

Introduction

Background

1. Deploying United Nations military personnel trained in child rights and child protection has become an increasingly crucial element for United Nations peace operations. Military personnel are mandated by Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict, which were established to protect children from the effects of conflict. Security Council resolutions 1261 (1999), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1612 (2005), 2143 (2014), 2225 (2015), 2427 (2018), and 2601 (2021) specifically call for the training of peacekeepers on the protection and rights of children, and pre-deployment awareness training on child protection. Accordingly, the training of military personnel on child protection is recognized as a key priority for the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) in its Child Protection Policy.
2. In 2008, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) – renamed the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) in 2019 – included a child protection training module in its Core Pre-deployment Training Materials as part of the mandatory curriculum.
3. In 2018, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (known informally as C34) affirmed, in its report A/72/19:

“...the importance of continuing to ensure that all peacekeeping personnel receive adequate training on child protection and child rights in order to strengthen the protection of children in conflict and post-conflict situations. The Special Committee notes with appreciation the efforts to update training programmes and materials, all of which are critical to ensuring that there is an effective and comprehensive response, including preventive measures, with respect to child protection. The Special Committee welcomes the launch of the child protection pre-deployment training modules developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF, encourages the continued development of specialized training modules on child protection for all categories of peacekeeping personnel, requests the Department to make them available and encourages troop-contributing and police-contributing countries, as well as all regional and national peacekeeping training centres, to make full use of them, as appropriate” (para. 269).

4. In resolution 2143 (2014), the Security Council,

“Recommends that Member States include child protection in military training and standard operating procedures, as well as in military guidance as appropriate; recommends further that United Nations entities and United Nations peacekeeping troop

and police-contributing countries undertake targeted and operational trainings for the preparation of United Nations mission personnel including troop and police contingents on their contribution in preventing violations against children so as to give all mission personnel the ability to effectively recognize, report and respond to violations and abuses committed against children and to successfully support child protection activities for better implementation of their respective mandates” (para. 20).

Specialized Training Materials on Child Protection, 2014

5. Following the request of the C34 in 2012, DPKO surveyed six peacekeeping missions on child protection training needs and received over 500 replies from actively serving peacekeepers. With this critical input from the field, training materials were developed in close consultation with child protection actors, as well as all members of the C34. A total of 37 Member States participated in the workshops accompanying the development process.
6. The resulting materials included:
 - (a) An updated child protection lesson in the Core Pre-deployment Training package
 - (b) Specialized training materials on child protection
 - (c) A film on child protection

The materials were designed for pre-deployment and in-mission training of United Nations peacekeepers, both military personnel and formed police units. The materials are available at the Peacekeeping Resource Hub web page: <https://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/pre-deployment>

Updated Child Protection Training Materials

7. The above-mentioned training materials were reviewed and updated in 2018, 2020, and 2023 to ensure compliance with the latest United Nations child protection policy and guidelines for United Nations military personnel. The updated materials include new scenarios based on current challenges in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan.

Purpose

8. Child protection is more than a subset of the protection of civilians (POC) mandate. While many of the concepts of civilian protection and the basic information on the rules of engagement apply, the child protection mandate entails some very specific tasks that military personnel need to undertake in addition to the physical protection of children. Those tasks are mandated by the Security Council and usually include, but are not limited to, supporting the implementation of a monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children, the implementation of action plans to end those grave violations, and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes.

9. The training materials are aimed at introducing child protection concepts and providing mission-specific tactical child protection situations for discussion among military and police contingent leaders and staff. The materials are intended to promote a better understanding of the missions' child protection mandates, the work of actors in and outside of the missions who contribute to the protection of children, and the work of actors who are integral to the coordination of child protection.
10. The training materials include exercises to encourage military personnel to consider their behaviour towards children, and the difference between child protection activities and community outreach activities. The training materials also focus on the roles and responsibilities of every military personnel to successfully implement the child protection mandate. Scenario exercises – based on real situations from UNMISS, MINUSCA, MINUSMA and MONUSCO – provide the opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired in these training modules.

Structure of the Reinforcement Training Package on Child Protection for the United Nations Military, 2023

11. The 2023 Reinforcement Training Package on Child Protection for the United Nations Military comprises three modules, nine lessons and several scenario exercises. The training materials can be delivered over the course of five days and are organized as follows:

Module 1: Conceptual Framework

Lesson 1.1: Children in Armed Conflict

Examines the impact of armed conflict on children and identifies the six grave violations that guide United Nations peacekeeping mandates.

Lesson 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities of Mission Components and External Partners

Identifies the various actors within peacekeeping missions, the roles of civilian Child Protection staff, military Child Protection Focal Points, and internal and external child protection actors who coordinate with the military on issues related to child protection.

Module 2: Legal Framework

Lesson 2.1: Legal Framework

Examines the legal framework for peacekeeping operations, including international law, Security Council resolutions, United Nations peacekeeping policies, mission rules of engagement and the use of force directive that guide all mission mandates.

Lesson 2.2: Child Protection Framework

Examines the guiding framework on child protection, including international law, Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict and mission mandates, the framework

and guiding principles of the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the Department of Operational Support (DOS) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).

Module 3: Operational Framework

Lesson 3.1: Interacting with Children

Examines the ethical obligations of military personnel when interacting with children in the mission area.

Lesson 3.2: Military Component Child Protection Roles and Tasks

Examines the roles and tasks of military personnel with regard to child protection, situational awareness, early warning, and child protection considerations in military operations.

Lesson 3.3: Military Component Child Protection Action and Response

Examines rules of engagement with regard to child protection, reviews the grave violations that military personnel are most likely to encounter in the field mission context, as well as responses and appropriate actions when encountering children.

Lesson 3.4: Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point

Examines the roles and responsibilities of the military Child Protection Focal Point at Force Headquarters and the application of the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection.

Lesson 3.5: Military Child Protection Focal Points in Sectors, Units and Team Sites

Examines the roles and responsibilities of the military Child Protection Focal Points at sector/brigade, unit and team site levels, and the implementation of Force Headquarters directives.

Scenario Exercises

Provide opportunities for learners to engage in various scenarios (e.g., military occupation of a school, offensive operations, early warning of grave violations against children) involving the roles of military Child Protection Focal Points and the military component.

Important Considerations for Peacekeeping Training Centres, Commanders, Course Directors and Trainers

12. This training package **is not a course**. National trainers will **need to design the course and adapt the training materials** to the needs of their audience. The scenarios are based on critical situations that actually occurred in the field, as well as mission information on child protection, protection actors and relevant mechanisms.
13. No single set of training materials can cover the entire complex and vast range of child protection challenges and possibilities. Therefore, troop-contributing countries (TCCs) should design courses according to the specificities of the particular area of operations in which battalions or formed police units will be deployed. The same rationale applies for the

training of force-level staff officers, military observers and military liaison officers. National military training systems are requested to analyse the package and tailor the modules to their own needs. Mission operation documents such as the mission concept, the force concept of operations, operation orders, directives, rules of engagement, directives on the use of force and other documents deemed necessary (e.g., country maps) should be obtained by national trainers to supplement the scenarios and course materials.

14. With regard to previous skills, experience and knowledge, all military personnel undertaking this training must be proficient in basic operational tasks (individually and collectively). As such, it is expected that a battalion staff officer is fully capable of performing the tasks of a staff officer before undertaking the training on child protection (just as it is expected that a driver is fully capable of driving a vehicle under certain weather and terrain conditions).
15. Learners must have already undertaken the core pre-deployment training as a pre-requisite to this child protection training. The Core Pre-deployment Training Materials cover fundamental United Nations principles, concepts and ideas related to field mission structure and functioning, which should be well understood by learners before they undertake the child protection training. Any training designed by Member States should encompass the Core Pre-deployment Training Materials followed by any specific child protection training materials for military personnel. The Core Pre-deployment Training Materials are available from <https://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community/pre-deployment>.
<http://research.un.org/revisecptm2017>.
16. The present training package places emphasis on understanding mission coordination among the components (i.e., military, police and civilian). Therefore, **it is highly recommended** that the national peacekeeping institution in charge of training invite civilian child protection actors to participate in the training, and in particular, in the scenario discussions. Those civilians may come from existing United Nations country teams, United Nations agencies (e.g., United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), DPO Child Protection Office) or from international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (such as Save the Children).
17. The materials, especially the scenarios, are based on real experiences at specific missions. Since the training materials cannot be classified and there is a considerable amount of sensitive information in the situations depicted, the scenarios in the handouts may refer to Missions W, X, Y and Z so as to preserve the anonymity of the missions.

Instructor Profile

18. This training course would be best presented and delivered by instructors who have mastered the child protection training package and the Core Pre-deployment Training Materials and who have preferably undertaken a Training of Trainer course on the pre-deployment materials. Specific knowledge of the particular mission where the unit is to be deployed is advisable, with preference to instructors who have participated in targeted

United Nations peacekeeping operations, as they would be able to bring a practical understanding and experience of a mission into the discussions. Instructors should be familiar with facilitating scenario exercises.

Training Characteristics

19. Training for United Nations infantry battalion (UNIBATT) commanders and staff, formed police unit commanders and staff, and individually deployed personnel (e.g., force staff officers, military observers and military liaison officers) may vary according to national particularities and resources. However, there are fundamental training characteristics that must be respected in preparation for deployment to a peacekeeping mission:
 - (a) Training should be realistic: all necessary efforts shall be undertaken to replicate possible real situations that the battalion might face on the ground
 - (b) Training should be mission-specific: the operational reality of the specific mission must be incorporated into the training environment
 - (c) Training methodology should be based on practice

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21. The content of this training package was developed with the assistance of relevant substantive experts in DPO, with special support from the Office of Military Affairs in DPO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children, and the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldier Initiative.

Symbols Used



Note (for Trainer)

Background information

Speaking points



Main points on the topic; ideally, the speaking points should be presented in the trainer’s own words



Learning activity/Discussion

Activity or discussion that is strongly recommended



Handout (for Learners)

Handout to be given to learners



Film/Video

Film/video suggested as a core activity
