

Lesson 3.6
Communications Content

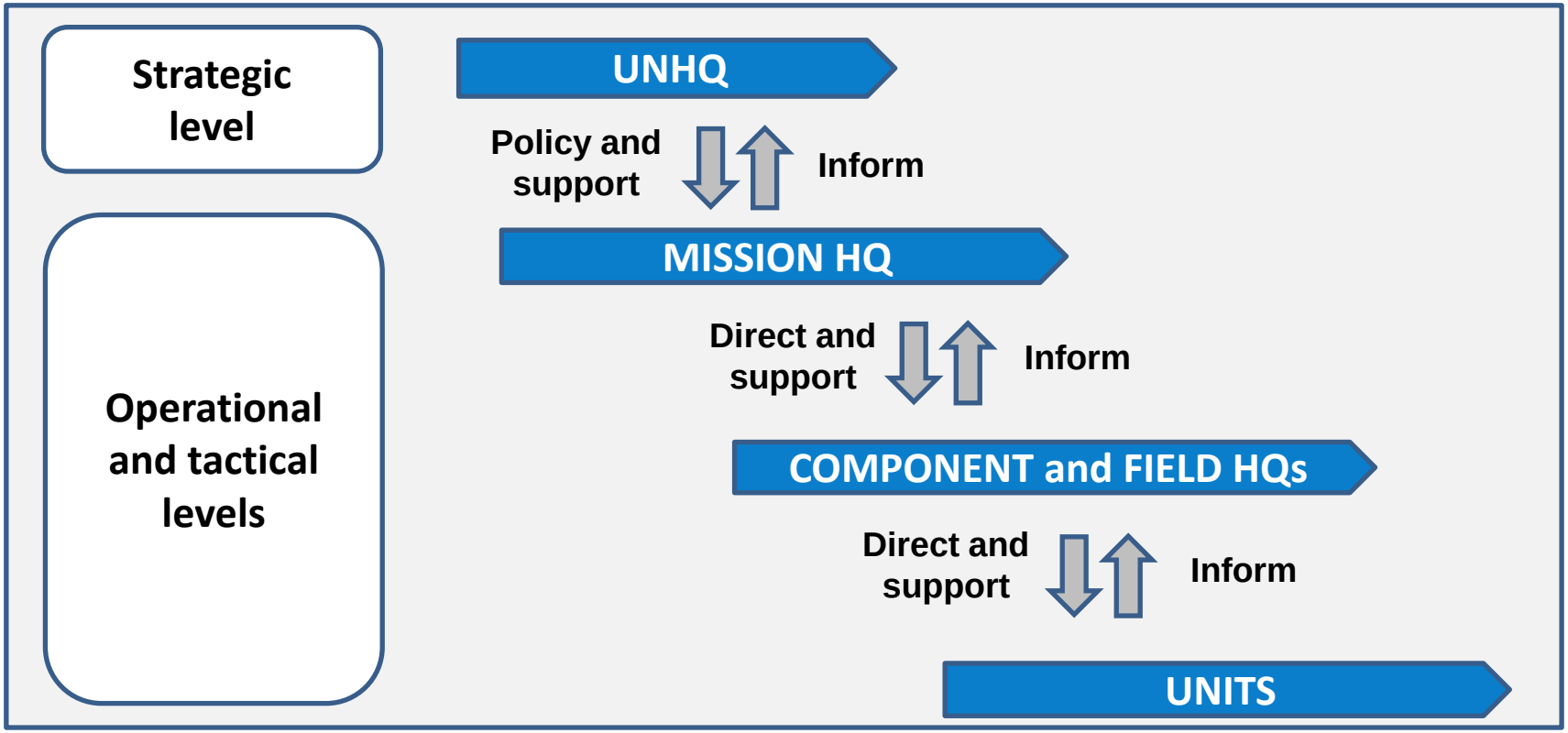
Learning Outcomes

- Explain the need for clear, compelling and mission-aligned communications content.
- Explain strategies for communicating effectively.
- Describe the ethical considerations of communications.

Lesson Contents

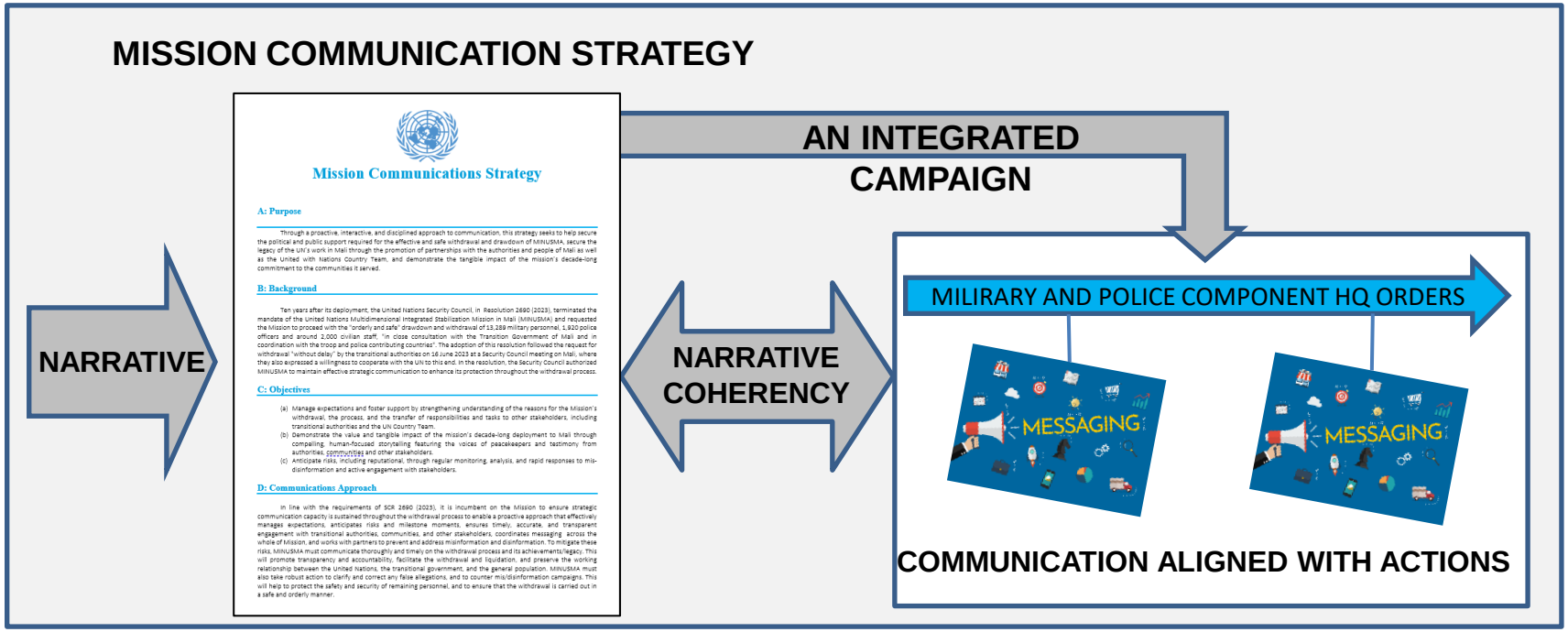
- A narrative-led approach.
- Mission strategic communications strategy.
- Mission roles and responsibilities.
- Impactful counter MDMH messages.
- Ethical considerations in counter MDMH activities.
- Crafting communication content during crisis situations.

Communicating as One



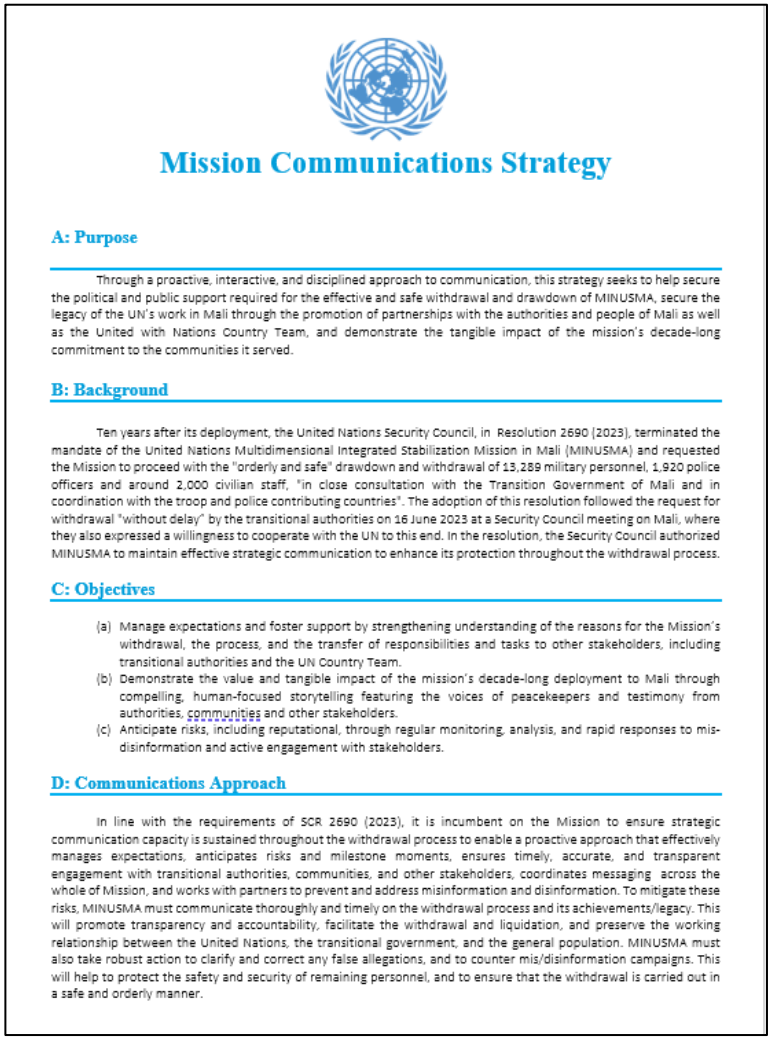
- UNHQ sets strategic communications policy and guidance.
- Mission HQ provides direction and support to all components.
- Military and police component communications support the implementation of the mission's communications strategy.

A Narrative-led Approach



- A Mission's communications strategy narrative explains and reinforces the objectives of the mission to diverse audiences.
- The narrative must be communicated to various audiences through consistent actions, images and words.
- **All military and police communications should be framed in the context of the Mission narrative.**

The Mission's Communications Strategy



Mission Communications Strategy

A: Purpose

Through a proactive, interactive, and disciplined approach to communication, this strategy seeks to help secure the political and public support required for the effective and safe withdrawal and drawdown of MINUSMA, secure the legacy of the UN's work in Mali through the promotion of partnerships with the authorities and people of Mali as well as the United with Nations Country Team, and demonstrate the tangible impact of the mission's decade-long commitment to the communities it served.

B: Background

Ten years after its deployment, the United Nations Security Council, in Resolution 2690 (2023), terminated the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and requested the Mission to proceed with the "orderly and safe" drawdown and withdrawal of 13,289 military personnel, 1,920 police officers and around 2,000 civilian staff, "in close consultation with the Transition Government of Mali and in coordination with the troop and police contributing countries". The adoption of this resolution followed the request for withdrawal "without delay" by the transitional authorities on 16 June 2023 at a Security Council meeting on Mali, where they also expressed a willingness to cooperate with the UN to this end. In the resolution, the Security Council authorized MINUSMA to maintain effective strategic communication to enhance its protection throughout the withdrawal process.

C: Objectives

(a) Manage expectations and foster support by strengthening understanding of the reasons for the Mission's withdrawal, the process, and the transfer of responsibilities and tasks to other stakeholders, including transitional authorities and the UN Country Team.
(b) Demonstrate the value and tangible impact of the mission's decade-long deployment to Mali through compelling, human-focused storytelling featuring the voices of peacekeepers and testimony from authorities, communities and other stakeholders.
(c) Anticipate risks, including reputational, through regular monitoring, analysis, and rapid responses to mis-disinformation and active engagement with stakeholders.

D: Communications Approach

In line with the requirements of SCR 2690 (2023), it is incumbent on the Mission to ensure strategic communication capacity is sustained throughout the withdrawal process to enable a proactive approach that effectively manages expectations, anticipates risks and milestone moments, ensures timely, accurate, and transparent engagement with transitional authorities, communities, and other stakeholders, coordinates messaging across the whole of Mission, and works with partners to prevent and address misinformation and disinformation. To mitigate these risks, MINUSMA must communicate thoroughly and timely on the withdrawal process and its achievements/legacy. This will promote transparency and accountability, facilitate the withdrawal and liquidation, and preserve the working relationship between the United Nations, the transitional government, and the general population. MINUSMA must also take robust action to clarify and correct any false allegations, and to counter mis/disinformation campaigns. This will help to protect the safety and security of remaining personnel, and to ensure that the withdrawal is carried out in a safe and orderly manner.

- Purpose
- Background
- Objectives
- Communications approach
- Challenges
- Audiences
- Narrative
- Methods of communication
- Actions and impact
- Roles and responsibilities
- Implementation
- Evaluation

Strategic Communications Officers – Roles and Responsibilities

Mission level	• The **Head of Strategic Communications and Public Information Unit** is the authoritative voice for the Mission
Component HQ level	• **Military and police strategic communications officers** report to the Force Commander or Police Commissioner - proactively engaging with UNHQ, Mission strategic communications unit and other UN communicators to deliver on the Mission's overall strategic communications strategy and ensure an integrated and coordinated whole-of-mission approach.
Sector / Regional level HQ level	• **Sector / Regional HQ strategic communications officers** report to the Sector or Regional HQ, will contribute to the implementation of the Mission and component's communication strategies while working collaboratively with information officers at unit level.
Unit level	• **Unit strategic communications officers** report to respective unit commander and proactively support the planning and implementation of the components' communications objectives.

Communications



All communications content:

- Must align with the mission and component's narrative, themes and key messages.
- Must be tailored to a specific target audience.
- Achieved through a combination of actions, images and words.

Impactful Counter MDMH Content



1. Understand the audience
2. Clear and concise messages
3. Utilize multiple communication channels
4. Tailor approaches to specific stakeholders
5. Cultural sensitivity and localisation
6. Continuously monitor and adapt

Impactful Counter MDMH Messages (2)

6 GOLDEN RULES



1

Understand the audience

a. Stakeholder analysis
b. Cultural and Gender sensitivity
c. Risk assessment



2

Craft clear and concise messages

a. Simplicity
b. Accuracy
c. Relevance



3

Utilise multiple communication channels

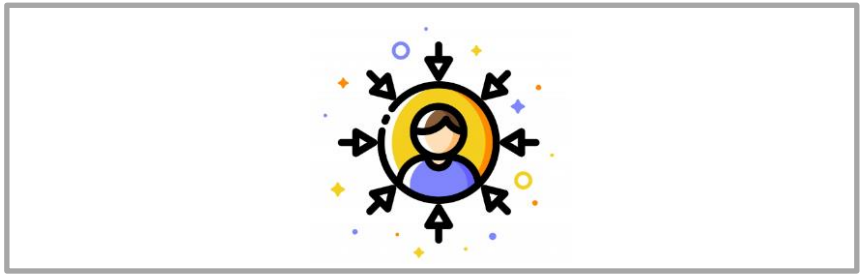
a. Offline media.
b. Online media.
c. Face-to-face interactions.

Impactful counter MDMH messages (3)

6 GOLDEN RULES

4 **Tailor approaches to specific stakeholders**

a. UN personnel and peacekeepers
b. Local communities
c. NGOs.



5 **Cultural sensitivity and localisation**

a. Translate materials
b. Incorporate local idioms and cultural references
c. Partner with local experts



6 **Continuously monitor and adapt**

a. Track engagement and impact
b. Adapt to evolving threats
c. Embrace innovation



Ethical Considerations in Counter-MDMH Activities

- Respect for cultural diversity.
- Responsible reporting.
- Transparency and accountability.
- Protecting privacy and confidentiality.
- Promoting inclusive and respectful dialogue.

Ethical Considerations in Counter MDMH Activities (2)

1

Respect for cultural diversity

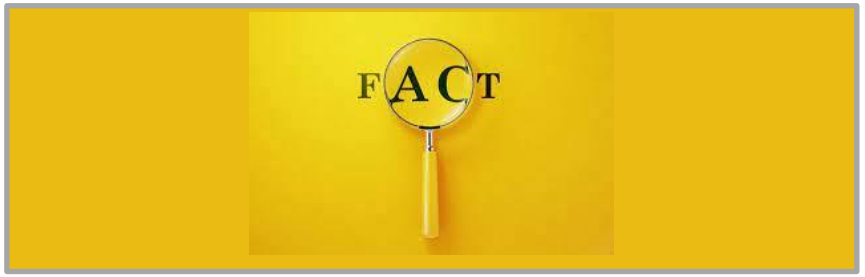
a. Cultural sensitivity
b. Avoid stereotypes and generalisations
c. Localise content and language
d. Respect and promote human rights



2

Responsible reporting

a. Verify information
b. Attribute sources
c. Avoid sensationalising or exaggerating



3

Transparency and accountability

a. Clearly identify UN affiliation
b. Be open to feedback
c. Address mistakes and concerns



Ethical Considerations in Counter MDMH Activities (3)

4

Protecting privacy and confidentiality

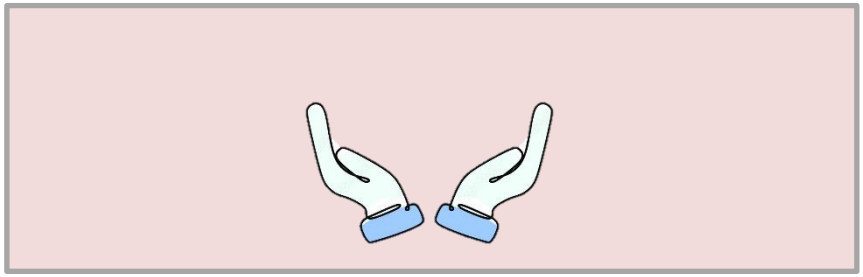
a. Obtain free, prior and informed consent
b. Handle sensitive information with care
c. Avoid sharing unnecessary information



5

Promoting inclusive and respectful dialogue

a. Encourage open dialogue
b. Counter hate speech
c. Promote empathy and understanding



Key Takeaway

- Mission-led narrative.
- Units must be equipped to contribute communications content.
- Align words and actions.
- Golden rules and ethical considerations.
- Prepare for crisis.

Questions