



# Module 4: ENGAGING WITH PARTIES TO CONFLICT



# Learning objectives

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Describe preparatory steps needed before engaging with parties to conflict
- Discuss key considerations when engaging with parties to conflict, particularly on
  - Action plans
  - The release and reintegration of associated children



## Group discussion: engaging with parties to conflict

- What has been your experience of engaging with parties to conflict?
- Are you engaging with listed parties *only* or also with non-listed parties?
- What are the mission's objectives for engagement?
- Do other mission components engage with parties to conflict?



# Challenges of engaging with parties to conflict

- Access constraints
- Designation of party as a ‘terrorist entity’
- Fragmentation in party’s chain of command
- Party refusing to engage on children
- Lack of coordination on release and reintegration of associated children



# Why do you need to prepare?

- To focus on the right interlocutor(s)
- To adapt messages and approaches
- To comply with mission policies and practices
- To learn from the experience of and coordinate approaches with the mission and partners



# Preparation matters!

## Expected engagement

- DDR process
- Action plan
- Peace process

## Unexpected engagement

- Armed actor surrendering without warning
- Large number of children seeking protection in UN compounds/bases
- Government not able or willing to support DDR process



# Key considerations for engagement

- Attitudes/practices of mission leadership
- Rules and regulations on engagement
- Previous experiences with party to conflict
- Applicable legal framework
- Party to conflict's internal structure
- Party to conflict's motivations and interests



## Group discussion: engaging on action plans

- What has been your experience of engaging parties to conflict on action plans? What is working/not working?
- Why do parties to conflict agree to action plans? What aspects of action plans are worth emphasizing to them?





# Key aspects for a successful action plan

- ✓ Political interest of party
- ✓ Consistent advocacy
- ✓ Unconditional access
- ✓ Effective coordination
- ✓ Context-specific action plan
- ✓ Regular monitoring of implementation
- ✓ Resources for implementation



# Group discussion:

## Release and reintegration of associated children

- What are some common mistakes in engaging with parties on DDR for children? How can you avoid making them?



# Group exercise: preparing for engagement

## Tasks:

- 1) Identify a current child protection issue in your mission area that requires engagement with a party to conflict
- 2) Discuss the following questions:
  - a) Are you engaging with the right person(s)?
  - b) What is the party's interest in engagement?
  - c) What are the mission's attitudes towards this party?
  - d) What approach would be best suited for this engagement?



# Takeaways

- Take advantage of your mandate and political space to engage with parties to conflict
- It's important to have a good understanding of relevant parties to conflict in your mission area and the best person(s) within the party to talk to
- Avoid “one-size-fits-all” approaches
- Be aware of the links between your engagement with a party to conflict and the mission's engagement

