



Module 3, Lesson 2

MILITARY COMPONENT CHILD PROTECTION ROLES AND TASKS



Learning Objectives

- **Describe** the guidance framework on child protection at the operational and tactical levels
- **Explain** the child protection roles and tasks of United Nations military personnel
- **Explain** why military personnel need to develop situational awareness
- **Apply** the guidelines for monitoring and reporting by military personnel



Child Protection Mandate (1)

Security Council resolution 2666 (2022) Democratic Republic of the Congo

Child protection

Requests MONUSCO to take fully into account **child protection as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate**, inter alia, in DDR processes and in SSR as well as during interventions leading to the separation of children from armed groups in order to end and prevent violations and abuses against children, and to continue to ensure the effectiveness of **the monitoring and reporting mechanisms on children and armed conflict**, and *acknowledges* the crucial role of United Nations **Child Protection Advisers** in MONUSCO (para. 28).



Child Protection Mandate (2)

Security Council resolution 2640 (2022)

Mali

Strongly condemning all violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law, ... as well as killing, maiming, recruitment and use of children, attacks against schools, humanitarian actors and services, and medical personnel and infrastructure...; (preambular paragraph)

To provide specific protection and assistance for women and children affected by armed conflict, including through Protection Advisors, **Child Protection Advisors**, Women Protection Advisors and **civilian and uniformed Gender Advisors and focal points**, as well as consultations with women's organizations, and address the needs of victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict; (para. 26(c)(iii))



Supporting Mandate Implementation through Action

Action: Provide physical protection for children

Protect civilians

Support DDR

Action: Support separation of children from armed forces/groups with the CP staff

Action: Gather and share information

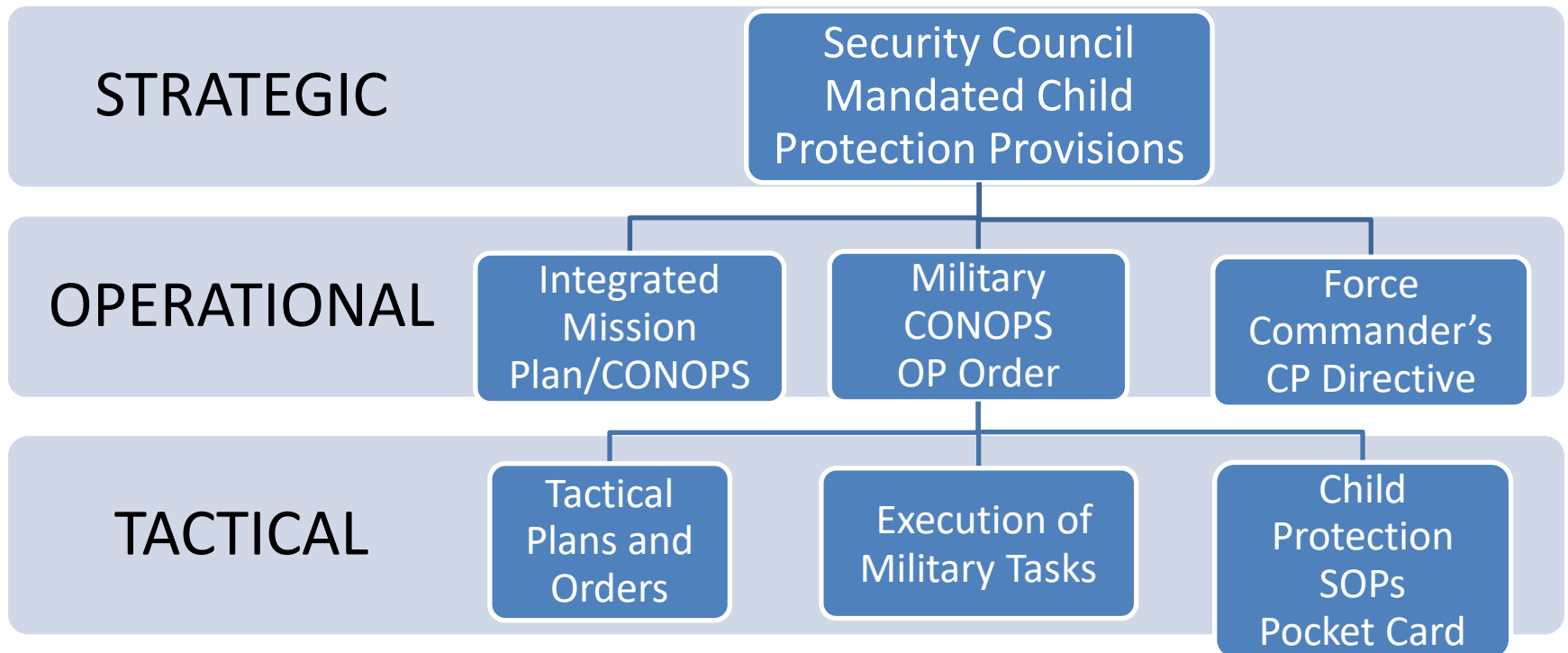
Monitor and report the six grave violations

Support action plans to release children from armed forces/groups

Action: Support CP staff in accessing various places (e.g., military barracks)



Child Protection Guidance Flow Chart

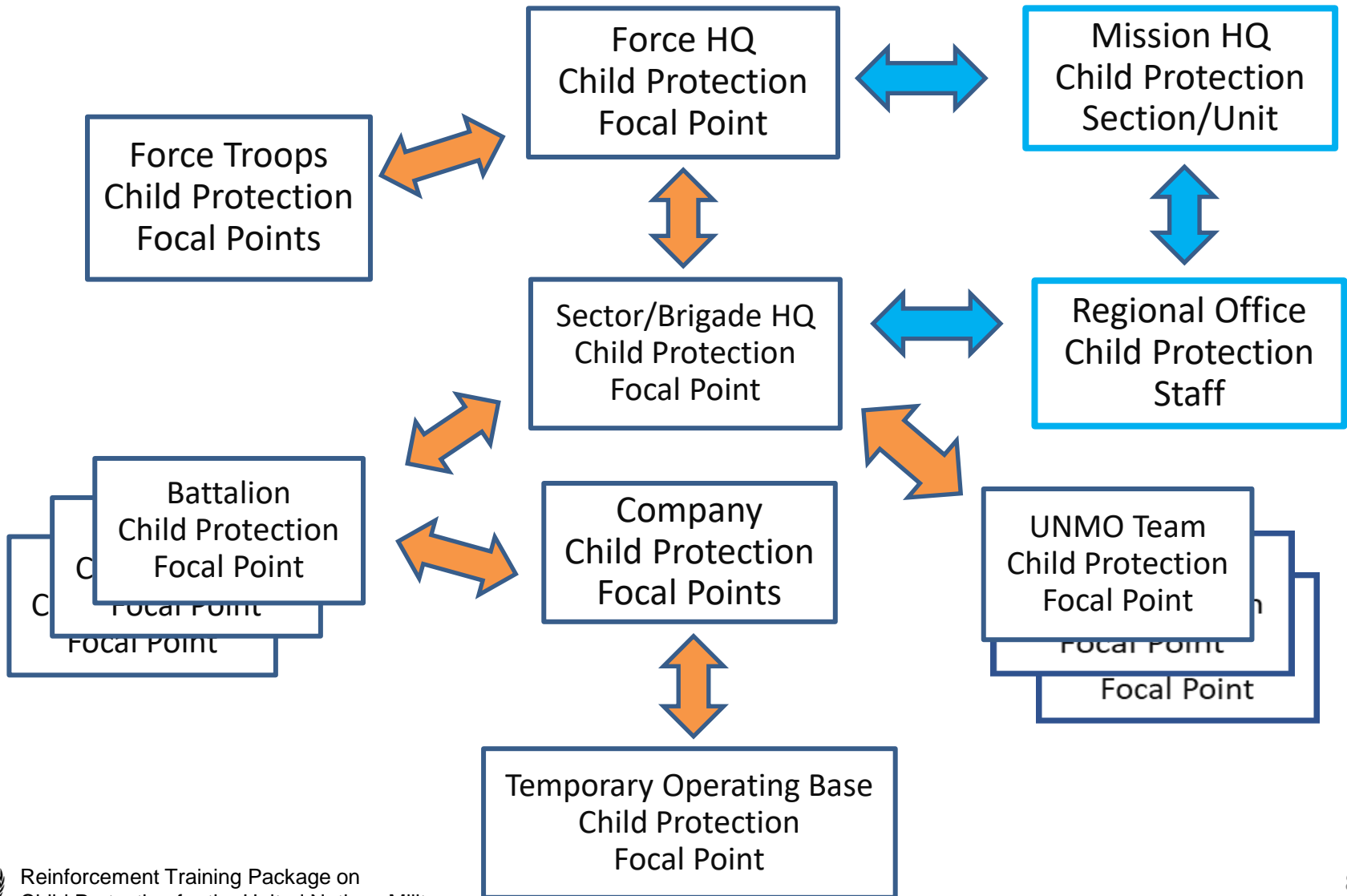


Military Component and Child Protection

- Ensure child protection is mainstreamed into planning and conduct of protection activities
- Ensure that threats to children and children's vulnerabilities are identified and plans are developed with these in mind
- Identify and establish a military child protection network within the military component
- Issue specific child protection directive(s) and guidance for military personnel



Military Component Child Protection Focal Point System



Activities that may involve Child Protection action



Military Child Protection “Lens”

VILLAGE PATROL	➔	Are children in school? Are schools open?	Are children playing? Working in fields?	Is a CA network established in village?
PATROL BASE	➔	Where are the children in your AOR?	Are they close to your TOB. Why?	What are the threats to children?
INTERACTING WITH ARMED GROUPS	➔	Do you see any children?	Report to the civilian CP staff; Note/give details	Security of the CP staff? How to engage?
PROTECTION OF IDP CAMP	➔	Do children leave the camp? Work?	Security of camp? Does armed group have access?	Vulnerabilities within/outside of camp?
ROBUST PATROLLING /OPERATIONS	➔	Does armed group use children? In what role (s)?	How to minimize risk to children?	How to treat injured or captured children associated with armed forces/groups?



Protection Tools/Resources



- Joint Protection Teams
- Must/Should/Could Matrix
- Community Liaison Assistants
- Community Alert Networks



Situational Awareness – Understanding the Operational Environment

1. What are the threats to children in my area of responsibility? (who, what, why, when, where)
2. What are the host Government and the community doing about it?
3. What are other parts of the mission, UN agencies, other international organizations and NGOs doing about it and how can we work together?



Case Study: Situational Awareness

On a patrol in your Company Operations Base area of responsibility, you pass through a village that hasn't been visited by the United Nations in a while. Everything seems calm and the villagers are going about their daily business. You stop in the marketplace to chat with some villagers and get a grasp of the situation. A village elder complains about recent visits by an armed group that has been active in the area for a couple of months. You know that such visits are common, villagers are usually harassed, and goods are taken from them. According to the villager, the armed group asked to see the local teacher. On their second meeting with the teacher, which ended in an argument, they shot him for unknown reasons. As you carry on with your patrol, you mention the incident to your driver, who half-jokingly remarks:

“I wonder who the teacher was teaching, because there are not any children to be seen in the entire village”.

**To whom will you report your observations, and
what is your analysis of the situation?**



Security Council resolution 1998 (2011)

Security Council resolution 1998 (2011)

The Security Council,

...requests the Secretary-General to also include in the annexes to his reports on children and armed conflict those parties to armed conflict that engage ...in recurrent attacks on schools and/or hospitals; in recurrent attacks or threats of attacks against **protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals** in situations of armed conflict... (para. 3).



SG's Report – Children and Armed Conflict

Central African Republic

A total of 18 attacks against schools (7) and hospitals (11) including protected personnel were attributed to government/pro-government forces; and armed groups: CPC, UPC, 3R/FPRC, anti-balaka and other unidentified perpetrators. Incidents of 14 schools used for military purposes were attributed to government forces and other security personnel, CPC, MPC, UPC, and unidentified perpetrators. (A/77/895-S/2023/363, para. 31 and 32)



Information Collection Plan

⇒ Include specific questions relating to child protection

This will help to:

- Identify early-warning indicators (e.g., are there boys/girls in the streets? Are boys/girls going to school?)
- Determine whether the situation is changing
- Report violations through the monitoring and reporting mechanism



Early Warning Indicators of the Six Grave Violations

Killing and maiming

- *Illicit flows/import of weapons, especially light/small weapons*
- *Deliberate targeting and indiscriminate attacks in populated areas*

Recruitment and use

- *Closure of schools for prolonged periods*
- *Communities' grievances/loss of livelihoods, intercommunal disputes*

Abduction

- *History of systematic abduction of children from specific segments of the population*
- *Girls and boys engaging unsafe routes to fetch water, firewood, to go to school/work in fields/markets*

Rape and other forms of sexual violence

- *Arrest and detention of children*
- *Corruption and unethical military practices and behavior*

Attacks on schools or hospitals

- *Cases of intimidation against medical or school personnel*
- *Increased presence of members of armed forces and/or armed groups in the vicinity of schools and hospitals*

Denial of humanitarian access

- *Presence of roadblocks and checkpoints*
- *Humanitarians turned back, threats, intimidations, harassment, extortions, corruption, and criminal activities*



Monitoring and Reporting Mandate

If any of the six grave violations against children has taken place, report the following:

- **Who** (alleged perpetrator/s)
- **Where**
- **What**
- **When**
- **Information about the child(ren)**
 - Age
 - Sex (how many boys/girls)
 - Nationality/other relevant information

NOTE: Even if you do not know all the relevant information, DO NOT interrogate children



Monitoring and Reporting

Dos and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Analyse protection threats and risks for children	Forget about child-specific threats/risks
Discretely and accurately take note of details (location, armed group/unit, number of children, sex, violation)	Interview or interrogate the child(ren)
Transfer the information as quickly as possible to civilian Child Protection staff	Collect information on names, addresses or any data that may be linked back to an individual/group of individuals (witnesses and/or family members)
Protect the victim(s), his/her identity and keep information confidential	Take photographs of the child(ren), or put names of children and sources of information in any report
Know and coordinate with the child protection actors in your area of responsibility	Neglect to share information with the child protection actors



Takeaways (1/2)

- Know your roles and how you can contribute to child protection:
 - Direct role: prevent violations and mitigate threats
 - Support role: gather information, support the Child Protection Section/Unit, provide security to civilian Child Protection staff
- Military components have directives/SOPs on child protection – **apply them**
- Create orders and SOPs to address information requirements, handover of children, etc.



Takeaways (2/2)

- Child protection is an integral part of practically every patrol activity
- Protection involves a combination of actions to reduce vulnerability and risk
- Assess the child-specific indicators in your operational environment
- In all your actions and orders, **consider the best interest of the child**



References (1/2)

- United Nations, DPO-DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in UN Peace Operations, 2023
- Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/77/895–S/2023/363), June 2023
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- Child Soldier Initiative, Child Soldiers: A Handbook for Security Sector Actors, 2017 (Third Edition)
- United Nations, UNDDR, Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), 2014 (see chaps. 5.20, “Youth and DDR”, and 5.30, “Children and DDR”)
- OSRSG-Children and Armed Conflict website (<http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/>)



Questions

