

Module 7



Dos and Don'ts for the United Nations Police

Dos and Don'ts – Statements

Module 1: How to Promote Child-friendly Interactions with Children

#	Statements	Dos	Don'ts
1	Advise the host-State police to only let social workers and psychologists deal with signs of distress in a child, as this is not relevant to police work.		
2	Always coordinate with the Child Protection Adviser before interviewing a child who might be a victim/witness of grave violations.		
3	Attend to the child's needs first, and champion the defence of his/her rights to encourage the local authorities to adopt child-friendly practices.		
4	Advise the host-State police to make sure that interviews with children are conducted privately, in a one-on-one meeting without the presence of other adults.		
5	Advise the host-State police to always explain to the child that, during the interview, the child does not have to answer all the questions that the host-State police will ask him/her.		
6	Advise the host-State police to explain clearly to the child the next steps in the process. E.g., "Once the judiciary police complete their data collection, and the prosecutor gives formal instructions on the procedure to be followed, a referral will be made to the assigned guardian until your parents/caregivers can be informed about the situation."		
7	Advise the host-State police to avoid touching the child, getting too close to the child, or adopting dominant behaviour, e.g., standing above the child.		
8	Advise the host-State police to practice active listening by creating an environment in which the child feels free to explain his/her		

	situation, even if it means returning to the interviewing room for several days to respect the child's pace of telling his/her story.		
9	Advise the host-State police to ensure that boys are interviewed by male police officers and girls by female police officers.		
10	Advise the host-State police to offer the child the possibility to recreate his/her experience or to return to the site of the incident, if the child consents to do so.		

Module 2: How to Support Child-friendly Prevention and Diversion

#	Statements	Dos	Don'ts
11	Apply the principles of the best interests of the child and do no harm in all interactions with children, including teenagers.		
12	Have direct discussions with local communities and determine if it is worth informing the host-State police.		
13	Even in countries where diversion cannot be decided by the host-State police, ensure that police officers fully and properly document possible rehabilitation options in their reports.		
14	Promote mediation in cases where a child consents to marriage after a case of sexual violence.		
15	Help to integrate child protection into all relevant policies, strategies and plans, as well as implement capacity-building programmes.		
16	Refrain from developing stand-alone prevention strategies; rather, connect such strategies with international norms and standards on how best to prevent abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect of children.		
17	Advise the host-State police on using bail as a means of promoting diversion and avoiding detention of children.		
18	Directly organize outreach activities on children's rights, for example with local communities.		
19	Promote the use of verbal or written warning, apology, restitution and community work as means of diverting children's cases from judicial proceedings, even if the child does not consent to such actions.		
20	Visit schools to raise awareness among children about recruitment strategies used by parties to conflict and protection mechanisms available to them.		

Module 3: How to Support Child-sensitive Apprehension, Arrest and Detention

#	Statements	Dos	Don'ts
21	Systematically take photographs of children, unless their parents or guardians formally refuse.		
22	Advise the host-State police to prioritize mental and physical well-being of the child before collecting information for the investigation.		
23	When advising the host-State police, advocate using detention as a measure of last resort for children.		
24	Advise the host-State police to exercise judgment on a case-by-case basis, as it may not be desirable for the parents/guardians to attend an interview with a child, e.g., when the police suspect that the parents/guardians have mistreated the child in any way, either physically or psychologically.		
25	Advise the host-State police to use the minimum amount of force necessary to ensure the safety of both the child and the police officers.		
26	Advise the host-State police to treat a person as an adult when it is not possible to clearly assess his/her age. Otherwise, the person will be insulted if the police approach him/her as a child.		
27	Advise the host-State police to use coercive interviewing methods and techniques that aim to obtain a confession by means of duress, threats or diminishing the interviewee's decision-making capacity, only when strictly necessary for national security reasons.		
28	Advise the host-State police to apply child protection measures if the child is considered a danger to himself/herself or others; such child protection measures should be prioritized over detention.		
29	Advise the host-State police to detain children separately from adults, girls from boys, and accused from convicted children, at all times.		
30	Apply the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the Handling of Detention in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions in all situations when UNPOL officers apprehend and place individual(s), including children, under the effective control of the United Nations peace operation, even if for a brief period of time.		

Module 4: How to Adapt Justice for Children to a United Nations Peace Operation

#	Statements	Dos	Don'ts
31	Obtain the child's opinion on matters that concern him/her, even if the child does not want to give his/her opinion.		
32	In your advisory role vis-à-vis the host-State police, continuously remind the authorities of international standards relating to child protection, even when they seem to care about national laws only.		
33	Advise the host-State police never to dismiss a case involving a child without documentation, as the justice system should retain information about all cases and see if recidivism is a concern.		
34	When reporting a violation of children's rights, always prioritize confidentiality and the child's security before the investigation.		
35	Only consider boys who possess a weapon as children associated with armed forces or armed groups.		
36	Strategic, operational and tactical levels must all be sensitive to the fact that girls and boys experience conflict differently and the necessary adaptations must be made to deal with them accordingly.		
37	Advise the host-State police to integrate children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups in development initiatives that benefit a larger group of children, rather than stigmatizing such children as "former child soldiers".		
38	Only social actors should deal with the long-term reintegration of children and prevent discrimination, isolation and violence against them, as this is not the mandate of the police.		
39	Advise the host-State police to provide the same protection to children suspected, accused or found guilty of criminal activities as any other children, because they are still children even if they are in conflict with the law.		
40	Advise the host-State police to always preserve public safety, even when it implies violating the rights of the child. Public safety has priority over children's rights, especially when it is in the interest of society as a whole.		

Module 5: How to Collaborate on and Coordinate Child Protection in a United Nations Peace Operation

#	Statements	Dos	Don'ts
41	Advise the host-State police to involve non-formal community leaders (e.g., religious, traditional or cultural leaders) in child protection actions, even though they have no formal agreement with the police.		
42	Negotiate directly with armed forces or armed groups for the release of children.		
43	Advise the host-State police to provide services directly to a child in need, taking into consideration his/her best interests, even though they may not be competent or authorized to do so.		
44	On matters relating to child protection, establish working relationships only with civilian mission components and external actors who have roles and responsibilities in the area of child protection.		
45	Tell the host-State police what to do, as part of your role is to lecture them and modify practices.		
46	Seek out opportunities for joint activities with the host-State police, such as capacity-building, sensitization and patrolling.		
47	In addition to your usual reporting responsibility within the hierarchy, the only other person you should report to and coordinate with on matters relating to child protection is the United Nations Police (UNPOL) Child Protection Focal Point.		
48	Support the crime prevention actions of the host-State police, even if it involves taking part in lengthy coordination meetings with non-governmental organizations.		
49	Ignore harmful practices that are often embedded in the culture of the host-State (police) owing to social norms, otherwise you will be in constant opposition to the police.		
50	Seek assistance or debriefing after a challenging experience relating to children. Mental health is very important, and actions that promote mental well-being in UN peace operations are encouraged.		

Module 6: How to Monitor and Report Violations of Children's Rights

#	Statements	Dos	Don'ts
51	Only use child labour when you are certain that it is beneficial for the child and his/her family.		
52	Report only the six grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict to the child protection system; avoid overburdening the system with other types of violations of children's rights.		
53	Report all violations of children's rights to the Child Protection Advisers, rather than to United Nations police channels.		
54	Report cases of your colleagues paying children for small tasks such as guarding their car or cooking meals.		
55	Ignore abusive actions carried out by the host-State police, as you do not have the mandate to execute or make decisions.		
56	Refrain from investigating suspected cases of grave violations of children's rights that are brought to your attention, as your role is to report such cases to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism through the Child Protection Advisers.		
57	Report misconduct of United Nations personnel only; let the national authorities deal with their own staff.		
58	Report situations in which the host-State police have not upheld the rights of children in their custody, including conditions of detention, even if the host-State police ask you not to do so.		
59	Share information about the release of a child from the armed forces with the Child Protection Adviser, but not with the host-State police.		
60	Report the case of a girl accused of sexually exploiting another girl, even though it will not be considered by the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism.		