

UN Specialised Training Materials on United Nations Military Observers



Based on the Department of Peace Operations
UN Specialised Training Materials
Military Observers for United Nations Peace Operations

SERIES EDITOR

Harvey J. Langholtz, Ph.D.



Peace Operations Training Institute®
Study peace and humanitarian relief any place, any time



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Cover photo: UNIFIL's Indonesian peacekeepers on patrol along the Blue Line in south Lebanon. 16 November 2020. UN Photo by Haidar Fahs/ UNIFIL.

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Specialised Training Materials on United Nations Military Observers

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*** These materials are available in full as supplemental materials accessible through the POTI student classroom.**

The precise contents of these handouts will not be covered on the End-of-Course Examination but will be useful in supplementing your studies.

PowerPoints from the original training document can also be found in the student classroom.

Background

The UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) has developed a suite of training packages to prepare peacekeepers for their deployment in missions. Amongst these packages are the Specialised Training Materials for specific military duties and military units.

In the current peacekeeping environment, United Nations Military Observers (UNMO) are frequently unarmed and operating in remote areas with fragile security conditions. UNMO roles of monitoring and supervising ceasefires, truces, and armistice are evolving and adapting in this new complex operational environment. UNMO are required to undergo a more robust pre-deployment training programme in accordance with DPO's Operational Readiness Assurance and Performance Standards.

This revised Specialised Training Material packet will provide you with the UN pre-deployment requirements and materials specifically designed for UNMO. This STM replaces the guidelines and training materials outlined in United Nations Military Experts on Mission (MEOM/March 2010) designed for Military Liaison Officers (MLOs), UNMO, and Military Advisors (MILADs).

Aim

The aim of these training materials is to provide you with a comprehensive training package that combines the Conceptual, Legal, and Operational Frameworks. The STM mainstreams relevant aspects of the protection of civilians, gender, Security Risk Management (SRM), and improvised explosive device (IED) safety into the frameworks and materials. The STM includes small learning activities/exercises, as well as a more comprehensive scenario-based exercise, which you can complete to strengthen your understanding of how better to operate in a UN peacekeeping environment. The training packages are designed for application in both pre-deployment and in-mission training. Specific training guidance is also included in Annexes.

Target Audience

The priority target audience for this STM package is military decision makers, staff officers, and Military Observers. However, leadership at all levels that supervise, support, and coordinate training for Military Observers may benefit from this material. Additionally, it is noted that the military leadership from member states and their national peacekeeping training institutions, course directors, and instructors of Military Observer courses will benefit from these materials.

Structure of the Training Materials

The package is constructed in three modules:

- » Module 1: Conceptual Framework
- » Module 2: Legal Framework
- » Module 3: Operational Framework

Available in the student classroom:

- » PowerPoint Slide Lesson Presentations
- » Learning Activities and Table Top Exercise (TTX)
- » References and Background Materials

General Guidance

General Considerations

This package is a compendium of critical training content for UNMO operating in UN peacekeeping. No training material can cover the entire spectrum of complexity in a peacekeeping environment, with all its challenges, complexity, and activities. The STM package should therefore be viewed as the baseline to underpin related training efforts for military peacekeepers.

Concerning necessary competencies for you to benefit from this training package, it is recommended that you be proficient in military tasks (individually and collectively) at the tactical and technical level. Also, it is expected that you are capable of performing proficiency in the following skills: Language, writing, reporting, briefing, mediation, negotiation, and use of language assistants. It is critical for you to have received the Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials (CPTM) as a pre-requisite to this training. The CPTM contains fundamental principles, concepts, and ideas to UN peacekeeping operations (UN PKO), which should be grasped before participating in the UNMO STM course.

The STMs can be downloaded from: <http://research.un.org>.

Table Top Exercise (TTX) Considerations

Contained in the STMs are TTXs available in your Online Classroom. These exercises are scenario/situational driven learning activities to help consolidate learning outcomes and help reinforce the lesson's "Take Away". TTXs will help you to consider the principles and concepts when operating in a United Nations peacekeeping operation, using the hypothetical NARALAND scenario and unit-specific situations. The exercises help you to better understand the manifestation of integrating units in a peacekeeping environment.

Methodology: Using your national problem-solving doctrine, methodology, military decision-making processes, and troop-leading procedure, you will analyze situations and missions and present Courses of Action (COAs) to be executed in a UN peacekeeping operation. You will focus on the adequacy of the core elements and principles when operating in support of peacekeeping operations. This course should assist you in bridging gaps in the transition from standard military operations to peacekeeping operations. Command and control (C2), operations conducted with incomplete information, support structure, and the coordination/collaboration with the various actors and interlocutors in a UN peace operation can be a challenge.

Method of Study

This self-paced course aims to give students flexibility in their approach to learning. The following steps are meant to provide motivation and guidance about some possible strategies and minimum expectations for completing this course successfully:

- Before you begin studying, first browse through the entire course material. Notice the module, lesson, and section titles to get an overall idea of what will be involved as you proceed.
 - The material is meant to be relevant and practical. Instead of memorizing individual details, strive to understand concepts and overall perspectives in regard to the United Nations system.
 - Set personal guidelines and benchmarks regarding how you want to schedule your time.
 - Study the lesson content and the learning objectives. At the beginning of each lesson, orient yourself to the main points. If possible, read the material twice to ensure maximum understanding and retention, and let time elapse between readings.
 - At the end of each lesson, take the End-of-Lesson Quiz. Clarify any missed questions by re-reading the appropriate sections, and focus on retaining the correct information.
 - After you complete all of the modules, prepare for the End-of-Course Examination by taking time to review the main points of each lesson. Then, when ready, log into your online student classroom and take the End-of-Course Examination in one sitting.
- » ***Access your Online Classroom at***
<www.peaceopstraining.org/users/user_login>
from virtually anywhere in the world.
- Your exam will be scored electronically. If you achieve a passing grade of 75 per cent or higher on the exam, you will be awarded a Certificate of Completion. If you score below 75 per cent, you will be given one opportunity to take a second version of the End-of-Course Examination.

Key Features of Your Online Classroom »

- Access to all of your courses;
- A secure testing environment in which to complete your training;
- Access to additional training resources, including multimedia course supplements; and
- The ability to download your Certificate of Completion for any completed course.

MODULE

1

At a Glance: Conceptual Framework



UN Photo by John Isaac.

Module 1 provides an overview of the conceptual framework related to United Nations Military Observers (UNMO) operating in a UN peacekeeping operation (UN PKO) to support and help contribute towards a successful achievement of the mandate.

Module 1 Content »

- Lesson 1.1 UNMO Overview in UN Peacekeeping
- Lesson 1.2 UNMO Command and Control and Structure
- Lesson 1.3 UNMO Concept of Support
- Lesson 1.4 United Nations Peacekeeping Intelligence
- Lesson 1.5 Safety and Security
- Conceptual Framework Wrap Up

Learning Outcomes »

- Understand the concept of UNMO.
- Learn the nature and characteristics, roles and identity of UNMO, and the nature of challenges in missions, especially in non-permissive environments.
- Recognize the logistical and administrative support to UNMO.
- Explain the organizational principles, flexibility, and adaptability of UNMO.
- Recognize command and control, responsibilities of key mission leaders, and sections.
- Learn the UN policies on arming UNMO.
- Describe the use of intelligence in the UN and how it relates to the UNMO.
- Explain the concepts of safety and security for UNMO in a UN mission.



Ahmed Himmiche (right), head of the group of unarmed UN Military Observers (UNMO) recently dispatched to Syria, speaks with children on the streets of Homs as he and his team patrol the city. 21 April 2012. UN Photo by Neeraj Singh.

Overview

The module also examines the nature, capabilities, and characteristics of UNMO and how they support the UN mission components and, in some cases, the host nation.

United Nations Military Observers (UNMO) contribute decisively and in support of the successful achievement of the mission's mandate. To date, UNMO have deployed to peacekeeping operations in many of the UN missions. To acknowledge the nature and characteristics of UNMO and their complementarity with the force and the other components in the mission, it is essential for us to be familiar with their conceptual framework.

The aim of Module 1 is to provide you an overview of UNMO in order to employ them in an appropriate manner and to familiarize you with the conceptual framework of how UNMO support UN missions.

It should be emphasized that the aim of this course is to provide you with a comprehensive training package that combines the Conceptual, Legal, and Operational Frameworks for the employment of UNMO, starting here with the Conceptual Framework. This Specialised Training Material (STM) will also help mainstream aspects of protection of civilians and gender into the frameworks and materials. The STM includes learning exercises and discussions, as well as a more comprehensive scenario-based exercise/Table Top Exercise (TTX), which can be conducted at the end of the course to help strengthen our understanding of how better to employ UNMO in a UN peacekeeping environment. This training package is designed for application in both pre-deployment and in-mission training.

The audience for this STM package includes personnel identified to deploy as UNMO in a UN PKO, military decision makers, staff officers, and tactical unit leaders, who during their UN deployment may be assigned to, employ, coordinate, or perform missions with UNMO. However, leadership at all levels that supervise, train, prepare, support, and coordinate with UNMO may also benefit from this material.

For all practical purposes, throughout these Specialised Training Materials, we will use the abbreviation/acronym "UNMO" to refer to the United Nations Military Observers both in singular and in plural forms.

This module addresses the conceptual framework for UNMO operating in a UN PKO. UNMO activities are always conducted in compliance with peacekeeping principles and ethos in mind. More importantly, UNMO should always operate within the context of the mission's mandate.

LESSON 1.1

UNMO Overview in UN Peacekeeping



UN Photo by JG.

As UNMO are a special asset creating effects that contribute to the achievement of operational-level objectives, it is crucial that military decision makers, staff officers, and tactical level unit leaders who employ or work with UNMO are aware of their capabilities and limitations.

Lesson 1.1 Content »

Section 1.1.1	Roles and Responsibilities
Section 1.1.2	Distinctive Identity
Section 1.1.3	Deployment in Non-Permissive Environments
Section 1.1.4	Arming UNMO

Learning Outcomes »

- List UNMO's main roles.
- Explain how to maintain and display a distinctive identity as UNMO.
- Explain when and how UNMO are deployed into non-permissive environments.
- Describe the UN policy on arming UNMO.



Peacekeepers from the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan speak with the local population near Bhimbar UN Field Station, Pakistan as visible representatives of the UN. Their mandate is to be a neutral party in the India-and-Pakistan situation. 20 October 2005. UN Photo by Evan Schneider.

We will give an overview of the roles and employment concept of UNMO to the current complex UN PKO environment. This means, from this point forward, you should try to be in the mind-set of wearing the Blue Beret that represents the UN in a complex peacekeeping environment.

The UNMO must be fully integrated into the mission and force concepts, as well as the tactical, operational, and strategic information/intelligence frameworks. The UNMO has its own unique characteristics that add a dimension to the accomplishment of the mission's mandate.

Suggested Reading »

Read *Guidelines March 2017: United Nations Military Observers (UNMO) in Peacekeeping Operations.*



Available from: <http://dag.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/400972/Annex%20D%20-%20References%20%28Guidelines%20for%20UNMO%29.pdf?sequence=30&isAllowed=y>.

Lesson 1.1 Content

- Roles and responsibilities
- Distinctive identity
- Deployment in non-permissive environments
- Arming UNMO

Figure 1.1.1

It is important to understand that the UNMO is deployed as part of the military structure of the UN mission that may have a myriad of roles and supporting tasks.

Figure 1.1.1 lists subject areas we will be covering. This lesson content covers the roles and aim of UNMO employment, as well as the operational environment. Finally, we will discuss other considerations that are needed to optimize UNMO in a mission.

It is important to understand up front that UNMO do not operate in total isolation but work in close coordination with other United Nations stakeholders, including the mission's military/police contingents, civilian components, and other agencies.

UNMO is an enabling asset that facilitates the accomplishment of the mandate through verification, coordination, negotiations, force protection, protection of civilians (POC), and current information/intelligence. We should understand and consider UNMO as a unique, effective asset presenting the Force Commander (FC) with specific capabilities.

As in all good training practices, let's review the learning outcomes. At the end of the lesson, our aim is for you to be able to assimilate the essential roles and responsibilities and how the UNMO fits in the UN structure. Please take a moment to read and understand the requirements:

- List UNMO's main roles.
- Explain how to maintain and display a distinctive identity as UNMO.
- Explain when and how UNMO are deployed into non-permissive environments.
- Describe the UN policy on arming UNMO.

Section 1.1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Core Roles of UNMO

There are four main types of roles that are expected of UNMO in the field.

Observation, monitoring, and reporting:

- UNMO primarily observe and monitor military/peace agreements between parties to a conflict, ceasefire, armistice, withdrawal, or separation of forces.
- UNMO observe and monitor humanitarian situations impacting human rights violations, abuses against children, incidents, trends of conflict, sexual violence, and the return of refugees or displaced persons.
- UNMO are part of an early warning framework reporting on security, POC, and political and humanitarian situations. Often, this is done in cooperation with civilian mission components, like the UN Mine Action Service, Human Rights Division, and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) team.

Assessment and verification:

- UNMO conduct assessments and verification of information concerning armed groups, ceasefire allegations, post-conflict agreements, presence of explosive hazards, or any matter directed by the Head of Military Component/Force Commander (HOMC/FC). Verification is increasingly pertaining to cantonment, demobilization, and reintegration of armed groups, as well as the collection, storage, and decommissioning of weapons.

Negotiation and mediation:

- UNMO facilitate or conduct formal and informal negotiations between persons and groups in the field and/or represent the United Nations mission in such negotiation/mediation.
- Negotiation and mediation tasks address a range of issues, including de-escalating violence, persuading parties on a peaceful resolution, exchange of prisoners, freedom of movement, or assisting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. UNMO should refer to subject matter experts for technical assistance.

Liaison and coordination:

- UNMO get involved in outreach and establishment of military liaison and coordination between the mission and other field entities.
- Liaison and coordination with mission components, host nation local governments, host nation military forces, security institutions, armed groups; international agencies, UN partners, and non-governmental organizations.
- Civil society groups include human rights organizations, women's groups, youth groups, and disabled person's organizations; the humanitarian assistance community.

UNMO Team Site

UNMO teams are mission-tailored. The size and composition of teams depend on the mission mandate and area of responsibility. At a minimum, the teams should be multinational and comprise six military officers in the rank of Captain to Lieutenant Colonel (with a Lieutenant Colonel as Team Leader). Each team site should ideally have female UNMO. Female UNMO are critically important in providing better access and outreach to local communities, especially women and children.

In order to improve the working efficiency of a team site, UNMO should be assigned specific responsibilities within the team such as personnel, operations, logistics, communications, and liaison. This is essential for the team to maintain operational effectiveness. These responsibilities include:

- Team Site Leader (TSL)
- Deputy Team Site Leader (DTSL) and Operations Group Leader
- Operations Officer
- Military Information/Intelligence Officer (1/2)
- Movement/DDR and Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC) Officer (1/2)
- Training Officer
- Team Site (TS) Chief Administration Officer
- Administration and Logistics Officer (1/2)

Section 1.1.2 Distinctive Identity

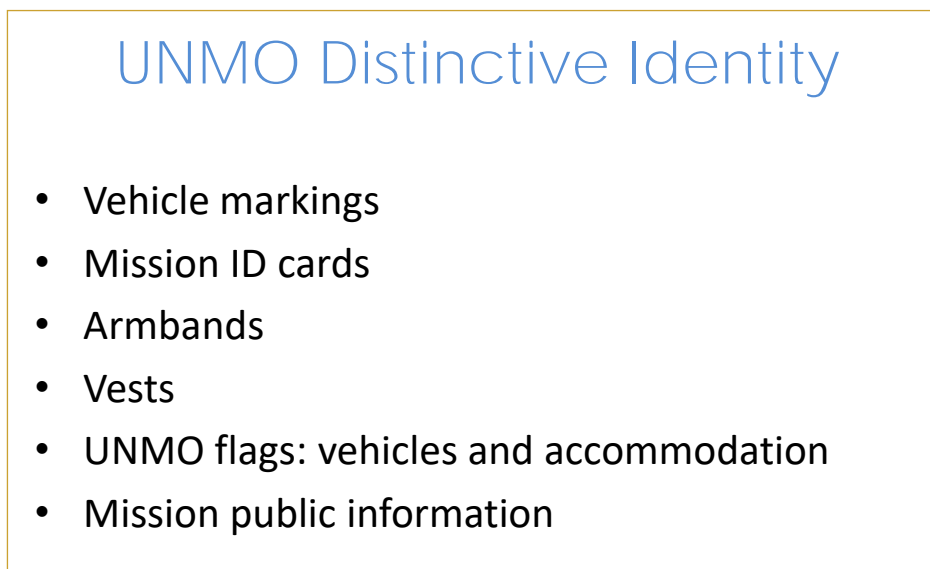


Figure 1.1.2

UNMO are outreach-oriented, impartial, and unarmed. Being unarmed is an important means by which UNMO build trust in their roles in the mission.

To maintain their identity and enhance their personal security, UNMO should be easily distinguishable from the mission's armed contingents, particularly when conducting operations while escorted by armed contingents.

UNMO include clear markings on their vehicles in both English and the local language; for example, markings may include "UNITED NATIONS MILITARY OBSERVERS". UNMO should also be provided with military ID cards, distinctive armbands, and/or easily recognizable, highly visible vests. In addition to the United Nations flag, UNMO vehicles and accommodations bear a distinctive UNMO flag designed/flown so that their premises are easily identifiable to parties to the conflict, as well as the local civilian population.

The UN mission's public information messages should also include information about the UNMO's presence, tasks, and activities for the benefit of stakeholders and the local population.

Section 1.1.3 Deployment in Non-Permissive Environments

UNMO deployed in non-permissive environments may face unpredictable and potentially life-threatening situations. Unstable security situations do not permit UNMO to perform their functions effectively and independently.

In non-permissive environments, the deployment of UNMO may be delayed until the HOMC/FC determines that the security situation is conducive to UNMO operations. This is determined through a comprehensive threat and risk management assessment of the area of responsibility (AOR).

Risks for UNMO in non-permissive environments could be mitigated by co-locating them with military or police contingents that provide armed escort. However, sometimes risks cannot be effectively mitigated, and UNMO should not be deployed in their normal small team sites in isolated areas.

Section 1.1.4 Arming UNMO

UNMO enjoy a special and advantageous status as impartial and unarmed when dealing with local stakeholders. UNMO are perceived as non-threatening, relying only on reason and skill rather than force to achieve goals. Remember from earlier in the lesson that this is the basis of their distinctive identity.

In most cases, UNMO **do not carry weapons or ammunition**, whether issued by their home country or personally owned. They should not buy, own, or export weapons or ammunition while on mission.

On an **exceptional basis and in high-risk areas**, the HOMC/FC may recommend to the HOM (Head of Mission) arming UNMO after completing **a structured risk assessment** of the mission. Arming UNMO may only be authorized by the Under-Secretary-General (USG), Department of Peace Operations (DPO), in consultation with the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security (DSS USG).

Situations where this might arise could include where there are numerous armed groups outside the peace process or terrorist groups seeking recognition by targeting United Nations personnel.

If the USG DPO approves the arming of UNMO, then they will include **a specific directive for the use of firearms** by UNMO. This directive identifies principles, parameters, and conditions for the use of force by the UNMO. Similarly, the mission should draft standard operating procedures (SOPs), **in consultation with UN Headquarters (UNHQ)**, on the carrying of arms by individual UNMO.

Nonetheless, there have been recurring suggestions that UNMO should carry personal weapons when operating in non-permissive environments. This is a sensitive issue for many, with debate in the following areas:

- Arming UNMO may increase and not reduce risks to their security.
- Armed UNMO may give the impression that they are part of armed contingents.
- Armed incidents could negatively affect the ability of UNMO to conduct open interaction with the local population and other parties to the conflict.

Lesson Take Away

Key Message: As UNMO is a key asset that contributes to the achievement of UN operational-level objectives, it is crucial that deploying UNMO, military decision makers, staff officers, other Military Experts on Mission, and tactical level unit leaders have an understanding of their roles, capabilities, and limitations to better employ UNMO and work within a United Nations operational environment.

To this end, we should be aware of the following:

- UNMO have several key mission roles, staff roles to ensure their team site functions effectively.
- UNMO roles include observation, monitoring, and reporting; assessment and verification; negotiation and mediation; liaison and coordination.
- UNMO have a distinctive identity that separates them from other identities in a mission, which facilitates their specific roles. This should be visibly displayed on vehicles, on their persons, and on their accommodation using flags, armbands, and IDs.
- When and how UNMO are deployed into non-permissive environments depends on the security risk assessment. If warranted and given special authorization, UNMO can be armed; however, there are certain limitations on how they conduct their tasks.



Ahmed Himmiche (centre left), the head of the UN Military Observers (UNMO) group dispatched to Syria, and his team speak with members of the opposition in El Karak. 26 April 2012. UN Photo by Neeraj Singh.

Summary

Let us continue to review. The UNMO is a key asset creating effects that contribute to the achievement of the mission mandate, and it is crucial that military decision makers, staff officers, and tactical level unit leaders who during the course of their UN deployment may be required to employ or work with UNMO and should be aware of their capabilities and limitations. Here are a few areas to take away from this lesson:

- UNMO have several key mission roles, and they are also expected to perform staff roles to ensure that their UNMO team functions effectively.
- UNMO have a distinctive identity, different from other parts of the mission, which facilitates their specific roles. This should be visibly displayed on vehicles, on their persons, and on their accommodation using flags, armbands, and IDs.
- When and how UNMO are deployed into non-permissive environments depends on the security risk assessment.
- In some cases, that may lead to the FC and HOM requesting the USG DPO in coordination with DSS to approve the arming of UNMO. This is an exception to the general principle and may have an impact on UNMO's effectiveness in the AOR.

End-of-Lesson Quiz »

1. **What are some of the main roles of UNMO on mission?**
 - A. Observation, monitoring, and reporting
 - B. Assessment and verification
 - C. Liaison and coordination
 - D. All of these
2. **How should UNMO maintain their distinctive identity on mission?**
 - A. UNMO should try to blend in as much as possible.
 - B. They should fly their national flags on vehicles and accommodation.
 - C. They should display clearly identifiable markings on vehicles, carry mission IDs, wear high visibility vests, and fly UN flags.
 - D. They should rely ONLY on public information messaging from the mission about where UNMO are and what they are doing.
3. **How can risks for UNMO in non-permissive environments be mitigated?**
4. **If an UNMO is armed, what are some of the issues and procedures?**
5. **True or False: To maintain their identity and enhance their personal security, UNMO should be easily distinguishable from the mission's armed contingents, particularly when conducting operations while escorted by armed contingents.**
 - A. True
 - B. False
6. **True or False: UNMO already carry personal weapons when operating in non-permissive environments.**
 - A. True
 - B. False
7. **What are some of the reasons why UNMO carrying personal weapons when operating in non-permissive environments is a sensitive issue?**
 - A. Arming UNMO may increase and not reduce risks to their security.
 - B. Armed UNMO may give the impression that they are part of armed contingents.
 - C. Armed incidents could negatively affect the ability of UNMO to conduct open interaction with the local population and other parties to the conflict.
 - D. All of these
8. **_____ are an operational asset that represents a capability that should be employed for achieving specific objectives in support of the mandate.**
 - A. UNMO
 - B. HOMs
 - C. DPOs
 - D. SOPs
9. **True or False: Risks can always be effectively mitigated when UNMO are in non-permissive environments.**
 - A. True
 - B. False
10. **True or False: UNMO always carry ammunition.**
 - A. True
 - B. False

Answer Key provided on the next page.

End-of-Lesson Quiz »

Answer Key »

1. D
2. C
3. Risks to UNMO can be mitigated by co-locating them with military or police contingents that provide armed escort.
4. In general, UNMO must not carry weapons on mission. However, the USG DPO may approve arming UNMO if requested by the HOM/FC following a security risk assessment and SOP.
5. A. True
6. B. False
7. D
8. A
9. B. False
10. B. False