

Lesson 1.5
UN Peacekeeping Strategic Communications and Public Information

Learning Outcomes

- Explain why strategic communications matters in addressing MDMH.
- Describe UN Peacekeeping's approach to strategic communications and public information.
- Differentiate strategic communications and communicating strategically.
- Explain how you can contribute to strategic communications, within your existing roles.

Lesson Contents

- Strategic communications and public information defined.
- Strategic communications pillars.
- Strategic communications and communicating strategically.
- Essential roles of mission staff and uniformed components.

References

UNCLASSIFIED

United Nations
Department of Global Communications
Department of Peace Operations
Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
Department of Operational Support Ref. 2022/23

Policy

Strategic Communications in Peace Operations

Approved by: USG DGC
USG DPO
USG DPPA

Effective date:

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DECLASSIFIED

United Nations
Department of Peace Operations
Ref. [*Reference no.*, to be provided by KMG]

Policy

Roles and Responsibilities of Military Strategic Communications Officers

Approved by:	Jean-Pierre Lacroix, USG DPO
Effective date:	*[1st day of the month following approval]*
Contact:	*[Office responsible for holding & maintaining the Policy]*
Review date:	*[to be reviewed no later than this date (max 3 years)]*

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“ More than ever strategic communications is central to the success of the United Nations work amid global geopolitical tensions and complex conflicts where peacekeepers are facing terrorists, criminals and armed groups who use misinformation, disinformation and hate speech as weapons of war. Disinformation is dangerous and potentially deadly, transforming our blue flag from a symbol of security into a target for attack.”

Secretary-General António Guterres 12 July 2022

What is Strategic Communications

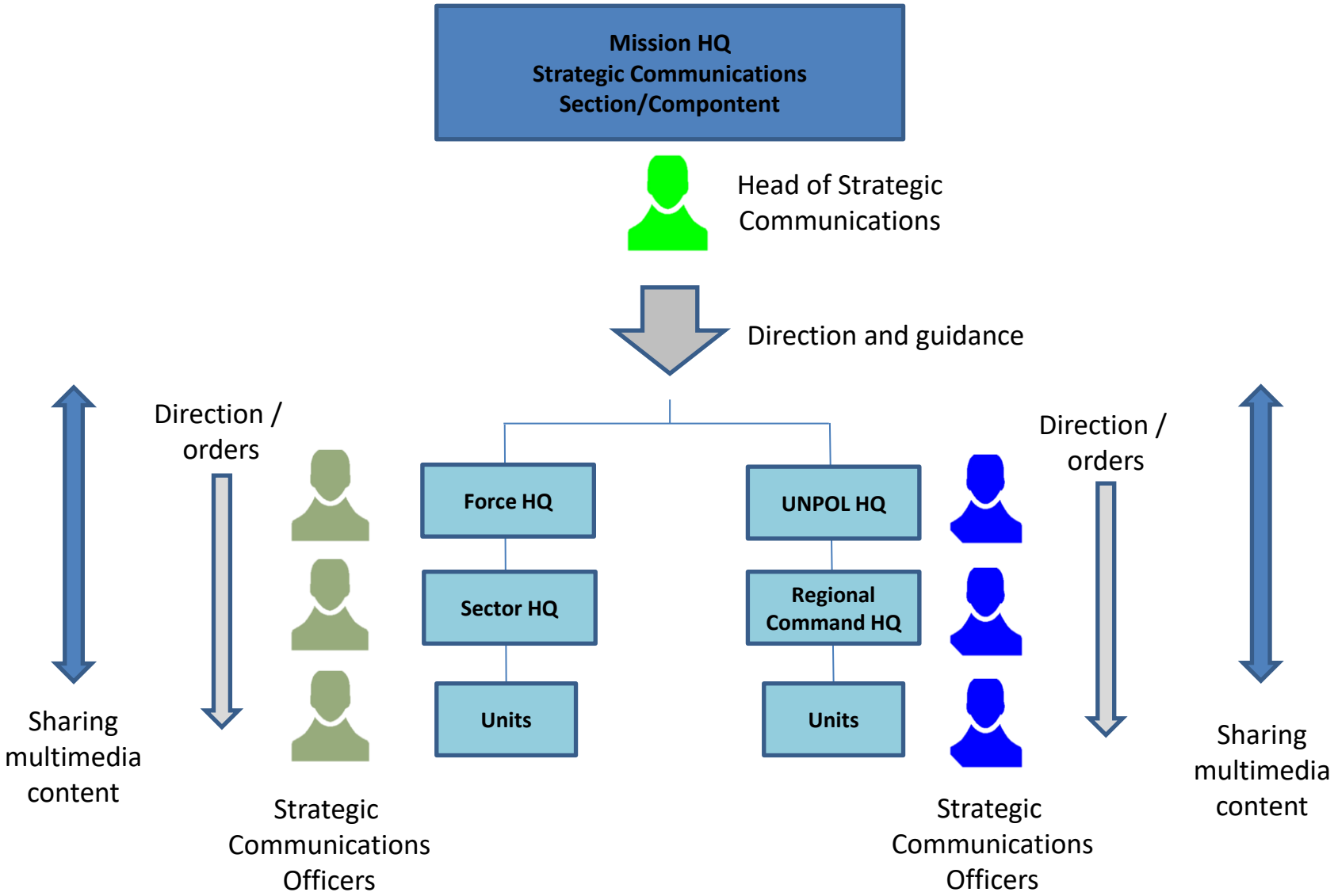
Purposeful or directed communication with the objective of building support for the mission, its mandate and activities as well as peace process and related host country activities, such as elections.

- a planned approach of disseminating information to achieve specific mission objectives.
- requires the consideration of objectives, audience(s), messages and content, as well as the platforms for dissemination.

Strategic Communications versus Public Information

- Strategic communications formulates communication strategies on priority mission issues.
- Public information focuses on providing timely and accurate information about a mission's activities, mandates and achievements to the public, locally and internationally.

Strategic Communications Structure



Roles of Unit Strategic Communications Officers

- Supporting the implementation of the mission's strategic communications strategy.
- Identifying opportunities and creating content to highlight the unit's actions and successes.
- Drafting media lines on activities and operations of the unit (*to be cleared by component and mission HQ*).
- Conduct outreach and engagement activities.
- Contribute to unit planning processes.

The Role of Unit Personnel

- All unit personnel can make important contributions to strategic communications, conducted under the direction of the Commanding Officer based on guidance from its higher-HQ.

- The misuse of social media by personnel can pose a significant threat to operational security. Commanding Officers are responsible for ensuring that the UN Guidelines for the Personal Use of Social Media are adhered to.

Strategic Communications and Communicating Strategically

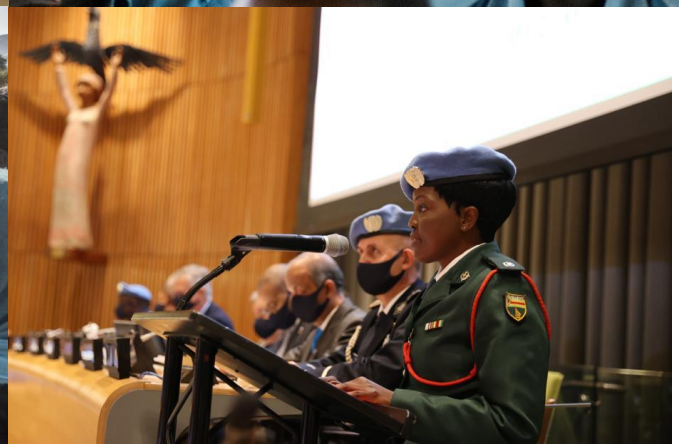
- **Strategic communications** provides a structured framework ensuring alignment with long-term mission objectives.
- **Communicating strategically** is an individual's ability to convey information in a way that is effective and objective-oriented, often adapting to the situation or audience at hand.

UN Peacekeeping Communicators

Who are the communicators in a mission ?





Strategic Communications Pillars

Addressing MDMH through:

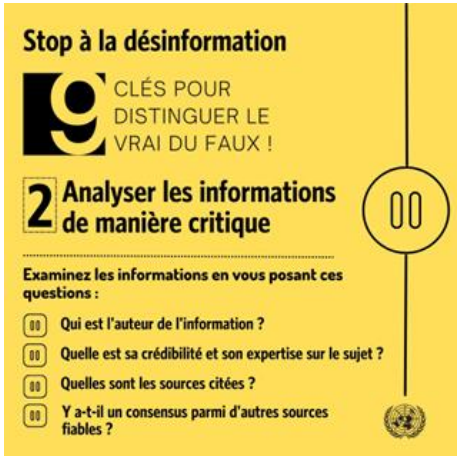
- Building trust and credibility
- Raising awareness
- Engaging with multiple audiences
- Monitoring information landscapes
- Adaptive response
- Leveraging partnerships

Mission Example: MONUSCO

- "This is a war that is going on through social media, the radio, and traditional news outlets," *Bintou Keita, Head of MONUSCO*.
- "From a smartphone, I will produce videos to echo good information," *Blessing Kasasi, UN workshop participant*.

Graphics from MONUSCO's Fight Against Disinformation campaign:







Take Aways

- Strategic communications is a political and operational necessity that is critical in enabling peacekeeping operations to fulfil their mandate.
- Strategic communications is an integral part of the planning / decision-making process.
- It is critical for protecting and enhancing a mission's reputation and credibility by providing clear information about its mandate, promoting its tangible impact on communities, managing expectations and building trust.
- All mission personnel can make important contributions to strategic communications

Questions