

MODULE 2

LEARNER’S HANDOUT

Child Protection Framework Scenarios

AIM

To improve learners’ understanding of the legal framework and its applicability in the context of child protection in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify the legal frameworks that provide for protection to children
- Discuss how to apply these frameworks on child protection to situations in the mission area

INSTRUCTIONS

- Working in assigned groups, learners should review the scenarios below in the context of the specific legal framework(s) applicable to each situation. The groups will discuss their solutions during the plenary session
- Each group should prepare a 10-minute briefing for the plenary presentation, taking into account the following:
 1. List the type(s) of violations in each scenario
 2. Identify the legal instrument(s) and associated provisions (articles) that apply to each scenario

CONDUCT OF THE EXERCISE

- Learners should be divided into groups for this exercise
- This exercise will be divided into three periods:
 1. The trainer(s) will brief learners on the issue(s) to be addressed; the groups will move to separate areas to discuss the issues
 2. The groups will discuss the issues in the scenarios and prepare their responses/presentation. Each group should prepare a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the key issues in each scenario and how to address them
 3. A representative from each group will give a presentation based on their discussions in plenary
- Following all the group presentations, a brief discussion will wrap up the exercise



SCENARIOS

SCENARIO A

An elder of a village located close to your battalion HQ and in your battalion’s area of responsibility visits you. He informs you that his village has only one school where about 60 children study. It was built the previous year with assistance from UN agencies, and has good infrastructure and facilities.

The local elder explains that, the previous week, a local armed group commander came to his village accompanied by 15 to 20 fighters, and told him that they needed a place to live for a few months and wanted to use the school premises. The commander stated that, in his opinion, the children were wasting their time studying and that it would be more useful if they worked on farms or joined his group to fight the government forces. If the school premises are not given to him, the commander would destroy the school building and facilities, and warned the village of dire consequences.

The village elder has just heard that the commander intends to come to the village tomorrow and forcibly occupy the school premises. He thinks that the armed group plans to take some boys and girls with them to fight and support their cause. He knows that some children already think of the commander as a hero and would join the group quite willingly.

SCENARIO B

At a refugee camp in a UN peacekeeping mission area, a dispute broke out between the local camp authorities and refugee leaders over the fate of Maria, a 13-year-old refugee girl. As a separated child, she had been placed in the care of a foster family from her province of origin. When a refugee worker learned that the girl had been promised (against her will) as a second wife to an older refugee man, the worker went to the camp authorities to protest.

The camp authorities stated that this would be against the law of the host country, and would also change the current status of the girl as a separated child searching for her family. The refugee leaders noted that the girl had adult responsibilities in her foster home and was considered an adult, and that it was customary practice for a girl of her age and status to marry in her home district. They felt that the camp authorities were intruding on their culture and traditions and undermining their leadership in the community.

The situation was finally resolved when a local traditional religious leader intervened and the marriage was cancelled. The girl was placed with a different foster family and a women's association in the camp monitored her situation. It was noted that,



although the girl's wishes were known, she was not asked about her thoughts on the matter.

SCENARIO C

During the civil war in the country in the late 1990s, hundreds of orphanages sprang up in the mission areas. Humanitarian agencies in the country were working hard to reunite children with their families and assist families in caring for them. One contingent raised money to purchase clothes and mattresses for the children in one particular orphanage. During the ceremony, the children at the orphanage were gathered to receive the donations from the contingent officers and thanked them with songs and food.

Within a week, all the donated items had been sold at the local market, and once again, the children were sleeping on the floor and wearing ragged clothes; fresh appeals were made to donors for assistance. Soon after, it was reported that the owner of the orphanage had opened a second orphanage. Fundraising and publicity documents stated that the orphanage had received donations totalling over half a million US dollars from two church groups, in addition to the UN mission’s support.

Later, rumours broke out that the orphanages in the area were clearing houses for male children who were sent to fight for one of the warring factions and for illegal adoptions.

SCENARIO D

In the southern part of the mission area, about 75 kilometres north of the border and just outside the provincial capital city, a UN patrol, consisting of two jeeps, comes across a heavily armed convoy of two trucks and four sport utility vehicles (SUVs).

The trucks are full of young women — some even look like children. One girl is being pushed up into the truck by two armed men and, across the field, another armed man is pulling a girl along. Both girls seem terrified and one is bleeding from a scalp wound.



SCENARIO E

Last year, the Head of a UN Mission was made aware of rumours that local women seeking jobs with the civilian administration — e.g., as cleaners or receptionists — had to have sex with international staff in the administration division, including senior staff, in order to be hired.

The Head of Mission sent the allegation to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). It was investigated and found to be true. The Head of Administration, as well as several others in the civilian administration section, including senior staff, were dismissed.

Following the sex-for-jobs scandal in the mission, yesterday you saw some girls and boys hanging around Force HQ premises and the Force deployment sites. You had heard from several military and civilian colleagues and the civilian police that they are often accosted by aggressive locals, both women and men, proffering young women and children for sex in exchange for money, food or other supplies.

You request basic fact-checking of the situation by relevant mission personnel and offices, including the Conduct and Discipline Team, Child Protection Section, Gender Adviser, Security Section, Human Rights, Force Provost Marshall, etc. The fact-checking team identifies a possible serious problem: it confirms that there are several rumours of peacekeeping personnel buying sex, not only from adult prostitutes, but also from children.

SCENARIO F

Your battalion is deployed close to an international border and has seen a number of conflicts and skirmishes between the opposing factions in the past 30 to 40 years. Both sides have used anti-personnel mines extensively during the conflict, most of which have still not been removed or cleared.

You are aware that, in the past few years, there has been several civilian casualties in your area of responsibility owing to landmines and explosive remnants of war. A number of children have been maimed and/or killed. One of your patrols has just reported that a landmine exploded in a field near a village where some children were playing. One girl lost both legs, and one boy is seriously injured. The patrol has requested medical evacuation for the injured children.

