interlocutors, and to adhere to and abide by the highest international norms and standards reflected in the body of law and guidance on children's rights. UN personnel shall at all times refrain from causing any harm to children.

ANNEX B: Reporting and information-sharing chart regarding violations against children



DO

- Report violations against children ensuring confidentiality
- Gather sufficient info to inform chain of command
- Provide protection if asked/if needed
- Provide medical aid if asked/if needed
- Consult civilian CPS/U before handing over children

DON'T

- Turn anyone away
- Interview children (aside from gathering basic info)
- Separate children from parents/guardians
- Place children at risk
- Take photographs of children

ANNEX C: Early warning indicators

Please, refer to annex 9 in the DPO-DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations (2023), available in the Policy and Practice Database (<https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/sites/PPDB>).

ANNEX D: Protection of schools

Please, refer to annex 5b “Sample directive on the protection of schools and universities against military use”, DPO-DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations (2023), available in the Policy and Practice Database (<https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/sites/PPDB>).

ANNEX E: Child labor

Please, refer to annex 5c “Sample Force Commander’s Directive prohibiting child labor”, DPO-DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations (2023), available in the Policy and Practice Database (<https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/sites/PPDB>).

ANNEX F: Detention and surrender⁹⁸

- A child may only be detained as a last resort and for the shortest possible period of time, and in accordance with international norms and standards relating to the deprivation of child liberty. Where possible, priority should be given to alternatives to detention.
- Children associated with armed groups or involved in conflict-related violence shall be primarily treated as victims.
- In case of spontaneous demobilization of children from armed groups, the Force should directly refer to the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit.
- The Child Protection Adviser of the mission is responsible for supporting the Unit Commander, the Detention Focal Point, the Head of Mission, and senior mission leadership in relation to all aspects of detention of children.

Treatment of children at designated places of detention

- When placed in a designated place of detention, children must be separated from adult detainees, girls must be separated from boys, and children in contact with the law (i.e., victims, witnesses) shall be separated from children in conflict with the law (i.e., perpetrators). In cases where a child is detained with a member of his/her family, the family unity shall be preserved in separate facilities conducive for families, and the child shall not be separated, provided it is in his/her best interest.
- Detained children must be protected against any form of violence, abuse and/or neglect.

⁹⁸ See DPO-DPPA-DSS Standard Operating Procedure on the Handling of Detention by United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions (2020), Annex B “Special Considerations for Children in Relation to the Standard Operating Procedures on the Handling of Detention in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions”. The SOP governs the detention of all individuals by a mission, including children. Annex B contains specific considerations relating to the detention of children by a mission. The SOP sets out the procedures for the handling, questioning, search, transfer, handover and release of persons detained by missions, in circumstances where the use of force is authorized by the mission’s mandate and set out in the mission’s rules of engagement and directives on the use of force. Its purpose is to ensure that persons (including children) temporarily detained by UN personnel in field missions are handled in a manner consistent with applicable international norms and standards.

- Where possible, and with the child's consent, the child's parent(s) or other caregiver shall be notified as soon as possible regarding the child's presence at the designated UN facility, while arrangements should be made for regular visitation of and communication with the child.
- Detained children shall be monitored daily and provided with medical care and adequate treatment in accordance with their physical and psychological condition and specific health needs, to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay. Medical examinations shall be conducted with the consent of the child and, when possible, the child's parent or other caregiver, unless the examination is deemed medically necessary by qualified UN medical personnel.
- The questioning of a child must be conducted in a child-sensitive manner. Any questioning of a child beyond his/her identity, age, medical needs, and family whereabouts shall be conducted by the Child Protection Adviser/Focal Point or delegated Child Protection Officer.
- Children shall only be searched if there are grounds to suspect the possession of an object which may inflict injury to them or others. The searching of children shall only be done in a partial and sequential manner, by UN uniformed personnel of the same sex trained on child protection, and in the presence of a second person. Children must never be subjected to strip or body cavity searches.

Handover of children and risk assessment

- Children detained by UN mission personnel shall be handed over to host State child protection authorities or to humanitarian child protection actors for interim care, until such time as family reunification or other durable solution occurs. Every effort shall be made by the field mission to ensure that the handover of children takes place within 48 hours from the time of their initial apprehension.
- Special assurances from the host State authorities must be obtained prior to the handover of children to government child protection authorities. In addition to preparatory measures⁹⁹ and other measures¹⁰⁰ required prior to handing over an adult detained person, the mission shall seek guarantees that: (a) the child will not be subjected to judicial measures (alternatively, if the host State judicial authorities assert the prerogative to prosecute the child for the alleged commission of a crime, handover shall be conditional upon appropriate assurances from the host State authorities on the respect for international child-specific standards on fair trial and conditions for detention); and

99 Preparatory measures include: arrangements containing assurances from the host State authorities that regarding the treatment of detained persons (including children) handed over; unimpeded access to detention facilities for mission personnel and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); no transfer of detained persons (including children) to third parties without the prior consent of the mission and subject to the same assurances; agreement on the location(s) where detained persons (including children) will be handed over and the facilities where they will be held; information on the legal basis for depriving a person (including a child) of his/her liberty and on the procedural safeguards provided; designated representative(s) who will act as host-State focal point(s) to facilitate the implementation of handover procedures.

100 If a handover is necessary, before the handover of a detained person (including a child) can take place, the mission shall, ensure that the following measures have been taken: a risk assessment to inform the decision whether or not to hand over the detained person; obtain the agreement of the host-State authorities to accept custody of the detained person and on the location where the handover should take place; (if not previously obtained) obtain from the host-State authorities the assurances specified above; obtain from the host-State authorities a judicial or executive order or warrant required by the relevant national law for the continued detention of the person handed-over; obtain information on where the person handed-over will be kept.

(b) mission personnel, child protection actors and the International Committee of the Red Cross shall be provided unimpeded access to the facilities where the handed-over child is placed.

- A child shall not be handed over to any authority when there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of the child would, if handed over, be subjected to: arbitrary deprivation of life; torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; rape or other forms of sexual violence; threats to his/her life, physical integrity or freedom on account of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; imposition of the death penalty; enforced disappearance; refoulement (including secondary refoulement); grossly unfair proceedings; prolonged arbitrary detention; recruitment or re-recruitment for direct or indirect participation in hostilities; detention and/or prosecution by military authorities; prosecution for alleged association with an armed group; placement in detention without charge. A risk assessment must be conducted by the mission prior to the handover to assess the potential risk that a detained child may be subjected to treatment described above. The risk assessment should also determine whether the child should be temporarily relocated for protection reasons.
- If host State authorities are unable or unwilling to provide the required assurances, or if there is a real risk of the child being subjected to the treatment described above, the child should be handed over to humanitarian child protection actors that are willing and able to provide alternative interim care without prejudice to the safety, security, and rights of the child.

ANNEX 5b: Sample Directive on the Protection of Schools and Universities Against Military Use

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

(Date)

To: Name, Force Commander
Name, Police Commissioner

From: Name, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (signature)

Subject: [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] directive on the protection of schools and universities against military use

Purpose:

1. These guidelines aim at preventing the use of schools and universities by [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force and Police and to minimize the impact of armed conflict on the security and education of children.

General principles

2. Schools have to be havens of peace, where children are protected even in times of armed conflict. They are, however, often attacked or used for military purposes by parties to the conflict in [COUNTRY], to the detriment of children.
3. [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force and Police are requested not to use schools for any purpose. All [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military and police personnel should avoid encroaching on the security and education of children by using the following guidelines as good practice.
4. Schools and universities that are operational should never be used in any way. This applies to schools and universities that are closed after school hours, during weekends and holidays and during vacation periods.
5. Abandoned schools and university buildings which are occupied or used by [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force and Police should be liberated without delay in order to allow educational authorities to reopen them as soon as possible. All signs of militarization or fortification of such buildings or structures should be completely removed after the withdrawal and any damage caused to the institution should be repaired quickly before handover to the authorities, to allow the return to educational use.
6. All ammunitions, unexploded ordinance or war debris should be cleared from the site.
7. The use of a school or university by a party to a conflict is not permitted and cannot provide grounds for continuation of such use.

8. Military and police personnel tasked to secure schools or universities should avoid, wherever possible, entering the school premises or buildings in order not to compromise their civilian status.
9. The Force Commander and the Police Commissioner are requested to ensure the implementation and wide dissemination of this directive.

Definition of terms:

“Schools and universities”

This denotes places used principally for the purpose of education. It comprises kindergartens or nursery schools, primary and secondary schools, vocational training centres and higher education institutions including universities, colleges and technical training schools. It also includes all property and grounds that belongs to these institutions.

It does not, however, include institutions that are dedicated to military training and education.

“Use”

This signifies any activity conducted within the physical space or premises of a school or a university in support of military efforts, be it temporarily or for a longer term. It includes, but is not limited to, the following: as a military barracks or base; for offensive or defensive positioning; for the stocking of arms and ammunitions; for interrogation and detention; for military training; as an observation post; as a firing or fire-control position. It does not include situations where the force and the police are present in proximity to schools and universities to provide protection to the school or ensure security.

References:

- Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual* (2012), (Section 2.13, page 26);
- Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, *Draft Lucens Guidelines on the Protection of Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* (2013).
- Security Council resolutions 1998 (2011) and 2143 (2014).

ANNEX 5c: Sample Force Commander's Directive Prohibiting Child Labour

[UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] FORCE COMMANDER CIRCULAR ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2017 DPKO-DFS-DPA POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION IN UN PEACE OPERATIONS REGARDING THE PROHIBITION OF CHILD LABOUR IN UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

To: All Sector Commanders
All Staff Officers
All Military Observers

From: Name, Force Commander

Subject: Force Commander's directive prohibiting child labor

Reference: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support and Department of Political Affairs Policy on Child Protection in UN Peace Operations regarding the Prohibition of Child Labor in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

Aim: The aim of this directive is to ensure that no child works for a battalion or for any soldier of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force and to contribute to the full protection of children from all forms of exploitation.

Definition: A child is any person under the age of 18 years.

2. Child labor is a violation of fundamental human rights. In response to several reported cases of use of child labor in different peacekeeping operations, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Department of Field Support (DFS), and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) adopted a policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations, which includes provisions on the prohibition of child labor in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations aimed at ensuring that personnel of peacekeeping missions abide by international norms on child labor.
2. Child labor means work that is judged dangerous for the physical and mental development of a child (persons below 18 years). It includes all work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children; interferes with their education by depriving them of the possibility to go to school, making them abandon school prematurely and working for long hours.
3. Consistent with the 2017 DPKO-DFS-DPA Policy mentioned above, I demand that all [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military personnel adhere to the following instructions:
 - a) Refrain from using child labor: any work or provision of services — including but not limited to washing vehicles, polishing shoes, running errands, working as domestic servants or security guards — by a person under the age of 18 years irrespective of duration, frequency, compensation, or the nature of the underlying agreement.

- b) Do not allow or authorize children on United Nations premises, camps, or facilities for the purpose of the provision of labor or the rendering of services.
 - c) Take all non-coercive measures including the use of access cards and control of identities to ensure that unaccompanied children do not enter [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] premises, camps, and facilities to work or procure services.
 - d) Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
4. Compliance to this circular is mandatory: all staff officers, Sector Commanders and Military Observers must take all necessary measures to ensure that persons working under their commands are informed and abide by it.

Enforcement: Besides the responsibility of Commanders to ensure compliance to this circular, the military police (UN and contingents), shall regularly conduct patrols and adopt other measures to ensure abidance with the provision of this directive.

[UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATION], Force Commander

(Signature, date)

ANNEX 6: Draft UNICEF Checklist for Age Assessment

Checklist

It is important to recognize that the assessment of age is not an exact science. It is a process within which there will always be an inherent margin of error and a child's exact age cannot be established through medical or other physical examinations. However, there are situations where it is deemed that an age assessment process is necessary and, in those instances, the following guidelines should be upheld.

Assessments of age undertaken in the field usually consider the child's:

- Presentation and demeanor at interview
- Account of their history
- Growth, physical or sexual development
- Mental and cognitive development
- Emotional and 'abstract' thought development.

The Child Focal Points will always ensure that the following practices are adhered to during the age assessment process

| STAGES | NARRATIVE | PRACTICE CHECKLIST |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Pre-procedure | <p>Ensure that the age assessment is being undertaken because relevant actors have <i>serious</i> doubts about the stated age of the child; ensure that the assessment is not being initiated as a routine or standard procedure.</p> <p>Is the procedure really necessary?</p> | <p><i>Indicators</i></p> <p>Q. Have the factors that may indicate that the child's age is inconsistent with that which is stated been given full consideration?</p> <p>Q. Have cultural, environmental, developmental, and physical factors been properly considered?</p> <p>Q. Have attempts been made to gather a picture of the child's individual circumstances and compile a social history and have these been fully considered?</p> <p>Q. Has more than one person expressed serious doubt about the child's age? Has there been due, measured, and objective consideration of whether there is any possible doubt that the stated age is correct?</p> <p>Q. Has the decision to submit the child to an age assessment procedure been approved by a senior official?</p> |

| STAGES | NARRATIVE | PRACTICE CHECKLIST |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <p>Principle of Necessity</p> | <p>Ensure that a plan to undertake a physical examination is a measure of last resort taking place because other attempts e.g., the gathering of documentary evidence, interviewing the child, etc., have failed to establish age.</p> <p>Is a physical examination the only method of assessing age?</p> | <p>Indicators</p> <p>Q. Have all alternative avenues to establish the child's age been fully explored?</p> <p>Q. Has the child been given an opportunity to respond to any doubts on the age stated by the child?</p> <p>Q. Could others involved in the child's life, a teacher, community elder etc. offer an indication of age?</p> <p>Q. Has documentary evidence — current and historical, country of origin, been robustly sought and considered?</p> <p>Q. Have 'structural' factors been given due consideration, for example the use of different calendars in some countries such as in Ethiopia where a 13-month year can lead to confusion in relation to a child's stated age?</p> <p>Q. If documentary evidence is not accepted, has the child been informed of the reasons why and allowed to respond and provide other evidence if possible?</p> <p>Q. Can others collaboration of anecdotal evidence or is there circumstantial collaboration?</p> <p>Q. Has an accurate social history been compiled and considered?</p> <p>Q. Has consideration been given to 'family positioning', cyclical events or other similar factors?</p> |
| <p>Consent and Assent</p> | <p>Ensure that informed consent to undertake the age assessment has been secured from the child or the guardian. It is extremely unlikely that genuine informed consent can be forthcoming at a time of 'crisis' and consent should only be sought when a child has had time to recover from traumatic or unsettling episodes – this may take considerable time in some instances. In circumstances where there is no consent, it cannot be used against the person and the person should be considered a child.</p> <p>Has the child given informed consent to a physical examination?</p> | <p>Indicators</p> <p>Q. Has there been an assessment of any trauma the child may be experiencing - has it been ascertained that the child is in a state of wellbeing sufficient so that they can give informed consent?</p> <p>Q. Has the child agreed to the age assessment?</p> <p>Q. Has specific consent been secured for a physical examination where this will be part of the age assessment?</p> <p>Q. Is it clear that the child has not been coerced, incentivized, or threatened into agreeing to the assessment?</p> <p>Q. Has the procedure and implications of the outcome been explained to the child?</p> <p>Q. Does the child understand what will happen — if appropriate have special communication aids been used?</p> <p>Q. Has the procedure been demonstrated to the child if necessary?</p> <p>Q. If the child has not consented has it been accepted that there will be no age assessment and/or physical examination and have guarantees been sought and secured that this will not influence the perception of the child's age?</p> |

| STAGES | NARRATIVE | PRACTICE CHECKLIST |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| During the Procedure | <p>Ensure that the age assessment procedure is multi-disciplinary and that it draws on a range of appropriately skilled professionals; ensure the assessment does not rely solely on a physical examination.</p> <p>Is a range of approaches being used in the age assessment?</p> | <p>Indicators</p> <p>Q. Are a varied range of relevant professionals contributing to the assessment, for example, social worker, child psychologist, teacher, or other educational professionals?</p> <p>Q. Are these professionals qualified in their field and are they experienced in their work?</p> <p>Q. Are the questions that are put to the child open-ended as opposed to leading?</p> <p>Q. Have other sources contributed to the assessment (see above)?</p> <p>Q. Have others been consulted, for example those who know the child, relatives, cultural mediators where appropriate?</p> <p>Q. Have 'second opinions' been sought if appropriate?</p> |
| Doing the Right thing, right | <p>Ensure that the professionals undertaking the age assessment have no vested interest and are independent from the agencies and actors that would provide services or support to the child or would in some other way acquire responsibility for the child if they are assessed as being a child; Are the professionals engaged in the assessment independent?</p> | <p>Indicators</p> <p>Q. Who employs the practitioners undertaking the assessment (Social workers, police officers, medical doctors) – are they independent from potential or actual services providers to the child?</p> <p>Q. Are the practitioners bound by a professional or ethical code that guides their work?</p> <p>Q. Have any other potential or actual conflicts of interest been considered and addressed?</p> <p>Q. Is it clear that the practitioners do not hold personal opinions that could unduly influence their assessment?</p> |
| Support System | <p>Ensure that, subject to their wishes, the child is supported and informed in a language it understands by a legal representative or guardian or other representative of their choice throughout the entire age assessment process. Is the child supported throughout the procedure?</p> | <p>Indicators</p> <p>Q. Who employs the practitioners undertaking the assessment (social workers, police officers, medical doctors) — are they independent from potential or actual service providers?</p> <p>Q. Is the mandate of the guardian clear and accepted by all — can they stop the assessment if they feel it is abusive or inappropriate in some other way?</p> <p>Q. Has the child received legal advice in preparing for the assessment and will they have legal advice in response to the outcome of the assessment?</p> |

| STAGES | NARRATIVE | PRACTICE CHECKLIST |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Gender Consideration and cultural sensitivities — Is the assessment sensitive to cultural and gender needs?</p> | <p>Ensure that the age assessment is culturally and gender sensitive and that the practitioners undertaking the assessment are fully familiar with the child's cultural and ethnic background.</p> | <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q. Has the child's opinion about the gender of the practitioners undertaking the assessment been sought and respected? Q. Do the practitioners understand the child's culture and ethnicity? Q. Can the practitioners and the child communicate directly in a shared language? Q. If necessary is a trained interpreter available who has been briefed about the assessment process? Q. Do the practitioners have an understanding of the culture and ethnicity of the child and can they apply this within the context of an age assessment? |
| <p>Confidentiality and non-intrusiveness</p> | <p>Ensure that there is no infringement of the child's dignity. Ensure the age assessment is undertaken in an environment that is safe for children and which supports their needs and is child appropriate.</p> | <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q. Are the practitioners trained in recognizing and responding to the abuse of children? Q. Is a chaperone present during physical examinations (note a girl must always have a female chaperone)? Q. Is the environment child friendly — for example, a quiet area free from adults possibly with toys, books, and magazines as appropriate? Q. Are children offered food and drink and allowed toilet and other breaks? Q. Is it a confidential environment (e.g., separate room) |
| <p>Post procedure</p> | <p>Ensure that services and support relevant to the outcome of the assessment are provided to the child without delay</p> | <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q. Is the outcome of the assessment accepted by all the relevant stakeholders in an objective manner? Q. Are immediate changes made to provision where required, for example the release or transfer of a child held in an adult detention facility? Q. Are relevant child appropriate referrals made as appropriate? Q. Are these referrals made promptly? Q. Is paperwork issued recognizing, confirming, or changing age status? Q. Does subsequent document outline that age is 'assumed'? |

| STAGES | NARRATIVE | PRACTICE CHECKLIST |
|--|--|--|
| Cases of DOUBT | Where, following the age assessment procedure, doubt remains about the age of the child ensure that this is applied to the advantage of the child. | <p>Indicators</p> <p>Q. Do all the relevant stakeholders accept in an objective manner the outcome of the assessment?</p> <p>Q. Do these stakeholders agree to treat the individual as if she/he is a child with due consideration of maturity?</p> <p>Q. Are immediate changes made to provision where required, for example the release or transfer of a child held in an adult detention facility?</p> <p>Q. Are relevant child appropriate referrals made as appropriate?</p> <p>Q. Are these referrals made promptly?</p> <p>Q. Is paperwork issued recognizing, confirming, or changing age status?</p> <p>Q. Does subsequent document outline that age is 'assumed'?</p> |
| The right to know and be informed | Ensure the outcome and the consequences of the outcome are explained to the child as promptly as is reasonably practical. | <p>Indicators</p> <p>Q. Is the outcome and consequences of the assessment explained to the child in a language and in a manner they understand using age appropriate or specialist forms of communication where necessary?</p> <p>Q. Are guarantees secured that the child understands the outcome and consequences of the assessment?</p> <p>Q. Is the outcome and consequences including any practical arrangements or changes to the child's situation given to the child in writing?</p> |
| The Right of Child to challenge the decision | Ensure that where appropriate the child is able to challenge a decision, which they disagree with. | <p>Indicators</p> <p>Q. Has the child been informed that they can submit new information at any time in the future and that, following this, a new assessment could be triggered?</p> <p>Q. Is there a right of appeal against the outcome?</p> <p>Q. Is the child aware of their appeal rights?</p> <p>Q. Does the child have a legal representative to assist them with their appeal and advise them about submitting new information?</p> <p>Q. Is the appeal procedure available to the child at no cost to them?</p> |

ANNEX 7: Sample Protocol for the Handover of Children in Custody Owing to Their Association with Armed Forces or Armed Groups

Protocol for the Handover of Children in Custody owing to their Association with Armed Forces or Armed Groups

Between

[GOVERNMENT]

And

[UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TASK FORCE ON MONITORING AND REPORTING]

Preamble

Noting the ratification by [GOVERNMENT] of relevant international legal instruments relating to the rights and protection of children, including:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000)
- The Geneva Conventions (1949) and the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions (1977)
- The ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and its Recommendation No. 190 (1999)
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998)

Also *noting* the endorsement by [GOVERNMENT] of the Paris Principles on the Protection of Children from Unlawful Recruitment and Use of Children by Armed Forces or Armed Groups (2007);

Underlining the primary responsibility of [GOVERNMENT] to fulfil, protect and promote the rights of all children affected by armed conflict, including children recruited and used and/or abducted by armed groups, and to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of children into their communities.

Reaffirming the commitment of [GOVERNMENT] to ensure the protection of children under the age of 18 years who escaped from armed groups, were released from armed groups, surrendered from armed groups, or were captured during military operations, and find themselves in the custody¹⁰¹ of [ARMED FORCES];

Stressing that the welfare and best interests of children encountered in the course of military operations shall be prioritized at all times and the necessary attention and resources shall be provided in order to enable immediate care, including basic medical, food and psychosocial needs.

It is directed as follows:

Children in custody refers to both boys and girls under the age of 18, who come into contact with military forces after having escaped, surrendered or been released from armed groups, or having been captured during military operations, and find themselves in the custody of the armed forces.

¹⁰¹ Children in custody refers to both boys and girls under the age of 18, who come into contact with military forces after having escaped, surrendered or been released from armed groups, or having been captured during military operations, and find themselves in the custody of the armed forces.

Directive 1 – Appointment of focal points

[GOVERNMENT CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY] shall appoint national-level and local-level focal points within for the implementation of the Protocol. [GOVERNMENT CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY] shall make available a dedicated hotline number to be notified of any presence of children in the custody of [ARMED FORCES]. The military commander of [ARMED FORCES] shall disseminate the hotline number to all commanding officers through a military order.

Directive 2 – Notification of presence of children in military custody

Commanding officers shall immediately alert [GOVERNMENT CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY] focal point of the presence of children in the custody of [THE ARMED FORCES], regardless of their nationality or current location, and in any case no later than 12 hours after first contact. The commanding officer shall ensure that children are immediately separated from adults, and boys from girls. If and when possible, efforts should be made to preserve family unity, providing it is in the children's best interest.

Directive 3 – Time frame for handover/access by child protection actors

The commanding officer shall facilitate the handover of children in the custody of [ARMED FORCES] to [GOVERNMENT CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY] in the shortest time possible and in any case no later than 72 hours after first contact. The commanding officer shall ensure that relevant child protection actors, including [GOVERNMENT CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY], the UN Child Protection Adviser, UNICEF, and the ICRC, have full and unimpeded access to children while in custody of [ARMED FORCES].

Directive 4 – Treatment while in military custody

Children in the custody of [ARMED FORCES] shall be treated humanely and in a manner consistent with the special status, needs and rights of children. The commanding officer shall ensure that:

- Children are provided with basic care, including food and non-food items, appropriate and safe shelter, and urgent medical care as needed, and shall be protected from any form of violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation while in custody.
- Children are asked only about their name, age, place of usual residence, family whereabouts and medical needs. No information shall be collected for the purpose of intelligence gathering. Further interviewing of a child should only be done by civilian personnel sensitized on child protection.
- Children's privacy is respected with a view to avoiding stigmatization or other harm owing to undue publicity or the process of labelling. No information that could lead to the identification of the child shall be made public; photos shall only be taken for the purpose of restoring family links.

Directive 5 – Cross-border arrangements

For children encountered outside their country of origin, the same handover process and set of principles shall be utilized. Once handed over from military authorities to civilian child protection actors in-country, [GOVERNMENT CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY] shall work with its child protection counterparts in the other country concerned, in collaboration with other relevant child protection actors, with the aim of cross-border repatriation, interim care and family reunification or other durable solution.

Directive 6 – Preparedness, implementation and compliance

[[GOVERNMENT] shall undertake a number of preparedness, implementation and compliance measures:

- Appoint a senior focal point within [ARMED FORCES] and [GOVERNMENT CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY] to oversee the implementation of the Protocol and to act as an interface with the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR);
- Disseminate the contents of the Protocol to all commanding officers and relevant Government officials involved in the practical implementation of the Protocol through a military order and political directive.
- Design a detailed operational plan guiding the implementation of the Protocol, outlining roles and responsibilities for commanding officers and relevant Government officials.
- Share regular compliance reports on the implementation of the Protocol with the CTFMR and inform the CTFMR of the number of children in military custody, disaggregated by age, sex and status of the child.

Terms and conditions

[ARMED FORCES] and [GOVERNMENT CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY] agree by the terms and conditions of the present Protocol with the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting. The Protocol will enter into force on the date of signing below and the duration will remain open-ended. Its contents may be revised and amended upon written agreement of all signatories. All issues of interpretation of provisions included in the present Protocol will be resolved amicably or, if needed, through diplomatic means.

Signed on [xx.xx.xxxx] in [xxxxxx]

SIGNATORY [MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS/DEFENCE]

SIGNATORY [GOVERNMENT CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY]

SIGNATORY [SRSG or RC]

SIGNATORY [UNICEF]

ANNEX 8: Sample Memorandum of Understanding Between UNICEF and [United Nations Peace Operations] on Co-Management of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

I. Purpose

1. In [COUNTRY], UNICEF and [UN PEACE OPERATION] have been the co-managers at principal and technical level of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children since the UN Country Task Force was established in [YEAR].

2. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish well-defined roles and responsibilities for the co-management of the MRM in [COUNTRY] at technical level, in order to avoid room for unilateral interpretations or misunderstandings, and to mitigate tensions and potential conflict that could negatively impact the UN's capacity and credibility to deliver on the MRM.

II. Scope

3. This MOU applies to the technical level co-managers of the MRM in [COUNTRY] (the UNICEF and [UN PEACE OPERATION] Chiefs of Child Protection), as well as to staff from both organizations in relation to the MRM, known hereinafter as "the parties".

III. Guiding principles

4. This MOU is guided by the following principles:

- a) Best interest of the child. In all actions concerning children, the best interest of the child will be a primary consideration. This applies to decisions regarding a specified individual child or group of children.
- b) Collaborative approach. The parties will work together in support of a common purpose: the smooth and effective functioning of the MRM. This includes sharing information and consulting each other regularly, in order to foster trust-building between the parties.
- c) Transparency and presumption of good faith. The parties will proceed with transparency in all their interactions. In case of uncertainty on the transparency of one party, it will be presumed that the party acted in good faith.
- d) Flexibility for conflict resolution. The parties will resolve differences as soon as they arise. This includes seeking common ground and being flexible in cases of disagreements. The best interest of the child and the smooth functioning of the MRM will be guiding criteria in solving disagreements.

IV. Engagement with external partners

5. As part of their responsibilities as co-managers of the MRM, the parties engage regularly with external partners, including national authorities (civilian and military), other UN bodies, international humanitarian and child protection actors, national NGOs and civil society organizations, diplomatic missions, and donor organizations.

6. When engaging with external partners in relation to the MRM, the parties agree to:

- a. Speak with one voice. This means conveying mutually agreed messages and not providing conflicting or contradictory information.
- b. Resolve technical disagreements internally. This means not airing the disagreements in public or involving external partners in their resolution.
- c. Use commonly agreed presentations related to the MRM in both bilateral and joint meetings with external partners.

7. The UNICEF and [UN PEACE OPERATION] Chiefs of Child Protection both agree to attend MRM-related strategic meetings that require senior-level representation at technical level.

V. Information-sharing

8. Information-sharing is at the heart of MRM coordination. The parties agree to adopt a proactive approach to information-sharing. This means not waiting for information to arrive or to be requested, but rather asking for and sharing information proactively, especially in cases where one party has knowledge that the other party has the information.

9. The parties agree to share all MRM-related documentation and information in a timely manner and continually, including reports (evaluation, thematic, situation), data on allegations, workplans and communications with the SRSR CAAC. When in doubt about whether information is MRM-related, the parties agree to err on the side of coordination and transparency and share it.

10. The parties agree to share all MRM-related correspondence addressed to government representatives before sending it. This will ensure they are speaking with one voice and allow the parties to coordinate follow-up messages and response

VI. Coordination

11. The parties agree to discuss MRM-related activities, whether for capacity-building, communication, advocacy, or response, before carrying them out individually. These include, but are not limited to:

- a. Public events or campaigns.
- b. Programmatic actions.
- c. Dialogue with armed groups for the purposes of releasing children from their ranks and preventing grave violations.
- d. Press releases or official statements on grave violations committed against children by parties to conflict.
- e. Training of external partners on the MRM.
- f. Use of MRM data for unilateral advocacy.
- g. When in doubt about whether certain actions are MRM-related, the parties agree to err on the side of coordination and discuss them.

12. The UNICEF and [UN PEACE OPERATION] Chiefs of Child Protection agree to hold regular bilateral meetings on a monthly basis to review and resolve any MRM-related issues, including problems on technical issues such as data collection and information management, as well as strategic issues related to advocacy, response and the work of the United Nations Country Task Force. This will allow the parties to be more effective in leading staff on the MRM and in sharing responsibilities as co-managers of the MRM.

13. The parties agree to share their responsibilities to co-chair MRM-related working groups on a rotational basis. This includes the United Nations Country Task Force, the Joint Technical Working Group (the government forum in charge of implementing the MRM Action Plan) and the Group of Friends on CAAC (a network of diplomatic missions which advocates on children and armed conflict issues). This agreement includes producing a calendar of meetings with clear assignments on co-chairing and the timely production of minutes or meeting notes. The parties agree to review and sign off on minutes or meeting notes together before sharing them with the relevant working group.

14. The parties agree to facilitate information-sharing between the United Nations Country Task Force and the Joint Technical Working Group, to foster government ownership of monitoring and responses on grave violations.

15. The parties agree to engage with the principal-level co-chairs of the United Nations Country Task Force on a regular basis, to keep them duly informed of progress and challenges in the co-management of the MRM in [COUNTRY], and to ensure their continued commitment to the revival of the MRM in [COUNTRY].

VII. Division and sharing of tasks

Engagement with authorities and parties to conflict

16. When engaging with government authorities in relation to the MRM, the parties agree to a division of interlocutors made in relation to each party's mandate and comparative advantage, as follows (examples are not exhaustive):

- a. UNICEF to engage with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health on attacks against schools or hospitals, and with the Ministry of Social Affairs on reintegration of children associated with armed forces or armed groups.
- b. [UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATION] to engage with military prosecutors and judges on the fight against impunity for perpetrators of grave violations against children.
- c. UNICEF and [UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATION] to engage jointly with the Ministry of Defence and [ARMED FORCE] authorities on the implementation of the MRM Action Plan.

Information management

17. Information management includes management of an MRM database. The parties agree to implement a shared information management system or database for the MRM in [COUNTRY]. This will require joint consultations with UNICEF, DPO, DPPA, OHCHR and OSRSG-CAAC in New York.

18. The parties agree that the implementation of a shared database for the MRM in [COUNTRY] will mean equal, unlimited, and permanent access to the database by both parties, joint management of the MRM data stored therein, and joint responsibility for the security of that data. Having equal access to a shared database will help the parties execute other shared responsibilities such as production of analysis on trends and production of MRM reporting requirements.

Data collection and verification

19. The parties are equally responsible for data collection and verification of allegations on grave violations. They will divide data collection and verification responsibilities according to their geographical presence and capacities.

20. The parties agree to use the same standards and procedures for MRM data collection and verification, including the use of a harmonized MRM incident form. This will provide them with a more solid basis on which to meet MRM reporting requirements and data analysis for other purposes.

21. The parties agree to apply agreed procedures for age assessment and for separation of children associated with armed forces or armed groups.

Response

22. The MRM Action Plan signed by the Government of [COUNTRY] includes four pillars: the separation of children from armed forces or armed groups, prevention, response, and the fight against impunity. As co-managers of the MRM, the parties agree to divide the focus of their work on the Action Plan along these four pillars, based on their institutional mandates and comparative advantages, as follows:

- a. [UN PEACE OPERATION] to work on the separation of children and the fight against impunity.
- b. UNICEF to work on prevention and response.

However, the parties will work together on engagement with armed groups as part of the recommended overall shift in focus of the MRM in [COUNTRY].

Capacity-building

23. The parties agree to develop and implement a joint capacity-building plan on the MRM in order to retain a critical mass of trained UN staff and partners on MRM data collection and verification.

Reporting

24. MRM reporting requirements include the Global Horizontal Note (GHN) quarterly reports for the Security Council, the [COUNTRY] contribution to the Secretary-General’s Annual Report on CAAC, and the country-specific reports on CAAC issues in [COUNTRY] submitted every two to three years. The parties agree to share MRM reporting requirements as follows:

- a. Prepare the GHNs on a rotational basis.
- b. Joint preparation of the [COUNTRY] contribution to the Secretary-General’s Annual Reports on CAAC and of the country-specific reports on CAAC. This means dividing the various sections of the reports between the parties.
- c. Development of a checklist on clear sign-off procedures for all reporting requirements.

VIII. Entry into force

25. This MOU is binding on the parties and will become effective immediately upon signature by both parties.

26. The parties agree to revise this MOU once a year starting from the date of signature.

| For UNICEF: | For MISSION X: |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| Chief of Child Protection | Chief of Child Protection |
| UNICEF | [UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATION] |
| Date: | Date: |

ANNEX 9: Early Warning Indicators of the Six Grave Violations Against Children

All grave violations against children

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| Structural indicators ¹⁰² | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Pervasive armed conflict or re-escalation of hostilities/cross border insecurity/no-go areas■ Presence of armed groups in areas/regions where communities (and children) live■ History of recruitment and use of children and other grave violations (and level of commitment to stop them) attributed to specific armed forces/groups■ External support and/or sponsorship of armed groups likely to influence armed groups support to communities as well as decisions on (and need for) forced recruitment of children■ Presence of refugees and/or internally displaced persons (IDPs), including unaccompanied or separated children■ Patterns of discrimination (e.g., based on a child's gender and/or other identity-based characteristics, including ethnicity, race, religion, economic status, sexual orientation, etc.).■ Trafficking of natural resources■ Exploitation of lootable and/or non-lootable natural resources profiting parties to the conflict and influencing duration of conflict and decisions to use children for forced child labor■ Embargos, targeted sanctions, or humanitarian blockades preventing provision of essential goods or relief items/donors conditionalities for funding (as a result of sanctions)■ Mobility and infrastructure (limited road and energy infrastructure, vast and diverse geography, and limited air assets)■ Intercommunal clashes/grievances (land, indigenous, water, herds, hunting) and natural disasters fueling conflict■ Host state strategy, willingness, and capacity to prevent grave violations against children■ Consent of the government, which can lead to political and operational implications for the child protection mandate■ Accountability mechanisms and measures taken against perpetrators of grave violations against children■ Level of civic space for children and youth/national and community-based civil society organizations relevant for the prevention of grave violations |
|---|--|

102 Structural indicators are key 'readers' of the mission context and conflict background, including on causes of the crisis. They enable UN personnel, prior or in the execution of their tasks, to verify macro-level conditions and patterns potentially impacting on the rights of children. Structural indicators may include international commitments and obligations as well as focus, monitorability and timelines of national policies and institutional arrangements for i.e., the respect and fulfilment of children's rights, the use of force and other key rule of law issues; national action plans against recruitment; socio-economic data predicting conflict events; consent of the government; local resource based economy relying on child labour; trafficking of natural resources; diversity and multiplicity of armed actors, including their military capacity, level of organization, modus operandi, aims and funding; capacity of national security forces and administrative institutions; mobility and infrastructures; presence of non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations involved in community engagement, child protection and humanitarian assistance.

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| <p>Structural indicators <i>continued</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Host state ratification/reporting/ domestication and implementation of humanitarian principles and relevant treaty obligations and commitments to additional standards¹⁰³ |
| <p>Process/outcomes indicators¹⁰⁴</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child-focused and gender-sensitive legislation, policies, and measures (administrative and judicial) are adopted, implemented, and monitored to prevent and criminalize child rights' violations ■ Action plans to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children as well as sexual violence against children by parties to conflicts adopted, regularly monitored, and updated ■ Child-focused and gender-sensitive data and tools relevant for the prevention of grave violations against children are incorporated in national development strategies, ministerial appointments and strategies, national security protocols, parliamentary committees, and child protection codes ■ Multisectoral reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups within the wider children community, support to family resilience and fight against stigma and discrimination ■ Child-focused and gender-sensitive policy, training, and accountability measures for the prevention of grave violations against children (guidance, orders, complaints mechanisms, arrests, convictions) targeting armed forces and armed groups are adopted, implemented, and monitored ■ Regular training, advice and support for security forces provided in coordination with relevant UN components in line with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces (HRDDP) ■ Armed forces and armed groups establish child protection units and/or child protection focal points ■ Implementation of child and gender-sensitive legal systems, community services and civil society programs (healthcare, education, sport, leisure activities, recreation, and dialogue for children) ■ Safety and security provided in and around IDP/refugee camps ■ Local early warning mechanisms, including Community Alert Networks (CANs) and protection and peace committees, rely on participation of communities, parents, teachers, women, and children |

103 The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, the International Labour Organization Convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Paris Principles, the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military use during Armed Conflict as well as other relevant international law and standards such as the Arms Trade Treaty (and specifically art.7 (4)) and the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.

104 Process or outcome indicators enable UN personnel to verify efforts (process) and effects and results (outcomes) of measures taken by national actors for the prevention of grave violations, including those they are directly mandated to influence e.g., national armed forces, armed groups, national law enforcement agencies as well as political and local leaders (i.e., reported cases of children under threats; measures enhancing school participation; budget allocations).

| | |
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| <p>Process/outcomes indicators <i>continued</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Measures are taken to prevent intimidation and reprisals against children and community members ■ Measures are taken to prevent intimidation, retaliation and attacks against human rights defenders, child rights advocates and local stakeholders engaging with the United Nations ■ Mission resources allocated for addressing child protection threats, including number of troops, mobility assets and specialized child protection expertise at HQ, sector, and unit level. |
| <p>Warning signs¹⁰⁵ (Common to all six grave violations)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Military operations, training operations, search-and-arrest campaigns, and incursions in local communities by armed forces or groups ■ Presence/operations of mercenaries and/or private military contractors ■ Presence of improvised fighting vehicles or motorcycles in villages and communities ■ Retaliatory behaviors against the civilian population for actual or perceived support to and collaboration with opponent groups ■ Arrests and detention of activists or ‘perceived collaborators’, including children, during protest or other events or more broadly for national security reasons or for actual or alleged association with groups designated as terrorist groups ■ Movements, checkpoints, and procedures likely to directly target or indirectly impact upon hospitals and access to humanitarian aid ■ Incursions by parties to the conflict in or around IDP and refugee camps where children, including separated and unaccompanied children, can become target of discrimination (e.g., ethnic, religious, racial, tribal) or perceived as sympathizers of a particular party to the conflict or political group or as a potential source of insecurity¹⁰⁶ ■ Children living in proximity to conflict zones, near military objectives, in military camps or in their vicinity ■ Cross-border incidents, including exchanges of fire and incursions ■ Intercommunal clashes/grievances (land, indigenous, water, herds, hunting) ■ Hate speech and incitement to discrimination (including based on race, religion, or gender) ■ Political violence, including election-related violence (e.g., political gatherings and rallies turning violent, excessive use of force by security forces in responding to protests, assassination of leaders, political orchestrations raising dissatisfaction and incitement to violence, etc.) |

105 Warning signs can include indications of occurrences, behaviours, and specific situations specifically observable at the operational and tactical level and enable UN personnel to anticipate and prevent deteriorating conditions leading to grave violations against children. Warning signs contribute to information that uniformed personnel, JMAC, Child Protection, Human Rights and other key mission components and partners are tasked to detect, analyze, monitor, and report. As for structural and process indicators, warning signs can be adapted and made relevant for different mission contexts. Warning signs, if left unaddressed, can lead to conflict and severe deterioration of the human rights situation. Warning signs provide a basis to identify solutions to address threats and prevent suffering. These can include, for example, the proximity of an armed group to an urban centre or its intention to initiate hostilities; movement of troops or establishment of check points; bad or alarming news on media and open-source information; political or violent gatherings and inflamed speeches; closing of schools and blocking of humanitarian routes; proliferation of weapons and illegal mining. They can also include credible individual or group perceptions.

106 Global Protection Cluster (GPC), Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, June 2010.

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| <p>Warning signs (Common to all six grave violations) <i>continued</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Level of awareness of communities on children’s rights in conflict and the impact of grave violations ■ Communities/women/children access to technology, communication and services including critical information for early warning/reliability of informal social sources such as word of mouth from community or family members/warning signs provided by education personnel and community members/perceptions (and misconceptions) of children vis-à-vis violent threats and grave violations/ ■ Civilians seeking refuge near UN bases ■ Level of support to armed forces and armed groups by communities ■ Presence of community-based armed groups/communities resorting to the creation of self-defense militias ■ ‘New’ or imposed beliefs, harmful practices, and religious norms, notions, and gender biased declarations targeting/affecting children ■ Change in perception of UN presence and politicization of support and engagement/misinformation and disinformation targeting the UN presence and/or the international community more broadly. |
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Killing and maiming of children

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| <p>Warning signs (specific to killing and maiming)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deliberate targeting and indiscriminate attacks e.g., through the use of weapons, including explosive weapons, in populated areas¹⁰⁷ ■ Children deprived of their liberty during armed conflict ■ Repressive approach (stigma, detention, anti-terrorism frameworks, denial of access to justice) towards children associated with armed forces and groups (CAAFAG) in the context of armed conflict ■ Illicit flows/import of weapons, especially light/small weapons ■ Harmful practices towards children, including vulnerable children (e.g., children with albinism, children accused of witchcraft) |
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Recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups

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| <p>Warning signs (specific to recruitment and use)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parties to conflict with history of recruitment and use of children ■ Children active in armed groups’ political or youth wings ■ Closure of schools for prolonged periods ■ Presence of terrorist and violent extremist groups, indoctrination ■ Communities’ grievances, stress, loss of livelihoods and intercommunal disputes ■ Perceptions and fear of families, parents, teachers and communities on safety and behavior of children ■ Families and children seeking refuge near UN peacekeeping operations presences ■ Level of awareness of communities and local authorities on children’s rights, of risks associated with the recruitment and use of children and of the impact on boys and girls |
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107 Save the Children. Stop the War on Children. Killed and Maimed: A generation of violations against children in conflict

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| <p>Warning signs (specific to recruitment and use) <i>continued</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Media/online content supporting children associating with armed forces or armed groups ■ Proximity to mining sites and other (licit or illicit) business relying on hazardous child labor ■ armed groups interacting with orphaned, separated, and displaced children ■ Illicit trade and import of small arms and light weapons (SALW) |
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Abduction of children

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| <p>Warning signs (specific to abduction)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ History of systematic abduction of children, including from specific segments of the population (e.g., religious/ethnic based) and/or geographical areas ■ Isolated and remote areas/poor protection for children gathering areas/adolescents' spaces/schools ■ Communities resisting 'taxes' or calls by parties to conflict for child recruitment and use ■ Girls and boys engaging unsafe routes to fetch water, firewood, to go to school or to go to work in fields and markets ■ Existence/history of child trafficking and criminal activities, including smuggling, extortion, and kidnapping for ransom ■ Harmful practices e.g., child and early marriage |
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Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children

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| <p>Warning signs (specific to rape and other forms of sexual violence)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Abductions in villages and communities/retaliations/revenge ■ Arrest and detention of children ■ Identification of intimidations and manipulations of children as triggers of abuse ■ Trafficking rings (forced prostitution and narcotics) ■ Girls and boys engaging unsafe routes to fetching water, firewood, to go to school or to go to work in fields and markets ■ Corruption and unethical military practices and behavior ■ Stigmatization penalizing gender equality ■ Harmful practices (e.g., genital mutilation, child, and early marriage) |
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Attacks against schools or hospitals

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| Warning signs (specific to attacks on schools or hospitals) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Increased presence of members of armed forces and/or armed groups in the vicinity of schools and hospitals■ History of use of schools and/or hospitals for military purposes attributed to specific armed forces and/or armed groups■ Military training in and around educational institutions■ Schools closed due to fear of violence and climate of insecurity■ Schools perceived as tools for propaganda or cultural indoctrination or as a symbol of the state■ Military checkpoints/roadblocks deny children’s access to schools and health facilities■ Cases of intimidation against medical (e.g., vaccination workers) or school personnel■ Denial of girls’ rights to access health services and enjoy educational, social, and economic progress |
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Denial of humanitarian access for children

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| Warning signs (specific to denial of humanitarian access) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Insecurity, including active hostilities and military operations compounding access■ Interference by parties to conflict with humanitarian partners and suppliers■ Presence of landmines and unexploded ordnances■ Inaccessible areas, lack of roads, floods, and natural disasters■ Humanitarians turned back, threats, intimidations, harassment, extortions, corruption, and criminal activities■ Presence of roadblocks and checkpoints■ Humanitarian aid perceived as legitimizing parties to conflict or favoring areas controlled by specific parties■ Discrimination against specific groups and geographic areas |
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