Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Training Materials for United Nations Peace Operations: Military Version



Based on the Department of Peace Operations Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Training Materials for United Nations Peace Operations: Military Version

Series Editor

Harvey J. Langholtz, Ph.D.

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Peacekeepers from Senegal serving with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) patrols sensitive areas in central Mali. MINUSMA has deployed Operation Oryx after recent events to increase protection of civilians through, among other things, increased patrols and mediation. 4 July 2019. UN Photo by Gema Cortes.

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Background

Since the Security Council first established protection of civilians (POC) as an explicit mandate in 1999, peacekeeping has evolved significantly, growing both in size and complexity. During this period, POC has continuously gained in prominence and today ranks as the priority mandate in a number of peacekeeping operations. While POC has sometimes become the yardstick against which the success of a mission is measured, it is arguably also the most challenging mandate to implement.

The Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support have developed a suite of training packages to prepare peacekeepers for their deployment in missions. Among these packages are separate so-called Specialized Training Materials on POC, Child Protection, and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. The in-depth examination of these core protection tasks in UN peacekeeping is necessary to train personnel, and in particular those personnel with dedicated protection functions, on effective mandate implementation in the field.

Nevertheless, experience has also shown that these protection tasks, despite their distinct nature, generate significant overlap. This is particularly true at the tactical level, where the assessment of protection threats, as well as the planning for and response to a complex protection crisis, is likely to simultaneously involve elements from POC, Child Protection, and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence realms. In order to reflect these realities and prepare peacekeepers for the multi-dimensional realities on the ground, this course aims to demonstrate the complex linkages between protection tasks and provide training guidance on how to prevent, deter, and respond to interrelated threats.

Aim

The aim of these training materials is to provide students with a comprehensive training package that combines aspects of POC, Child Protection, and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence for military peacekeepers in UN peacekeeping operations. This includes several small exercises as well as a larger scenario-based exercise, which can be run at the end of a course to strengthen participants' understanding of how POC, Child Protection, and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence considerations impact military planning processes at the tactical level. The training package is designed for application in both pre-deployment and in-mission training. ITS will also mainstream relevant aspects of the CPOC package into existing functional Specialized Training Materials.

Target audience

The priority target audience of this CPOC package is military decision makers at the tactical level. While the conceptual and legal frameworks presented herein lend themselves to a wider audience, Module 3 on the operational framework in particular was developed with Battalion Commanders, as leaders of the smallest military unit capable of limited independent operations, and their staff in mind.

To maximize the relevance of this course to the target audience, Module 3 on the operational framework focuses on how protection considerations should be integrated into the generic military decision-making and planning processes at the tactical level. Existing UN guidance as well as complementary external guidance is therefore presented only to the extent that they are relevant for tactical-level considerations.

General Guidance

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
- Scenario-based exercises
- Background materials referenced in the package

General considerations

This package is a compendium of critical training content for comprehensive protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping. No training material can cover the entire complexity of POC at the tactical level, with all its challenges and activities. The CPOC package should therefore be viewed as the baseline to underpin all POC-related training efforts for military peacekeepers.

Concerning necessary competencies for participants to benefit from this training package, it is recommended that personnel receiving this training be proficient in democratic policing principles and expected to perform duties related to POC once deployed to a peace operation. It is also critical for all participants to have received pre-deployment training based on the Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials (CPTM) as a prerequisite before this training. The CPTM contains fundamental principles, concepts and guidance related to UN peacekeeping, which should be well grasped by trainees before participating in a CPOC course.

The CPTM can be downloaded from: <http://research.un.org/revisedcptm2017>.

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 Martine Perret.

Module 1 provides an overview of the conceptual framework related to protection of civilians (POC), Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), and Child Protection (CP) in the context of armed conflict. It also examines the key concepts, guiding principles, and challenges faced by field missions.

Module 1 Content »

Lesson 1.1	Introduction
Lesson 1.2	Definitions & Terminology
Lesson 1.3	Protection Actors
Lesson 1.4	Principles of POC in Peacekeeping
Lesson 1.5	Operational Concept
Lesson 1.6	Mission Challenges
Lesson 1.7	Special Considerations for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
Lesson 1.8	Special Considerations for Child Protection

Conceptual Framework Wrap-up

Learning Outcomes »

- Explain the importance of POC.
- Know the key concepts of POC/CRSV/CP in UN peacekeeping.
- Understand the roles of different protection actors.
- Describe the POC guiding principles.

LESSON
1.1
Introduction



UN Photo by Harandane Dicko.

Contemporary armed conflicts are characterized by a number of trends.

Lesson 1.1 Content »

Section 1.1.1	Nature of Contemporary Armed Conflicts
Section 1.1.2	How Conflict Affects Civilians
Section 1.1.3	Role of the Host Government
Section 1.1.4	Security Council Attention to POC
Section 1.1.5	Evolution of the POC Concept in UN Peacekeeping

Learning Outcomes »

- Understand the nature of contemporary armed conflicts and the threats they pose to civilians.
- Recognize the role of the host government in the protection of civilians.
- Explain how the Security Council has acted following the increased attention given to protection of civilians.
- Understand how the protection of civilians concept has evolved in UN peacekeeping.
- Acknowledge the linkages between protection of civilians, Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, and Child Protection mandate implementation.



The Chinese Battalion of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) runs two patrols daily around the perimeter of UN House in Juba. The patrols pass through POC Site 1 and run past the entrance to POC site 3. Regular stops are made to check in with peacekeepers manning guard posts. 27 January 2016. UN Photo by JC McIlwaine.

Section 1.1.1 Nature of Contemporary Armed Conflicts

Contemporary armed conflicts are characterized by a number of trends, including the following:

- Today we see fewer country-versus-country or international armed conflicts. Most ongoing conflicts are internal conflicts over power and resources, social and economic inequalities, or ethnic or religious divides. While they often have regional implications, these conflicts are, in many cases, played out within national borders.

Suggested Viewing »

Watch "Mandated to Protect – Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping Operations" from the start (00:03) to minute 04:06. This segment provides an introduction to the topic of protection of civilians. The video was produced jointly by the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Government of Australia and released in 2011. It discusses POC-related issues such as what the "protection of civilians" term means and what peacekeepers are mandated to do. At several junctures in this module, the video will help illustrate and explain content.

Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8y8_GaxC3I>.

Nature of Contemporary Armed Conflicts

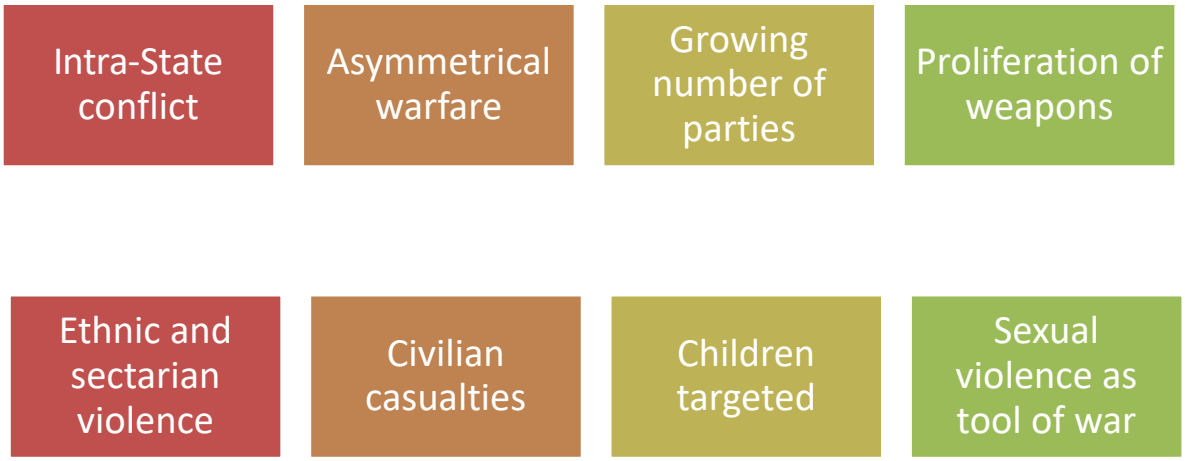


Figure 1.1.1

- Intra-State conflict often involves State and non-State actors with different capabilities and resources. Militarily weaker parties resort to asymmetric means, which can include aspects of terrorism or guerrilla warfare.
- While international armed conflicts between States typically have just two or a small number of parties, intra-State conflicts often see a large number of non-State armed groups involved, especially in situations where they further split into competing factions. The larger number of parties to conflict complicates conflict resolution processes.
- Conflicts often spill over across borders — causing influxes of weapons or refugees. Especially the ready availability of weapons now contributes to the ability of armed groups to sustain battle for longer periods.
- Intra-State conflict, even if originally triggered by political grievances such as in South Sudan, can easily take on an ethnic or sectarian dimension. Often manipulated in this way by leaders, conflicts along ethnic and sectarian lines are highly charged and difficult to resolve, leaving a lasting imprint on society.
- Current conflicts are characterized because they strongly affect civilians, directly targeting them or indirectly causing loss of life or livelihoods and denying their basic rights. A common characteristic of current conflicts is the frequent occurrence of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and the disrespect for life and the physical integrity of civilians (and civilian objects). Some of the protracted conflict situations the world witnesses today affect civilians through the urbanization of conflict and long besiegement.

- Children continue to be disproportionately affected by armed conflict. They are recruited and used as child soldiers, abducted, sexually abused, and killed and maimed. Attacks on schools and hospitals, as well as the denial of humanitarian access, further impact children negatively in war. Specific protection concerns must therefore be taken into account to ensure the safety and security of children. Further details on Child Protection will appear later in the module.
- Parties to conflict are increasingly using sexual violence as a strategic tool of war. Women and girls are the primary targets for rape and other forms of sexual violence, but men and boys are also targeted. More details on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence will be covered later.

Section 1.1.2 How Conflict Affects Civilians

One of the reasons why protection of civilians (POC) is so important in UN peacekeeping is because of the horrendous consequences conflicts have on civilians. Civilians constitute the majority of casualties in warfare. Civilians can become the victims because they are intentionally targeted, but they can also suffer as an unintended consequence of violence. Violent conflict can lead to violations and abuses of the basic human rights of civilians, including the rights to life and physical integrity.

Beyond the immediate physical consequences of violent conflict, civilians are also affected because they often lose their homes and become displaced; lose their livestock or means to earn income; and lose access to education, health care, and other basic services if schools, hospitals, and other important infrastructure are destroyed. Women and children suffer disproportionately as a result of armed conflict, violations, and abuses, including the pervasive levels of sexual violence and abuse. Conflict also spreads hate and destroys the social fabric of communities for many years. This makes it hard to reconcile communities and create sustainable peace.

In summary, civilians suffer terrible consequences from armed conflict in a variety of ways. And the consequences often do not stop when the violence stops; they have a lasting impact on communities and individuals.

Learning Activity »

» List examples of how armed conflict affects civilians.

» Explain the role of the host government when it comes to the protection of civilians and how this translates into reality.

Section 1.1.3 Role of the Host Government

The primary responsibility to protect civilians from physical violence rests with the host State. Protection of civilians mandates are without prejudice to the primary and sovereign responsibility of the host State. This is consistent with their obligations under international human rights, humanitarian, and refugee law and standards (covered in Module 2). The first step in implementing a protection of civilians mandate is to support the government to uphold this responsibility, which should also ensure a sustainable impact of a mission's actions. In situations of armed conflict, non-State parties to conflict also have a responsibility to protect civilians in the areas they control.

However, host governments have, on occasion, lacked the capability or willingness to protect their citizens. In these situations, and where deployed, peacekeepers assume the obligation to act unilaterally and protect civilians.

Section 1.1.4 Security Council Attention to POC

It has taken considerable effort and time for the international community to prioritize mandates to protect civilians. In recent years, the Security Council, as the highest authority in questions of international peace and security, has repeatedly stated that failure to protect civilians poses a grave threat to international peace and security.

The Security Council has acted in accordance with the increased attention given to POC and related protection mandates:

- In 1999, the first Security Council thematic resolution on the protection of civilians in armed conflict strongly condemned attacks against civilians in armed conflict and called on all parties to comply strictly with their obligations under international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee laws. It stressed the need to address the root causes of armed conflict, including gender inequality, to enhance the protection of civilians on a long-term basis. Since then, several Security Council resolutions have further defined the role of peacekeeping in protecting civilians.
- In addition, since 1999, the Council has also adopted several resolutions specifically addressing the issues of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and children and armed conflict, creating the frameworks of these two specialized protection mandates. Children and Armed Conflict, while a distinct mandate that is not limited to peacekeeping environments, also applies to peacekeeping missions, where it is implemented through Child Protection Units. More on this and the particular key resolutions will be discussed in Module 2.
- The Council established an Informal Expert Group on POC that meets regularly to discuss POC trends in particular country settings. For instance, the group meets before mandate renewals of the most significant missions to discuss the status of POC implementation and whether changes in the mandate are necessary.
- The Council provides most missions today with authority to use all necessary means or all necessary action to protect civilians.

Section 1.1.5 Evolution of the POC Concept in UN Peacekeeping

Over the decades since the first peacekeeping operations were mandated after World War II, missions always had an inherent task to protect civilians. However, the change of peacekeeping from traditional operations to multidimensional modern ones changed the outlook in this regard. In particular, the failures to prevent genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica in the 1990s brought POC to the centre of attention.

In 1999, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) became the first peacekeeping mission with a specific Security Council mandate to protect civilians. That same year, the Secretary-General also released his first thematic report on POC. POC continued to command much attention, and in 2009, around the 10-year anniversary of the original UNAMSIL mandate, the Council passed a resolution stating that all missions with a POC mandate have to prioritize POC over other mandated tasks with respect to the distribution of capacities and resources.

While agreement on the importance of POC was established quickly, finding consensus on what peacekeepers are expected to do in the context of POC has been difficult. In 2010, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) developed a commonly agreed-upon operational concept, and five years later, the first policy on POC in peacekeeping was created.

Evolution of the POC Concept in UN Peacekeeping »

- Influenced by mass atrocities in the 1990s
- 1999: First explicit POC mandate for a peacekeeping mission
- 2009: POC as priority mandate
- 2010: DPKO-DFS Operational Concept
- 2019: DPO Policy on POC

Figure 1.1.2

Current operations with a POC mandate

Not all peacekeeping missions have a POC mandate. Yet, in the past few years, every new mission that was authorized by the Security Council was given a POC mandate. Additionally, since all the largest missions have a POC mandate, nearly all peacekeeping personnel work in a mission with a POC mandate.



Peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) salute the Secretary-General as he visits the headquarters of UNIFIL in Naqoura. Secretary-General António Guterres visits Lebanon to reaffirm the support of the work of the UN in Lebanon, including political teams, peacekeepers, humanitarian aid workers, development professionals, and the country and its people. 20 December 2021. UN Photo by Eskinder Debebe.

At the start of 2020, seven missions had a particular POC mandate:

- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA);
- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA);
- United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO);
- United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID);
- United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL);
- United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA); and
- United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS).

In addition, five missions had a specific mandate to protect civilians from conflict-related sexual violence (MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNAMID, and UNMISS) and six missions were equipped with specific tasks regarding Child Protection (MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNAMID, UNIFIL, and UNMISS).

Credibility and legitimacy

Above everything else is the fact that failure to protect may result in the loss of civilian life, which is tragic and the most important consequence. But POC is increasingly also coming to define the success and reputation of UN missions, meaning there are implications for the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations and UN peacekeeping missions involved.

Ultimately, failure to protect civilians jeopardizes the whole institution of peacekeeping by not achieving the primary mandate, which damages the credibility and legitimacy of peacekeeping at different levels:

At the strategic level: Diminishes the image of the UN in the eyes of the international community, including citizens and voters around the world, potentially leading to reduced international support for peacekeeping, which in turn can impact political (renewal of mandate, etc.) and donor support;

At the operational/tactical level: Possibly undermines the political relationship with the host government; difficulties related to the host government's consent; lack of support among the local population; perception of partiality of the UN; and

At the tactical level: Disappointment or even animosity from the local population can complicate operational tasks, including information gathering, outreach to key leaders, and security (force protection issues related to base protection, patrolling, observation, and other tactical tasks).

Linkages of POC, CRSV, and CP

Experience has shown that there are significant parallels in the establishment and implementation of POC, CRSV, and CP mandates.

There are significant linkages between the three mandates in the conceptual, legal, and operational areas. Regarding the establishment of the mandate, for instance, CRSV and Child Protection are both mandated through (a) broader obligations under the POC mandate and (b) through specific thematic Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security and Children and Armed Conflict, respectively. More details on these mandates will be presented later.

The implementation of all three mandates on the ground creates significant overlap. Complex POC threats, for instance, will likely contain aspects of CRSV and Child Protection as well. As a result, a mission's operational response to such threats requires a holistic approach, which necessitates a solid understanding of the three functions. Likewise, at the tactical level, a physical response to CRSV or Child Protection threats can often follow a similar path to actions in response to POC threats.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the implementation of CRSV and Child Protection mandates contain particular aspects that do not apply to POC. From a conceptual perspective, these mandates are broader than POC in peacekeeping and exceed the realm of physical protection. As political mandates, they are mainstreamed through the mission and take effect at different levels. Activities beyond the scope of POC include, for instance, the negotiation of action plans with armed forces or groups and the support of Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms. This training package will not cover the aspects of CRSV and Child Protection that are particular to their mandates and will focus instead on the areas of intersection.

Takeaways

The takeaways from this brief introduction to the Comprehensive Protection of Civilians (CPOC) Training Materials include the following:

- The nature of modern conflict means that civilians are increasingly becoming a target and suffer horrible consequences;
- The primary responsibility to protect civilians from violence lies with the host government. When it is unable or unwilling to carry out this responsibility, then peacekeeping missions assume the obligation to protect;
- POC has become the priority mandate for peacekeeping, serving as a yardstick for success and affecting the credibility of missions; and
- The significant linkages between POC, CRSV, and CP mandate implementation demonstrate the need for a comprehensive approach to training on these issues.

End-of-Lesson Quiz »

1. **The primary responsibility to protect civilians from physical violence rests with the _____.**
   A. host State
   B. neighbouring countries
   C. General Assembly
   D. Child Protection Units

2. **TRUE or FALSE: Most current and ongoing conflicts are inter-State conflicts over power and resources, social and economic inequalities, or ethnic or religious divides.**
   A. True
   B. False

3. **Name one of the ways civilians are affected by conflict after the immediate physical effects.**

4. **The _____ became the first peacekeeping mission with a specific Security Council mandate to protect civilians.**
   A. United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)
   B. United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)
   C. United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)
   D. United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

5. **_____ suffer disproportionately as a result of armed conflict, violations, and abuses, including the pervasive levels of sexual violence and abuses.**

6. **TRUE or FALSE: In situations of armed conflict, non-State parties to conflict also have a responsibility to protect civilians in the areas they control.**
   A. True
   B. False

7. **Name one of the ways in which failure to protect civilians can damage the credibility and legitimacy of the institution of peacekeeping.**

8. **At the start of 2017, _____ missions had a particular POC mandate.**
   A. zero
   B. one
   C. two
   D. ten

9. **There is _____ in the establishment and implementation of POC, Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), and Child Protection (CP) mandates.**
   A. no overlap
   B. significant overlap
   C. little overlap

10. **When does the primary obligation to protect civilians shift from the host government to a peacekeeping mission?**

Answer Key provided on the next page.

End-of-Lesson Quiz »

Answer Key »

1. A
2. B. False
3. Answer may include: civilians often lose their homes and become displaced; lose their livestock or means to earn income; lose access to education, health care, and other basic services if schools, hospitals, and other important infrastructure are destroyed.
4. B
5. Women and children
6. A. True
7. Answer may include any of the following: failure to protect civilians diminishes the image of the UN in the eyes of the international community; failure to protect civilians possibly undermines the political relationship with the host government; and failure to protect civilians can cause disappointment or even animosity from the local population, which can complicate operational tasks.
8. D
9. B
10. When the host government is unable or unwilling to carry out its responsibility to protect civilians.