

# Lesson 3.4



## Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point

### The Lesson



#### Starting Lesson 3.4



*For an interactive start to lesson 3.4, ask learners:*

*Why is there need for a Child Protection Focal Point in Force Headquarters?  
Can it be a part-time task? Is training required for this function?*

#### OVERVIEW

Lesson 3.4 will examine the military Child Protection Focal Point System, focusing on the specific role and responsibilities of the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point. It will also address the development and implementation of the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain the functions of the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point within the military component and the mission
- Identify and discuss the key guidance required for the military component at the tactical level
- Demonstrate the application of the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection

#### ACTIVITIES


1. United Nations Mission – generic multidimensional structure
2. Directions to Sector Headquarters, Units, and Military Observer Team Sites
3. Mainstreaming child protection

**HANDOUTS (FOR LEARNERS)**


1. Sample Terms of Reference for Military Child Protection Focal Points
2. Generic Mission Headquarters Structure
3. Force Headquarters Structure
4. MONUSCO Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection (2021)
5. Sample Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection

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SLIDE 1: MODULE 3, LESSON 4: FORCE HEADQUARTERS CHILD PROTECTION FOCAL POINT



Module 3, Lesson 4  
**FORCE HEADQUARTERS  
CHILD PROTECTION  
FOCAL POINT**

 Reinforcement Training Package on  
Child Protection for the United Nations Military

**NOTES (FOR TRAINER)**

- ☞ *Lesson 3.4 will focus on the specific roles and responsibilities of the Child Protection Focal Points at Force Headquarters, and on the development and implementation of the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection.*

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SLIDE 2: LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## Learning Objectives

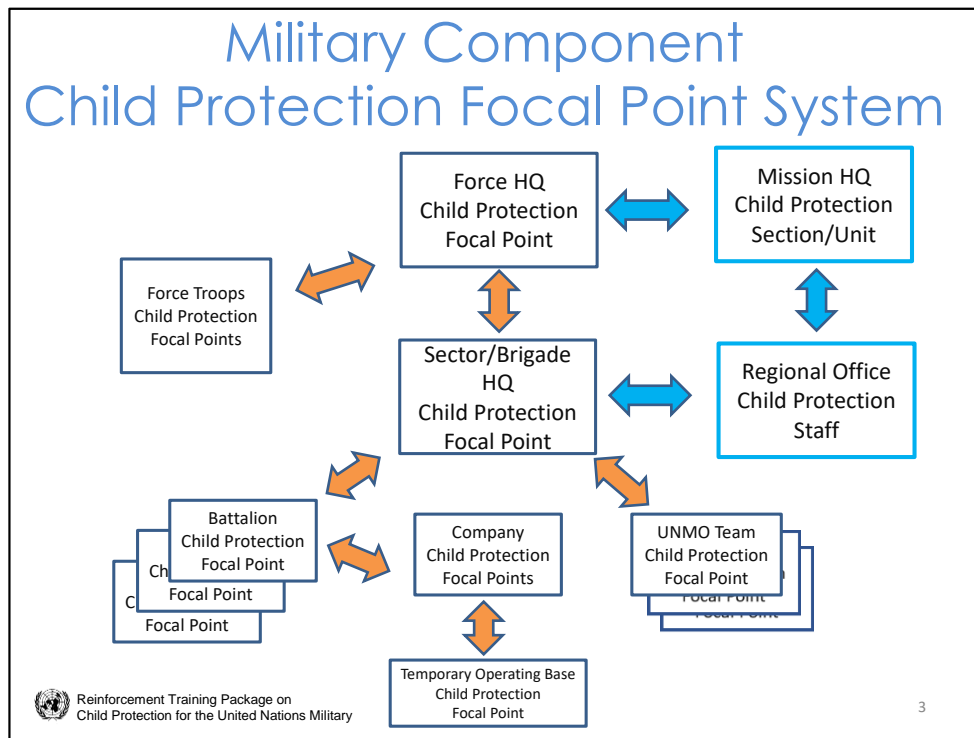
- **Explain** the functions of the Force HQ Child Protection Focal Point within the military component and the mission
- **Identify** and **discuss** the key guidance required for the military component at the tactical level
- **Demonstrate** the application of the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection

### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

- This lesson (3.4) will focus on the roles and responsibilities of the military Child Protection Focal Point at Force Headquarters, including with regard to the interaction with the civilian Child Protection staff and other key components in the mission. The lesson will also cover his/her responsibility for providing guidance on child protection at the tactical level.

In this lesson, we will also discuss the purpose, development and content of the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection. We will examine an actual child protection directive and the sample directive that serves as a template. The template for the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection is intended for missions with a sizeable military component, an explicit child protection mandate and dedicated child protection capacity.

 *The specific learning objectives of this lesson are on slide 2.*



NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The network of military Child Protection Focal Points is essential to the military component's child protection tasks and for effective coordination with mission and external partners.

*This slide was shown in a previous lesson (3.2, slide 8). It will serve to remind learners of the coordination and information-sharing within the military component and with the mission's Child Protection Section/Unit.*


It highlights the position of the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point (the subject of this lesson) and shows his/her interaction with other child protection actors at various levels.

## Force HQ Child Protection Focal Point – Key Tasks

- Coordinate with the mission Child Protection Section/Unit
- Provide advise on and mainstreaming child protection:
  - Advise the Force Commander
  - Advise and support all staff functions
- Provide operational guidance to sector and unit focal points
- Establish/Strengthen alert system
- Ensure and support training on child protection of sector and unit focal points
- Develop directives and SOPs on:
  - Handover of children associated with armed groups
  - Interactions with children
  - Child exploitation/labour

### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Child protection is very important in United Nations peacekeeping owing to the horrendous consequences of armed conflict on children.

 *In some missions, the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point is also the military Gender Officers. The gender role is not covered in this specialized training package.*

Handout: Sample Terms of Reference for Military Child Protection Focal Points

 The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point is responsible for:

- Coordination with the Child Protection Section/Unit of the mission
- Providing advice on and mainstreaming child protection:
  - Advise the Force Commander
  - Advise and support all staff functions
- Providing operational guidance to sectors and units
- Establishing/Strengthening the Child Protection Alert System
- Ensuring and supporting the provision of training on child protection
- Developing directives and standards of procedure (SOPs) on:
  - Handover of children associated with armed forces/groups
  - Interactions with children
  - Child exploitation/labour

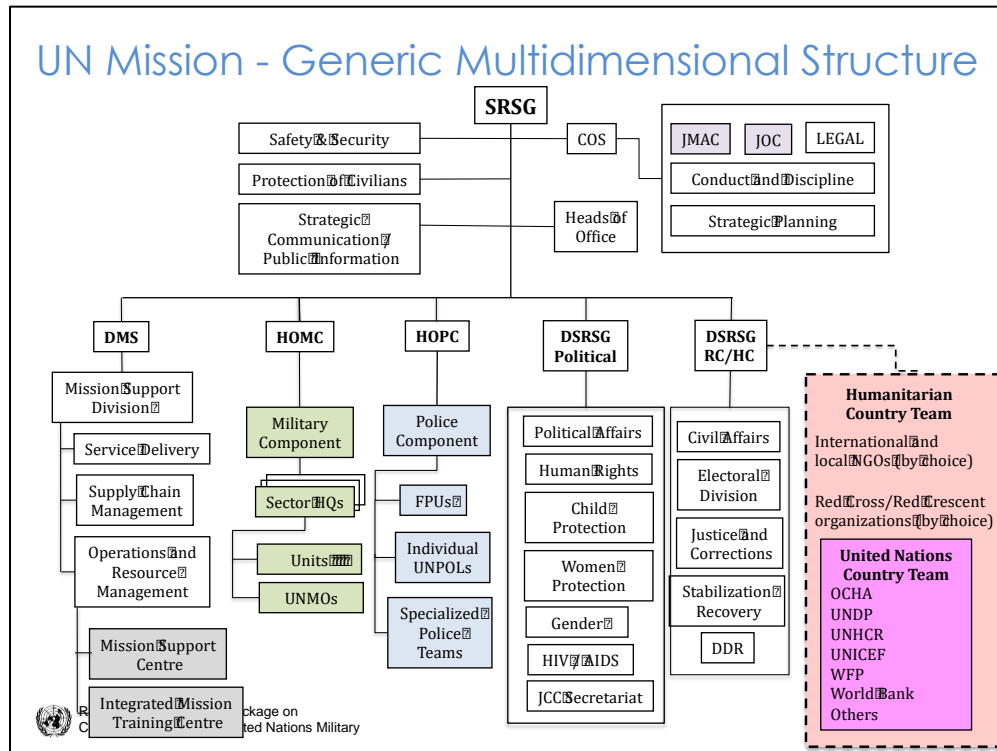
The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point must interact almost daily with the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit of the mission to exchange information, provide support, maintain situational awareness, and update the Section on relevant military component activities. This is a key relationship that must be nurtured. A key to the successful implementation of the child protection mandate is recognizing that the civilian component operates in a more informal manner than the military component and that the Child Protection Section/Unit is the lead for the implementation of the child protection mandate in the mission.

The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point ensures that child protection is mainstreamed at Force Headquarters; works closely with the Force Commander and other staff functions; and is the expert on tools such as the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection. Mainstreaming means that child protection is always at the forefront of military personnel's work. When drafting orders or planning an activity, the military officer must always consider their impact on children and their security. Special provisions on child protection and security should always be included.

The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point provides operational guidance, including drafting documents such as the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection, providing advice during the planning and execution of operations. This involves close liaison with the operations and other staff branches involved in the activities (such as CIMIC) to keep abreast of any planning and to provide timely advice (e.g., prior to completion of the document). Such guidance is also provided to sector/brigade headquarters, units and military observer team sites.

The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point will establish/strengthen the Child Protection Alert System to transmit information on the six grave violations and other child protection concerns, through the military chain of command and to the Child Protection Section/Unit, as well as on threats which could cause displacement, human rights violations, etc. The emphasis of the Alert System is to enable proactive action.

Training is a continuous process in missions, including induction training led by the Integrated Mission Training Centre (IMTC) on arrival, policy-driven in-mission training led by the civilian Child Protection staff, as set out in the DPKO/DFS/DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations (2017). This is "refresher" training to ensure that the relevant child protection SOPs (on handover of children associated with armed groups, interactions with children and child exploitation/labour, etc.) are understood. The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point should support that training and try to ensure that it is interesting, relevant and appropriate, and that all peacekeepers complete it. This will involve close liaison with the Child Protection Section/Unit and the personnel that deliver the training.



NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point primarily interacts with the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit of the mission. Other sections of the mission (e.g., JMAC, DDR) would also be of interest, but they may be best approached by the corresponding staff functions in Force Headquarters.

☐ Handout: Generic Mission Headquarters Structure.



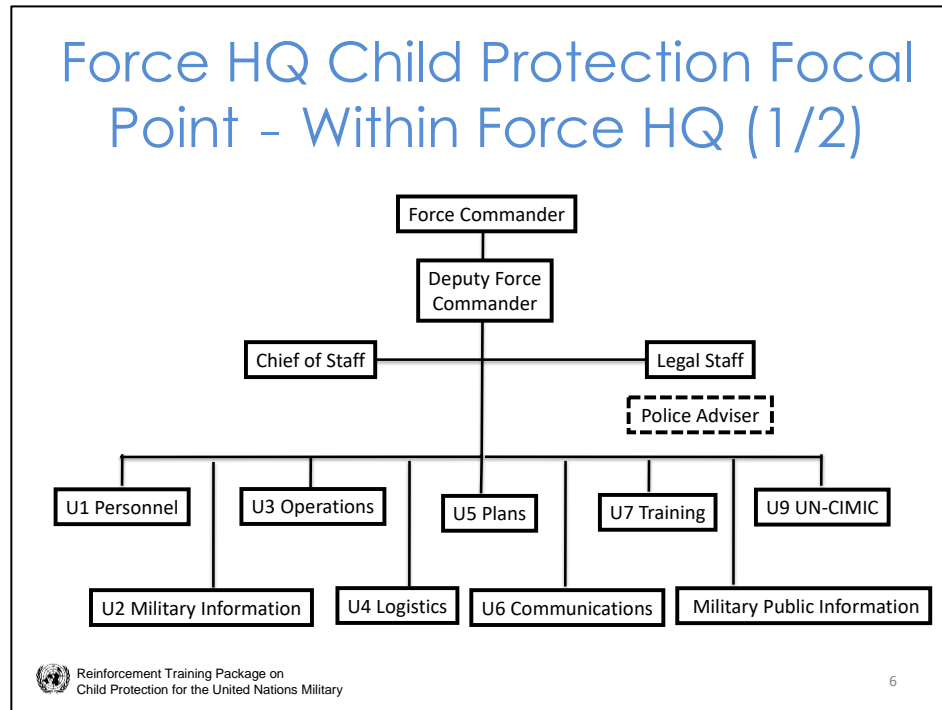
Remind learners of the mission structure, then initiate a discussion by asking learners: *Who would the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point interact with at mission headquarters?*

☛ Child protection is a whole-of-mission effort that involves everyone. However, the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point will mainly interact with the Child Protection Section/Unit of the mission, on an almost daily basis. The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point may be involved in some of their meetings and possibly in the Protection of Civilians Working Groups at mission headquarters.

While sections such as JMAC and DDR will be of interest to the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point, those sections need to be carefully approached. Force level U2 personnel are the main link between Force Headquarters and JMAC, and know who best to approach. It would be best to ask U2 to introduce you to JMAC, then work out the best way to continue the dialogue. Interacting with the United Nations Police would also be key; they would have a Child Protection Focal Point and carry out police patrol duties in the mission area. The police Child Protection Focal

Point frequently attends meetings with the Child Protection Section/Unit and would have much to share with you.

SLIDE 6: FORCE HEADQUARTERS CHILD PROTECTION FOCAL POINT – WITHIN FORCE HEADQUARTERS (1/2)



NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Everyone at Force Headquarters is involved in child protection activities. The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point should be familiar with the activities of all staff functions and work with them to ensure that child protection is effectively mainstreamed.

Handout: Force Headquarters Structure

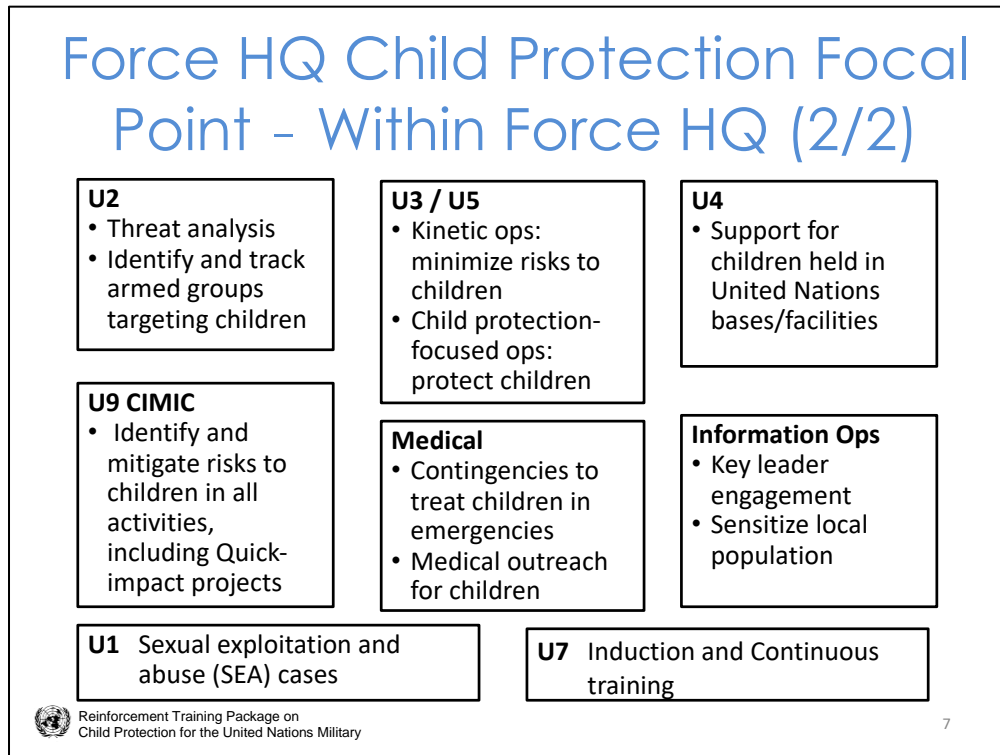


**Group Activity**

Review the Force Headquarters structure with learners, explain the U-level, and initiate a group activity. Divide learners into groups (pairs, tables, other) and ask them to identify how each function (U1-U9) can contribute to child protection. Allow five minutes for discussion, then ask the groups to populate the boxes in slide 7.

SLIDE 7: FORCE HEADQUARTERS CHILD PROTECTION FOCAL POINT – WITHIN FORCE HEADQUARTERS (2/2)





### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Everyone in Force Headquarters is involved in Child Protection activities. The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point should be familiar with the activities of all staff functions and work with them to ensure that child protection is effectively mainstreamed.

*The slide shows boxes for each U function. Ask each group to provide an example of how U functions can contribute to child protection, and fill in the boxes in the slide.*

#### EXAMPLES

**U2:** Maintains an ongoing analysis of the prevailing threats to children in each part of the mission area, identifies trends, and alleged perpetrators, and seeks to provide early warning of risks of grave violations against children to the Force. U2 should know which armed groups are recruiting and using children. Information comes from JMAC, United Nations Police, military patrol and Civil Affairs reports, etc.

**U3/U5:** U3 conducts operations and may plan operations to be executed over a short period of time (e.g., three days); U5 plans future operations. During the execution of military operations, commands should assess the likelihood of any grave violations and enact contingency plans accordingly.

There are two main lines of activity:

1. Ensuring that all kinetic operations assess the potential risks of harm for children (e.g., children may be harmed directly, accidentally be detained, separated

- from their caregivers, forced to participate in acts of violence) and identify measures to reduce the risk. For example, your unit is going to conduct a deliberate operation against an uncooperative armed group that is based in a village, and if children may participate in combat against the military personnel. How can you reduce the risk of harming children (and other civilians) living in the village? Mortaring the village risks injuring not only the armed group but also civilians.
2. Conducting deliberate operations to protect children, such as preventing an armed group from attacking a village.

**U4:** U4 does not actually have any resources but can request resources from Mission Support to plan for and respond to the treatment of children subjected to grave violations. One key area is supporting the establishment of holding facilities in battalion bases. If apprehended, children should not be held for more than 48 hours before being handed over to host State child protection authorities or humanitarian child protection actors for interim care. Moreover, children should be separated from adults in all holding facilities, and boys from girls.

**U9:** CIMIC liaises with civilian agencies and may be a valuable source of information about children at risk. It is the focus for quick-impact projects (QIPs) such as building wells, repairing schools, donating books and writing material, etc. Many of these projects either support children directly or have an indirect impact on children. They should be carefully assessed for potential detrimental impacts on children.

**Medical:** Very sick and/or injured children may be treated at a United Nations military base, as a last resort. Contingency plans need to be made for the priority treatment of injured children and medical evacuations; and this must be rehearsed. Contingency plans should also include medical assistance to be provided to children who were either taking part in hostilities or collateral damage. Children temporarily held at a United Nations military base will need preliminary medical examinations, which need to be formalized as a procedure (see SOPs).

Medical outreach refers to instances whereby a medical team (from a unit or level 2 hospital) visits a village or local hospital to provide medical support. Medical teams may also support NGOs carrying out inoculation programmes, which will likely prioritize aid to children (especially infants). Each event has to be planned, the risks to children identified, and action/measures taken to reduce the risk.

**Information operations:** The military component will likely carry out key leadership engagement activities with senior members of the host country's military at the national and provincial levels, as well as with leaders of armed group. A component of this engagement will be to persuade them to stop the recruitment and use of children. Other information operations, initiatives may include conducting awareness sessions to sensitize villagers to the risks that their children face and what actions they can take to reduce the risks (e.g., escorts to go to school).

**U1:** U1 deals with sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) cases, some of which may involve children.

**U7:** Child protection training will be conducted as part of induction training and as continuous (refresher) training with the rotation of units.

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SLIDE 8: FORCE HEADQUARTERS CHILD PROTECTION FOCAL POINT – SECTOR/BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS, UNITS AND UNITED NATIONS MILITARY OBSERVER TEAM SITES

## Force HQ Child Protection Focal Point – Sector/Brigade HQ, Units, UNMO Team Sites

- Establish focal point network and ensure information flow so as to maintain situational awareness, including an alert system on the six grave violations
- Ensure that Force HQ child protection directions are understood and implemented
- Support Sector/Brigade HQ, unit, UNMO team site focal points in operations and training

### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point is responsible for ensuring that the information flow and the Alert System are functioning efficiently.

 Show Slide 3 – Military Component Child Protection Focal Point System again. It is important that learners recognize the military chain of command in United Nations missions. Force Headquarters provides directions to sector/brigade headquarters, which in turn will direct battalions and team sites in the sector.

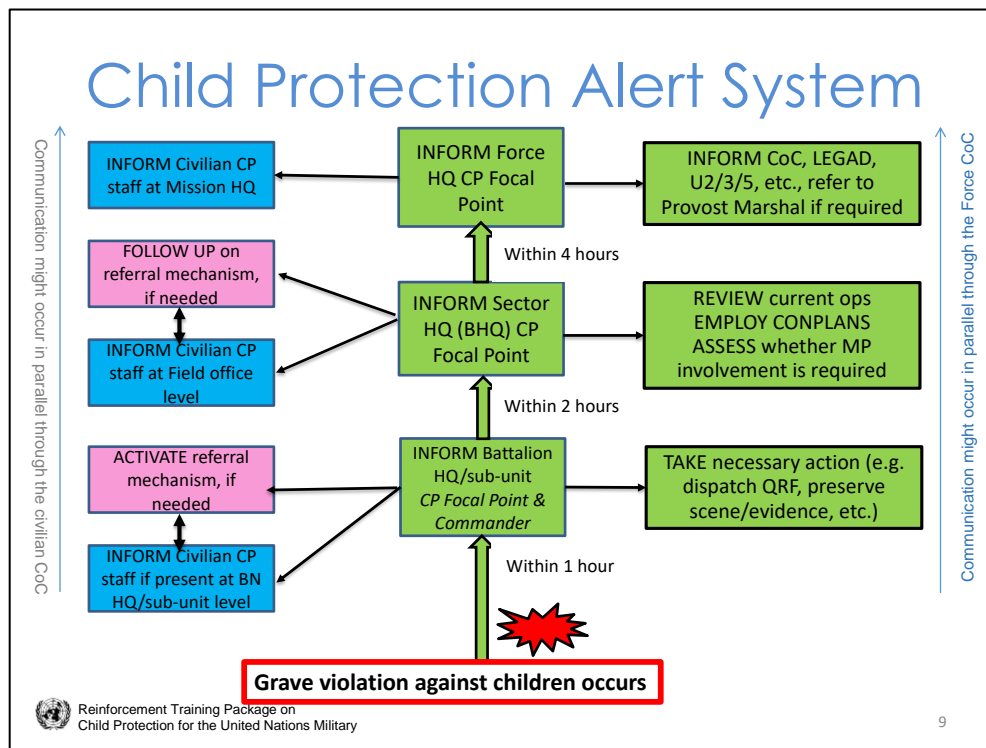
That means, the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point will not normally communicate directly with an infantry battalion in a sector. The Focal Point may, however, communicate with force troops (e.g., engineers) who are not under the command of sector/brigade headquarters.

Maintaining situational awareness and issuing timely directions are always a challenge for Force Headquarters. The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point is key to maintaining situational awareness in relation to child protection issues and achieves this through the focal point network (see slide 3) with sector/brigade and force troops. Sectors can be linked to the units they command and to the UNMO team sites in their area of responsibility. The main reason for this network is to alert Force and sector/brigade headquarters when children are in danger, including information on grave violations against children, so that they may take action to preempt the threat. This alert system may also trigger an investigation into an action that has already taken place. Each mission has its own procedures for an alert system and communication with the Force, Child Protection, and other parts of the Mission to ensure a coordinated response.

Force Headquarters issue directions through the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection (to be examined subsequently) and formal orders. It is the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point's responsibility to track the directions, support other headquarters and units in implementing them, and confirm that they have been implemented.

The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point should establish good relations with the civilian Child Protection staff in the mission and the designated Child Protection Focal Point at sector/brigade headquarters in order to better support the sector/brigade, units and UNMO with their operations and training requirements.

SLIDE 9: CHILD PROTECTION ALERT SYSTEM



NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The Child Protection Alert System triggers early/timely involvement of the Child Protection Section/Unit and other mission actors to pre-empt threats to children.

☞ Use the slide builds and explain to learners:

- The Child Protection Alert System feeds into the Civilian Protection Alert System. It has an instruction that the mission Child Protection staff should be notified as a priority, so that the appropriate child protection network can be activated as required.

Each mission has its own alert system, but all follow the same generic outline through the chain of command.

In this slide, a member of the force has come across information about grave violations against children in the field. He/she may be able to take immediate action to respond to the violation, and must alert the battalion headquarters and other subordinate units' military Child Protection Focal Points afterwards.

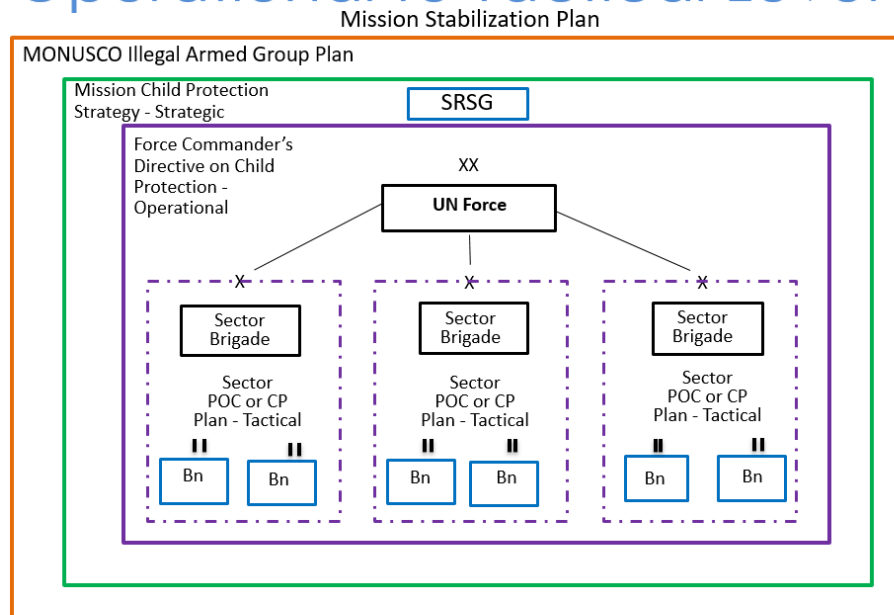
If he/she assesses that the risk cannot be prevented or the threat is not imminent, he/she must alert the battalion headquarters and other subordinate units' military

Child Protection Focal Points so that others may take action. In turn, they shall then alert the Force Headquarters military Child Protection Focal Points and the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit in mission Headquarters.

In the absence of a battalion headquarters and/or other subordinate units' military Child Protection Focal Point, the sector/brigade headquarters or Force Headquarters military Child Protection Focal Point must be contacted. The Force Headquarters military Child Protection Focal Point must be informed and will then decide what further actions might be required, in liaison with the civilian Child Protection Section/Unit.

SLIDE 10: OPERATIONAL TO TACTICAL LEVEL

## Operational to Tactical Level



NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The Force Child Protection Plan is part of a larger picture, so it must be integrated/mainstreamed.

- This slide outlines the framework of plans in MONUSCO. Other missions may use different terminology. The Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection is mission specific and issued at the strategic level, in accordance with DPKO/DFS/DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations. The peacekeeping force deployed at each mission should have developed mission-specific child protection

directions based on the particular Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection, in consultation with the civilian Child Protection staff. Usually, the mission framework is articulated in a Mission Stabilization Plan. MONUSCO's mandate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo also drove the development of an Illegal Armed Group Plan.

It is imperative to implement the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection in close coordination with other mission plans and directives. Operational level plans and orders are translated into tactical level plans and activities. Coordination at the sector/brigade and field office levels is essential for the effective implementation of the child protection mandate.

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SLIDE 11: FORCE HEADQUARTERS CHILD PROTECTION FOCAL POINT – MUST DOS

## Force HQ Child Protection Focal Point – Must Dos

- Maintain a good relationship with civilian Child Protection staff
- Engage all Force HQ staff functions so as to influence assessment and planning of operations
- Support subordinate child protection focal points in military components
- Share information with civilian child protection partners

### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point's primary responsibilities:

- Maintain good relations with the Child Protection Section/staff, so that military and civilian components work effectively together
- Engage all Force Headquarters staff functions to inform the assessment and planning of child protection operations (mainstreaming)
- Support the Child Protection Focal Points in the military component of the mission
- Share Information (upwards, downwards, sideways) with relevant child protection partners

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SLIDE 12: DIRECTIONS TO SECTOR/BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS, UNITS AND UNITED NATIONS  
MILITARY OBSERVER TEAM SITES (1/2)

## Directions to Sector/Brigade HQ, Units and UNMO Team Sites (1/2)

### Group Activity

- What essential directions should Force HQ issue, and in what format?
- What child protection guidance would sector/brigade HQ, units and UNMO team sites expect from Force HQ?

### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)



This part of the lesson will focus on directions relating to child protection issued by Force Headquarters to sector/brigade headquarters, units and UNMO team sites.

Divide learners into groups and ask them to discuss the following question:  
*What essential directions should Force Headquarters issue, and in what format?*

Allow five minutes for discussion.



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SLIDE 13: DIRECTIONS TO SECTOR/BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS, UNITS AND UNITED NATIONS  
MILITARY OBSERVER TEAM SITES (2/2)

## Directions to Sector/Brigade HQ, Units and UNMO Team Sites (2/2)

### Group Activity (contd.)

- Roles and responsibilities
- Coordination and reporting mechanisms
- Procedures

### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Directions from Force Headquarters must be comprehensive with regard to the responsibilities of the Child Protection Focal Points at each level.

☛ First of all, directions from Force Headquarters must be very clear about the child protection roles and responsibilities for each level. They should spell out what the sectors are required to do.

Secondly, the roles of the reporting and coordination mechanisms must be defined so that everyone understands how the alert system works, to whom reports should be submitted, and from whom to seek advice and support.

Thirdly, procedures to cover all eventualities must be in place: what action should be taken when a child surrenders; what are the procedures for detaining a child; how to secure an incident area for subsequent investigation, etc.

Directions from Force Headquarters should be issued in written format and regularly reviewed. Some directions may be in the form of operational orders (OPORDs) and further broken down into fragmentary orders (FRAGOs). Although force SOPs will contain detailed procedures, the main document is the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection.

## SLIDE 14: FORCE COMMANDER'S DIRECTIVE ON CHILD PROTECTION

## Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection

- Directions to subordinates on key issues
- Drafted by staff, in conjunction with civilian Child Protection staff
- Signed by Force Commander (authority may be delegated, but not responsibility)
- Forwarded to SRSG and other mission components/sections
- Office of Military Affairs, DPO
- DPO Child Protection Team

### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The Force Commander should be actively involved in the preparation of the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection so that it reflects his/her views.

*☞ This slide contains some preliminary notes on the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection (an actual directive and the sample directive (that serves as a template) will be examined later).*

☛ Force Headquarters will issue directives covering key concerns (e.g., sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), civilian protection, child protection, detention, operational pace during unit rotations, etc.). It is important that the directives be comprehensive and cover all the aspects of a subject area so that they may be valid for a long time.

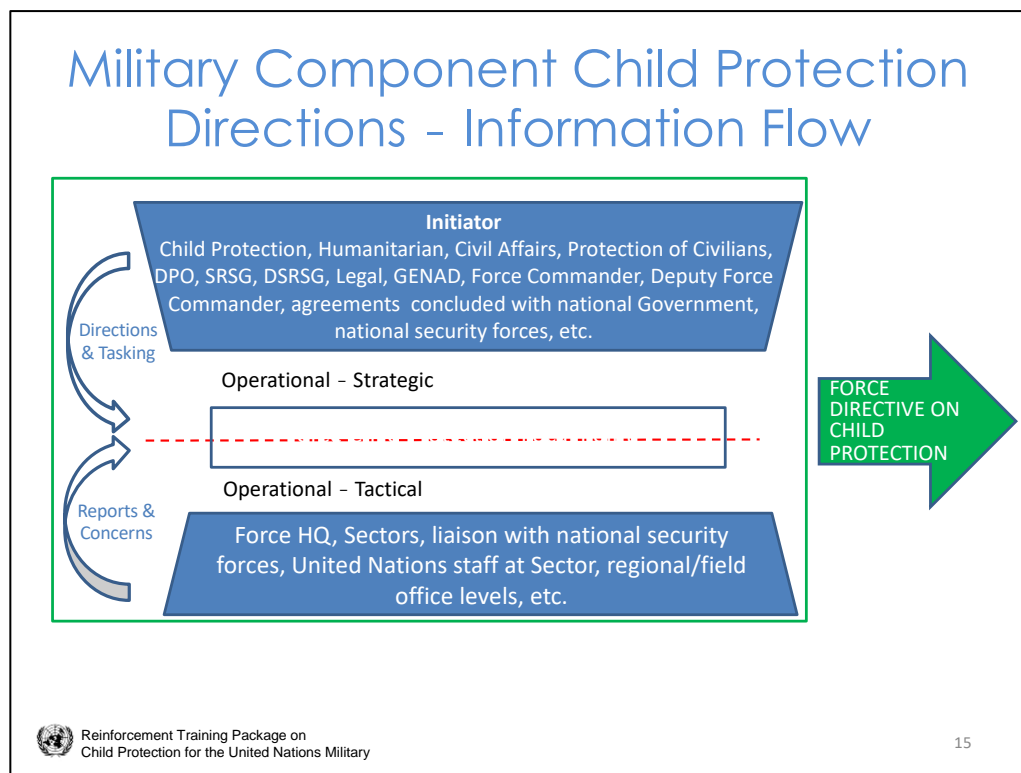
One of the first things you should do upon arrival at the mission is to locate the Force Commander's directives and make sure that you are up to date on them. There should be a stand-alone Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection, so that military personnel have a specific go-to document on what needs to be done with regard to implementing the Child Protection mandate.

The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point is responsible for drafting the Force Commander's Directive in close coordination and consultation with the civilian

Child Protection staff and other functions in the mission, as necessary. Although it is the Focal Point who drafts the Directive, the Force Commander should provide initial directions, review the drafts, and sign the final product. The Force Commander is also responsible for the implementation of the Directive. The key recipients and users of the Directive are staff at Force and sector/brigade headquarters, units and UNMO team sites.

Directives are normally copied to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in charge of the mission, the appropriate civilian sections at mission headquarters, and the Office of Military Affairs (OMA) in DPO, where they may be reviewed to ensure that they are compliant with the relevant DPO policies, in consultation with the DPO child protection team.

SLIDE 15: MILITARY COMPONENT CHILD PROTECTION DIRECTIONS – INFORMATION FLOW



NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The military child protection directions are informed by strategic and tactical operational guidance, as set out above, and must reflect the situation.

- The different sections in a mission issue directions, (see top text box), as they are familiar with the realities, concerns and issues on the ground, at the operational level (see bottom text box). The military component's Child Protection Focal Point is at the centre (see middle text box) and has to issue guidance to the military personnel .

His/her role is to balance directions from above and the realities on the ground and produce a practical document in consultation with the civilian Child Protection staff, who is the lead for the implementation of the mission's child protection mandate.

The Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection cannot provide directions on how to resolve every single situation at the tactical level. Therefore, the military Child Protection Focal Point is a key resource person to provide additional guidance, if necessary.

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SLIDE 16: MAINSTREAMING CHILD PROTECTION INTO MILITARY OPERATIONS

## Mainstreaming Child Protection into Military Operations

- Integrate a child protection focus into military ops:

For example:

- Assign task to a specific Brigade to:
  - Enable, strike, withdraw in order to neutralize ZZZ Armed Group
- Support child protection actions by:
  - Designating NO FIRE areas/zones
  - Isolating locations for children associated with armed forces/groups

**Support activities cannot be carried out in isolation;  
they must be part of integrated mission planning**

### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Child protection must be mainstreamed into military operations and specific activities aimed at protecting children must be included when planning and conducting military operations.

- Practically every military operation has child protection consequences. Mainstreaming child protection is crucial to ensure that the “do no harm” principle is taken into account and the mission's child protection goals are achieved.

SLIDE 17: MAINSTREAMING CHILD PROTECTION – LEARNING ACTIVITY/GROUP DISCUSSION

## Mainstreaming Child Protection

### Learning Activity / Group Discussion

Discuss a recent/past mission experience and identify child protection mainstreaming activities undertaken:

- What type of operations?
- What type of activities?
- Were they successful?
- Why/Why not?



### Learning Activity/Group Discussion

Divide learners into small groups (at a table or around a flip chart/whiteboard).

 Ask learners the questions on the slide and initiate a discussion based on their responses.

*Emphasize the distinction between community outreach activities and child protection mainstreaming activities.*


## SLIDE 18: MONUSCO FORCE COMMANDER'S DIRECTIVE ON CHILD PROTECTION

# MONUSCO Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection

UNCLASSIFIED-GENERAL

**UNITED NATIONS**

United Nations Organization  
Stabilization Mission in the  
Democratic Republic of the  
Congo



**MONUSCO**  
GOMA

**NATIONS UNIES**

Mission de l'Organisation des  
Nations Unies pour la Stabilité  
en République Démocratique du  
Congo


DATE: 10 January 2021  
NO: 50 /MONUSCO/FC

**FORCE COMMANDER'S DIRECTIVE – PROTECTION OF CHILDREN BY MONUSCO FORCE**

Reference: UNDPKO/DFS Policy on Mainstreaming the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict within UN Peacekeeping Operations dated 1 Jun 2009.

**GENERAL**

1. **Aim.** The aim of this Directive is to set out how FHQ, Sectors and MILOBs implement plans and procedures on how to protect children during military activities within the legal framework. Protection of children is vital to the Mission's Protection of Civilians (POC) mandate. Operational effectiveness can only be achieved if due consideration of child protection is included in planning and the Force must be proactive and responsive when and where the lives of children are at risk.
2. **Situation.** MONUSCO Force HQ has been mandated by the Security Council to ensure that Child Protection concerns are integrated into all Ops from the strategic to the tactical. Grave violations against children continue to be committed in the MONUSCO AOR. Deliberate targeting of children, including the recruitment of thousands of boys and girls into armed groups is frequent with trends showing an increase. This activity directly contributes to the destabilisation of the population and constitutes a POC threat.



Reinforce  
Child Protection

18

## NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Every mission that has a child protection mandate will have a Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection. The context and content of the directive will vary from mission to mission.

Handout: MONUSCO Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection, 2021. The successful adoption and implementation of the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection in MONUSCO led to the series of child protection directives in MINUSCA (2018), UNMISS (2019, updated in 2020) and MINUSMA (2020).

 Go over the directive with learners; point out the supporting roles of each staff function (see para. 7).

Note that paragraph 6 covers the mission-specific plan, act, alert, and protect framework, which provides military components a framework to mainstream child protection into military responses at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

Suggest that learners read the directive more carefully in their own time. Each directive has to be adapted to the specific child protection needs of the respective mission.

## SLIDE 19: SAMPLE FORCE COMMANDER'S DIRECTIVE ON CHILD PROTECTION (1/2)


## Sample Force Commander's Child Protection Directive (1/2)

- Use the generic directive/template as a guide
- Details will differ from mission to mission
- Preparation: identify all existing directions relating to child protection in the mission
- Coordinate closely with the civilian Child Protection staff when drafting the Directive
- Follow-up the Directive to ensure that it has been received and implemented
- Update/re-issue Directive, as necessary

## NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The sample Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection must be adapted to the specific child protection context of each mission.

Handout/circulate: Sample Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection

 *This is a sample Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection that serves as a template. It can be found in annex 5a of DPO/DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations (2023):*

- Go over the slide, then circulate the sample Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection
- Explain that it must be adapted to the specific mission context, in close consultation with the civilian Child Protection staff. See the other annexes in the Manual (specifically annex 5b (sample directive on the protection of schools and universities against military use); annex 5c (Sample Force Commander's directive prohibiting child labour); and annex 9 (Early warning indicators of the six grave violations)).

The sample directive is a template as to what might be included in a Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection. Every Mission may have its own format for its Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection, and every Force

Commander may have his/her own ideas as to what it should include. The content will also vary depending on the mission's mandate, its child protection challenges, the Child Protection staff's advice on mandate implementation in that particular mission context, and how the mission is organized. In order to harmonize the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection across the missions, Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Points should use this sample child protection directive template as a basis for updating the mission's existing directive or developing a new directive.

When planning the Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection, one of the first tasks is to identify all existing directives relating to child protection, including those at Force Headquarters, DPO and the mission. The Force Commander's directive should reflect the mission's child protection directions and relevant DPO policies and guidance.

The drafting lead (usually the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point) should liaise with the other staff functions at Force Headquarters, as well as coordinate with the Child Protection staff in the mission and obtain his/her buy-in. It would not be desirable to issue the directive only to have the Child Protection staff disagree with parts of it, or to realize that it is not aligned with DPKO/DFS/DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations

Once issued, the Force Commander's directive must be followed up, ideally by a visit to/communication with sector/brigade headquarters and tactical level units to confirm that it has been received and understood, and to identify how the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point can assist the other focal points with its implementation. The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point should conduct such visits with the Child Protection staff, whenever there is Force rotation. The directive should be reissued on a quarterly basis to ensure that all Force rotations receive the directive.



## Sample Force Commander's Child Protection Directive (2/2)

### Monitoring and evaluation

- The Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection should be reviewed every two years, and at minimum, should include:
  - Qualitative survey distributed to all Force members
  - Quantitative interviews with key mission stakeholders
  - Focus group discussion/Scenario-based exercises



### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Simply issuing a Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection is not enough; implementing it, and monitoring and evaluating its implementation are critical.

☛ The Force Commander's directive must be evaluated and reviewed regularly by the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point and the civilian Child Protection staff in the mission in collaboration with other Child Protection Focal Points in the military component to assess progress in its implementation, its effectiveness and any problems or gaps arising during its implementation. This should be done every two years, and each time there is a change in the Mission Concept and Force Concept of Operations (CONOPS).

☛ At a minimum, the review should include:

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

The implementation of the Directive is the responsibility of the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point, under the authority of the Force Commander. Guidance should be sought from the Child Protection staff and DPO's Child Protection Team as to whether the annual evaluation of the implementation of the directive should be conducted by, or in consultation with/with the support of United Nations Headquarters.

## SLIDE 21: TAKEAWAYS

## Takeaways

- The Force HQ Child Protection Focal Point has a key role to play in mainstreaming child protection in the military component
- Interaction with the mission Child Protection staff is essential
- Timely information flow is vital to be pre-emptive in protecting children
- The Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection is a tool to provide comprehensive direction to the Force – **it must be re-issued, monitored, and evaluated** on a regular basis

## Summary

### Takeaways from Lesson 3.4:

- The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point has a key role to play in mainstreaming child protection in the military component
- Interaction with the mission Child Protection staff is essential
- Timely information flow is vital to be pre-emptive in protecting children
- The Force Commander's Directive on Child Protection is a tool to provide comprehensive direction to the Force – it must be re-issued, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis

## SLIDE 22: REFERENCES

## References

- United Nations, DPKO/DFS/DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations, 2017
- MONUSCO Force Commander's Directive – Protection of Children by MONUSCO Force (50/MONUSCO/FC), 16 January 2021
- United Nations, Sample Terms of Reference for Child Protection Focal Points, Annex 3a, DPO/DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations, 2023
- United Nations, DPO/DPPA Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations, 2023

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### SLIDE 23: QUESTIONS

## Questions



NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

- ☞ *Allow sufficient time for questions to be asked/answered. Actively encourage questions from learners.*

