

Lesson 3.9 UNMO STM Learning Activity Media Relations Role Playing Exercise

In this role-playing exercise with a military scenario, UNMOs in training should put into practice the knowledge on developing positive media relations and managing interviews presented in UNMO STM Lesson 3.9



Learning Activity Time Required:

10 minutes	activity introduction and instructions, and reading scenario
20 minutes	role-playing exercise
05 minutes	debrief in small groups
10 minutes	debrief in plenary group
Total time:	45 minutes

Gamagara Ceasefire Violation Scenario

The current crisis in Naraland (see attached map), a fictitious island country off the eastern coast of Southern Africa, has its origins in pre-colonial times. In the 1800s the Kambo tribe was forced to flee from its ancestral lands by the more powerful Mananca. The Mananca retained possession of the land now called Manancaland, while the Kambo eventually settled east of the Mananca, in what is now the province of Kambona. The Kambo have never abandoned their claims to Manancaland.

During the 1960s, the Kambo launched an unprovoked attack on Manancaland, which the Mananca successfully halted. The areas held by the belligerent parties at the end of those hostilities established the current provincial boundaries. Those boundaries have never been accepted by belligerents, despite efforts by the Naraland Government to mediate. Since then, repeated minor combats have taken place between the two provinces and both sides have formed militias that have caches of light weapons and landmines at their disposal.

In recent times, the Kambona Liberation Movement (KLM) and the Manancaland Resistance Movement (MRM) have launched several attacks on each other's provinces. Despite heavy fighting which has resulted in a large number of casualties, especially among the civilian population, neither of the belligerents has been able to achieve its military objectives. The Naraland Government was able to negotiate a ceasefire (the Treaty of Windhoek) and both parties agreed to international mediation and intervention.

The UN has responded by deploying an observer mission, the United Nations Mission in Naraland (UNMIN), to monitor the belligerent parties. The Treaty of Windhoek set in motion the establishment of a demilitarized zone (DMZ) and disarmament of militias.

UNMIN has now been deployed for 8 months and is well established. During the past month, in particular the last 10 days, various incidents have occurred that indicate an

upsurge in tension among the two parties, including several shooting incidents, reports of smuggling, unrest and recruitment in the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, and evidence of freshly laid anti-personnel mines.

Also there is evidence of a boom in the local economy, and everyone seems to be getting some form of benefit from the UN being there. Last week the local religious leader informed that the prostitution situation was getting out of control. He stated that UN personnel were approaching young ladies for help with housekeeping, but once inside the UN compound, ladies were used as sexual workers, and some were living with UN military. Many of the parents of these young women have complained to the religious leader and now they are blaming Senior UNMO for allowing this to happen.

As a result, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has tasked the Chief Military Observer to instruct all Sector Commanders to arrange meetings with the local rebel commanders and local civil authorities in order to stabilize the situation and reaffirm their commitment to the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and also the respect of the UN code of conduct.

Activity Guidelines:

1. Use the first few minutes to distribute and allow the participants to read through the scenario background and instructions.
2. Divide the participants into four - five groups of equal size.
3. Designate at least one instructor/facilitator for each group to act as reporter (Kambonan Local Reporter) and one cameraman with video camera (Media professionals will be desired)
4. It is advisable for PKTC to designate a second reporter with photo camera (International Newspaper Press Reporter). This reporter should design a newspaper front page with a photo of the most suitable participant and the correspondent headline, and provide the front page to each group during the debriefing in the plenary discussion.
5. Ensure that all participants' interviews are recorded to report back to the group after the role-playing exercise.
6. Allow each group to study its own brief and decide on their strategy. Preferably each participant group member should be interviewed playing the role of Military Observer.
7. Allow the interviewing to take place according to the scenario until 5 minutes before the end of the exercise.
8. Stop interviews 5 minutes before the end of the exercise. Have each of the groups evaluate their performance in screening the interviews, and report back to the class as a whole during the debriefing in the plenary discussion.

9. As instructors/facilitators, monitor the progress and content of the interviews and regularly remind participants of the objective of the exercise, without interfering unduly.

Confidential Brief for UN Military Observer

You are the Senior UNMO in Sector East. You have been authorised and allowed to meet with the local press to be interviewed. You have invited the reporters to a meeting to discuss the escalating tension, sporadic clashes and recent incidents in your sector.

During the meeting at your headquarters, you should:

- Explain the mandate of UNMIN and how the UN is working on the solutions to their problems within the confines of the ceasefire agreement.
- Answer reporters' questions based on the facts you have.
- Follow the instructions on how to manage an interview.

You do not have any hard evidence on the prostitution allegations and the involvement of UN personnel in this issue; but you would very much like to support an investigation into this allegation.

You must stick to the facts and be transparent in all answers.

Confidential Brief for the DS Kambonan Local Reporter

You are a Kambonan Local Reporter in the area. You have been invited to the UN base to interview a Senior UNMO about the problems in UNMIN and recent incidents in your area.

At the interview with the UNMO, you should:

- Argue that before the deployment of the UNMOs, morality and local traditions were respected and families lived humbly but with dignity.
- Argue that UNMOs are living with local young women despite their strong religious beliefs, destroying and corrupting their families.
- Argue that not only are young ladies being treated as prostitutes, but that girls under 12 years old are also being targeted.
- Argue that parents of these young women and girls have denounced to the local authorities the rape of their relatives.
- Argue that both the parents and the local authorities are blaming the Senior UNMO for allowing this to happen.
- Argue that you have strong evidence on an SEA case committed by UNMOs against one of your relatives.
- Argue that the UN is no longer trusted or welcomed by the local population since Kambonan families are being disgraced by UNMOs.

You should use a tough language style throughout the interview. You are very emotional and angry. From time to time you may interrupt the UN Military Observer. Remember the UN presence in your country is not welcome, you consider them an occupational force.

Confidential Brief for International Newspaper Press Reporter (OPTIONAL)

You are an International Newspaper Press Reporter accredited to UNMIN in the area. You have been invited to the UN base to conduct an interview of Senior UNMO about the problems in UNMIN and recent incidents in your area.

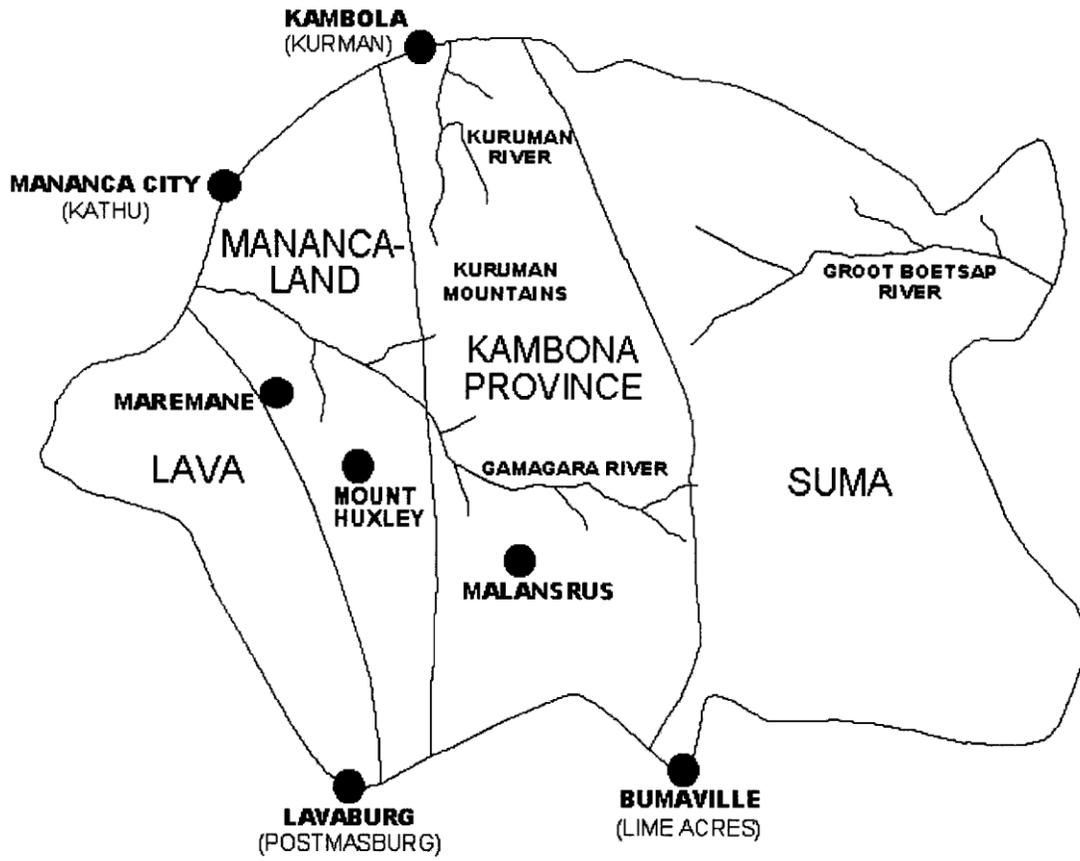
At the interview with the UNMO, you should:

- Argue that the UN appears to be on the side of the MRM because most of the people working for the UN as interpreters, drivers, cleaners and others are Manancans.
- Argue that on several occasions local people had reported that armed men wearing MRM fatigues and webbing had been seen in the DMZ and that you had reported this information to the UN. Because the UN has done nothing to stop the MRM, you have the firm belief that the UN holds a biased attitude.
- Argue that you have information that the MRM is caching arms on the banks of the old Gamagara river bed; if the UN is not going to do anything to stop the MRM, you think the KLM certainly will.

You have to capture the most incriminating phrase stated by the interviewed participant, together with a self explanatory picture of him/her to design your newspaper's front page.

You are more interested in reporting on the conflict rather than on the peace process itself. You have been recently hired by your newspaper and consequently you have to demonstrate your ability to catch worldwide attention and increase the sales of your newspaper.

Map of Naraland



Media Relations Check List

Don'ts

- Do not offer your personal opinion about the peace process or about United Nations activities. Any answer you provide may be regarded as an official opinion. If your answer does not accord with official policy, it may reflect badly on the mission and the Organization.
- Do not answer questions that are speculative, such as "What would happen if...?". You might provide incorrect information which could jeopardize the mission.
- Do not give any information about the mission's security plans or procedures. In any organization, even an open one like the United Nations, some information is privileged and may not be disclosed. Information affecting security is confidential.
- Do not discuss the state or activities of local or other combatant forces.
- Do not appear to support or favour one side over another. Remember at all times that you are impartial.

Dos

- Always refer reporters to United Nations information personnel if they ask you any questions that you are not authorized to answer. Referring to an authorized person is always better than giving an incorrect answer.
- Always be polite with media reporters, even if they appear rude or unfriendly. They may be under pressure to report the news; you should keep your professionalism and maintain an educated and polite attitude.
- Stick to facts; they can't be disputed.
- Be brief and precise. Time is the main limitation of modern media. Only so much news and images fit per minute. If you say too much or if you are unclear, the opportunity to project a positive image might be lost.
- The mandate of a United Nations peacekeeping mission is your main mission. Everything you have been tasked to accomplish is designed to support the mandate.

How You Can Manage an Interview

- ☑ The basic rules for handling an interview are few and simple. The camera or the reporter should not intimidate you. You are a professional and you are executing your mission in a highly professional manner.
- ☑ Always look at the reporter. Never look at the camera. Looking at the camera will give viewers the impression that you are not behaving naturally.
- ☑ Listen carefully to each question, to avoid making mistakes or losing face by giving an incorrect answer. You may ask the reporter to repeat a question, if you like. Gain time to compose your answer. Then stick to what you know and what you know you can say.
- ☑ Speak naturally and give facts, avoiding exaggerated movements with your hands and face. Always decline to answer questions you are not authorized to answer, or about which you may not be sure.
- ☑ If you say “no comment”, the reporter and the public will have the impression that you are trying to hide something. Your best answer would be “I don’t know” or to refer to a qualified officer.
- ☑ Make small sentences rather than answering questions with a “yes” or “no”. For example, do not answer “yes” to the question “Do you like your work?” Just say “I enjoy my work with the United Nations” or give a similarly short and clear answer.
- ☑ Avoid the expression “off the record” with a reporter. When you use it, you are suggesting that what you say is meant only for that reporter and should not be published or transmitted. That is not a wise practice - you should never assume that anything you say will be considered “off the record”. If you say something of interest, the reporter may decide to use it. Also, in some countries, reporters are not familiar with that expression. If you have any doubt about the matter, you should decline to answer.
- ☑ Because you are a peacekeeper, you represent the United Nations 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Whatever you may say may be perceived as the opinion of the Organization. Likewise, whatever you say on a blog or post on a social networking site is also public. While these may be personal activities, they are widely available and easily searched. So take care!
- ☑ Provide only information you are authorized to provide according to the guidelines. If you do not have complete guidelines, remember not to compromise the security of the peace operation, its mission and its people.