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Policy

The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping

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DPO POLICY ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING

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A. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide the conceptual framework, guiding principles, and key considerations for the implementation of protection of civilians (POC) mandates by United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations and related support by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO). Additional guidance materials, including the DPO Handbook on Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping (2020), provide further practical guidance on the implementation of POC mandates, particularly in various specific contexts.
2. Applicable to UN peacekeeping operations with a Security Council mandate to protect civilians, this policy promotes consistency in approach to the protection of civilians. At the same time, it also recognizes the varied operational contexts faced by UN peacekeeping operations and the requirement for flexibility to respond to changing environments and the different resources available across the life cycle of a mission.
3. The policy aims to clarify and operationalize the protection of civilians as mandated by the Security Council. As recognized by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly, the protection of civilians by UN Peacekeeping Operations requires a comprehensive and integrated approach.¹ For the purposes of this policy, a **comprehensive approach** to the protection of civilians is one which takes into account and addresses the range of factors that influence and underpin threats to civilians in both the short- and long-term, including political, security and socio-economic factors, as well as gender dynamics. Such an approach recognizes that the protection of civilians requires the full range of capacities and capabilities available to the mission and other actors. An **integrated approach** to the protection of civilians requires the effort of all mission components - civilian, police and military – and, where relevant and appropriate, coordination with other UN actors including the UN Country Team (UNCT), including in the contexts of early transition planning. Integrated analysis and planning are critical to ensure that the mission is able to implement a comprehensive approach to POC. POC Advisers² play a key role supporting the coordination among actors for the operationalization of the POC mandate. Moreover, mission-specific POC strategies guide the mission's approach to POC, strengthening the comprehensive and integrated approach (see paragraph 75 for further details on POC strategies).
4. This policy articulates the roles and expectations of the mission leadership and relevant mission components so that POC can be fully integrated into mission planning and activities (also see Annex A "Roles and Responsibilities"). It also stresses the requirement for both institutional and individual accountability for the effective implementation of POC mandates.

B. SCOPE

5. Compliance with this policy, under the overall authority of the Head of Mission, is mandatory for all UN personnel, civilian and uniformed, working in UN peacekeeping operations with a mandate to protect civilians. Civilian personnel include all staff members, seconded civilian personnel, United Nations Volunteers, civilian experts on mission, individual contractors, and consultants. Uniformed personnel include all members of the police, military, and corrections components, whether contracted or seconded.

¹ Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/75/19) (2021) para 129.

² Senior POC Advisers can be supported by POC Officers. In missions without a Senior POC Adviser, many of these functions will be carried out by a POC mission Focal Point. See paragraph X for further details on their roles.

6. This policy also applies to personnel in DPO under the authority of the Under-Secretary-General (USG) in their support to the protection of civilians by UN peacekeeping operations.
7. The POC mandate in UN peacekeeping often intersects with other mandated tasks – including support to peace processes, promotion and protection of human rights, building the rule of law and security, mandates on child protection and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. POC is also fundamentally linked to the gender equality and women, peace and security, and youth, peace and security agendas. Specific methodologies, tools, policies and guidance have been developed to support the implementation of these mandates and related tasks, and dedicated expert personnel are deployed to implement most of them. While this policy applies specifically to the mandate to protect civilians, the implementation of mandated tasks should be aligned and complementary, and respective experts within the mission must be engaged to ensure coordinated responses.

C. POLICY

C.1 Background

8. The POC mandate in UN peacekeeping is grounded in international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law, and reflects the desire of the Security Council to protect civilians from harm. Noting that civilians continue to account for the vast majority of casualties in situations of armed conflict, the Security Council has passed regular resolutions on the protection of civilians, children and armed conflict (CAAC) and CRSV. These resolutions have contributed to firmly establish the role of peacekeeping operations in protecting those most vulnerable in conflict-affected situations and confirmed these protective functions as a priority objective of peacekeeping.
9. Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict have stressed the need to address the root causes of armed conflict, to enhance the protection of civilians on a long-term basis. The most effective and sustainable way of protecting civilians is to ensure stability, peace and security through inclusive political processes and sustainable solutions to conflict and to support host states to fulfil their responsibility to protect civilians and respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of individuals on their territory. Proactive protection of civilians by peacekeeping operations can enable inclusive political processes and facilitate equal and meaningful participation, including by women and youth, in decision-making and peace and security processes. It can also mitigate harm to civilian populations while those processes may be stalled.
10. The protection of civilians by UN peacekeeping operations takes place alongside broader UN protection efforts, including the promotion and protection of human rights and humanitarian protection, which seek to prevent, mitigate and stop threats to individuals' human rights and fundamental freedoms, ensure that these rights are respected and protected by duty bearers and ensure access to basic services and humanitarian assistance.
11. The protection of civilians constitutes a common objective shared by UN actors to protect civilians from risks and threats to their physical integrity, including those arising from armed conflict. As such, to ensure coherence in UN support, there needs to be strategic coordination at both UN Headquarters and mission level on the protection aims of UN peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian actors operating in the same area.

C.2 Definitions and Guiding Principles

a. Defining the protection of civilians mandate: main elements and key terms

12. In accordance with mission-specific Security Council resolutions, peacekeeping operations with POC mandates are required to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, within the limits of the capabilities of a peacekeeping operation and within its areas of deployment.³ The mandates of individual missions may vary in language and include specific tasks and approaches to POC that will guide the implementation of the mandate and the strategic approach taken by the mission. These mandates do not, in any way, limit or detract from the primary responsibility of the host state to protect civilians on its territory. However, missions with a POC mandate are typically authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to use all necessary means to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, regardless of the source of the threat.⁴ The Security Council has specified that the mandate to protect civilians applies.
13. With a view to ensuring an operational definition for UN peacekeeping that takes these features into account, while focusing on key elements in line with the guiding principles for implementing POC mandates (see paragraphs 22-36), the protection of civilians mandate in UN peacekeeping is defined as: **“without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the host state, integrated and coordinated activities by all civilian and uniformed mission components to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians within the mission’s capabilities and areas of deployment through the use of all necessary means, up to and including deadly force”**.
14. Peacekeeping operations are deployed and mandated to protect civilians in multiple contexts. The following definitions and principles apply in determining the scope of the POC mandate in all contexts:
15. **Civilian:**⁵ For the purposes of this policy and the POC mandate in peacekeeping, everyone is to be considered a civilian, except persons falling in one of the following categories:
 - members of the armed forces;
 - members of an organized armed group with continuous combat function; and
 - civilians directly participating in hostilities, for such time as they do so.

In case of doubt whether a person is a civilian, that person shall be considered a civilian.⁶

When international humanitarian law applies to UN forces, they must comply with it, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. This obligation is independent of the POC mandate.

16. **Threats of physical violence against civilians:** Such threats encompass all hostile acts or situations that are likely to lead to death or serious bodily injury of civilians, including sexual violence, regardless of the source of the threat. This includes, inter alia, threats posed by non-state armed groups, extremist groups, self-defence groups, domestic and foreign state defence and security forces and other state agents and state-sponsored armed actors, as well as communities. It includes both direct and indiscriminate attacks, and attempts to kill, torture, maim, rape or sexually abuse and exploit, forcibly displace, starve, pillage, abduct or

³ Note that some mandates may require protection of civilians under “*imminent* threat of physical violence”.

⁴ The Security Council has not always explicitly referenced Chapter VII of the UN Charter when authorizing all necessary means.

⁵ The following definition is for the purposes of the protection of civilians mandate in UN peacekeeping only and is without prejudice to the definition of “civilian” under international humanitarian law.

⁶ ST/SGB/1999/13 Observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law. Guidance on whether international humanitarian law applies to a specific peacekeeping operation will be developed on a case-by-case basis and as required by the Office of Legal Affairs, in consultation with DPO and the relevant Mission.

arbitrarily detain, kidnap, disappear or traffic persons or recruit and use children. It also includes harm associated with the presence of explosive ordnance including mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. "Threat" includes both violence against civilians that has materialised and is ongoing and violence that has the realistic potential to occur. The threat need not be imminent unless the specific Security Council mandate requires this.

17. **Within capabilities:** As directed by the Security Council, the protection of civilians must be prioritized in decisions regarding the allocation, deployment and use of available mission capacities and resources.⁷ The POC mandate also recognizes that peacekeeping operations have limited resources and capabilities and may therefore face situations where they are unable to effectively prevent, stop, or even mitigate certain threats. When faced with multiple concurrent threats to civilians, missions will prioritize those that have a greater potential impact on the civilian population (including potential mass atrocities) or a greater destabilising effect. They must therefore prioritize their resources and prevention and response activities across the three tiers outlined below based on the nature of the threat, the full range of civilian, police and military capabilities available to the mission and the capacities of other protection actors, including the host state.
18. **Within areas of deployment:** 'Areas of deployment' includes the area of operational responsibility of any particular unit (civilian or uniformed) of the mission, even though that unit may not have established a physical presence in the location concerned. 'Within areas of deployment' recognizes that peacekeeping operations typically have a limited physical range. There may be regions where a mission has no presence or locations that it is unable to reach. Nonetheless, missions must always prevent and respond, if possible, to threats of physical violence against civilians where they have the capability to do so effectively, including where this can be done through advocacy and political engagement activities that may not require physical presence in the area at risk. Where a threat to civilians is within range of a mission presence or base, the mission must intervene within its capabilities. At the mission headquarters (Mission HQ) and Field Office/Sector levels, missions must be prepared to redeploy resources within the mission area to prevent or respond to threats to civilians as needed, with the support of DPO and DOS as required.

b. Guiding principles for implementing POC mandates

19. The POC mandate is guided by a set of legal and practical principles and is rooted in the UN Charter and international law. The following principles apply to all missions implementing POC mandates:
20. **Grounded in international law:** POC mandates are a manifestation of the international community's determination to prevent the most serious violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law and related standards and must be implemented in both the letter and spirit of these legal frameworks.
21. **A priority mandate:** In mandated missions, POC must be prioritized in decisions regarding the allocation and use of available capabilities and resources.
22. **Primary responsibility of the host state:** The host state always has the primary responsibility to protect civilians on its territory. The mission's POC mandate does not replace, affect or limit this responsibility in any way. The mission will, as far as possible, support the host state's POC efforts but may act independently to protect civilians when the host state is deemed unable or unwilling to do so, or where government forces themselves

⁷ S/RES/1894 (2009).

pose a threat to civilians. When supporting host state security forces or other non-UN security forces, peacekeeping operations must respect the UN human rights due diligence policy on United Nations Support to non-United Nations security forces.⁸

23. **Consonant with the principles of peacekeeping:** UN peacekeeping operations are guided by three inter-related and mutually reinforcing principles: consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. The protection of civilians is fully consonant with these principles, including the authorization of the use of force. As such, the principles of peacekeeping can never be an excuse for failure to protect civilians.
24. **Under effective leadership, command and control:** Senior leaders in missions and in UN Headquarters are ultimately accountable for the implementation of the POC mandate and must set the strategic direction and ensure accountability for its effective delivery by all mission components. For uniformed components, the Force Commander and Police Commissioner are responsible for the application of the Rules of Engagement (ROEs) and Directives on the Use of Force (DUFs), respectively, and contingent commanders must also ensure all those under their command understand and comply with these as well as this policy.
25. **An active duty to protect:** Activities to protect civilians must be planned, deliberate and ongoing. All mission components must constantly work to prevent, pre-empt and respond to threats to civilians, and not just react to attacks. This includes dialogue and engagement, presence in areas under greatest threat, creating a credible deterrent posture and supporting national POC capacities.
26. **A whole-of-mission activity:** Protecting civilians requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that involves jointly planned and coordinated action by civilian and uniformed mission components, grounded in structured and regular information-sharing, an integrated analysis and a common understanding of the threat environment. A POC lens should be applied across the mission's integrated analysis (e.g., early warning, threat assessments, forecasting and predictive analysis, after action reviews, etc.) to inform planning and decision-making. The different components should implement activities in an integrated, complementary and sequenced manner to leverage comparative advantages and maximise effects on the ground. As it is a priority mandate, all components must integrate and prioritize POC activities in their workplans, activities, training, and monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, the mission's POC Adviser should be systematically included in the mission's integrated information-sharing, planning and analysis mechanisms and fora.
27. **A coordinated approach:** Due to the multitude of actors who contribute to protection of civilians both within and outside of the mission, peacekeeping operations must take into account the comparative advantage, optimal positioning and appropriate modes of engagement vis-à-vis local, national, regional and international protection actors, and systematically share information with such actors as appropriate. This requires multiple actors coordinating and carrying out distinct activities simultaneously.
28. **In cooperation with humanitarian and development actors and in respect of humanitarian principles:** UN humanitarian and development agencies and NGOs undertake a broad range of activities to protect civilians.⁹ In addition, like all civilians, humanitarian personnel are entitled to protection under the POC mandate. Close and

⁸ Human Rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces (A/67/775-S/2013/110).

⁹ Humanitarian actors define protection as "all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law"; see IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (2016).

systematic coordination and information-sharing with these actors through established mechanisms, including the relevant UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination platforms, and UN integrated coordination mechanisms,¹⁰ is therefore essential and will remain pivotal for transition planning. Humanitarian actors rely upon the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence (the humanitarian principles) to discharge their mandates effectively and safely and it is therefore necessary to maintain a clear distinction between their role and that of political and military actors, including peacekeeping operations. While the creation of security conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance can support the protection of civilians, this objective, often a separately mandated task of peacekeeping operations, goes beyond the scope of the present policy.

29. **A tailored, community-based approach:** Actions, plans and programmes to protect civilians must always be informed by consultation with local communities. This takes place through regular, meaningful, safe and respectful engagement with women, men, girls and boys, with a view to understanding and taking into account their concerns, strategies and capacities; empowering local actors and organizations; and supporting existing protection mechanisms in order to contribute to a sustainable impact. Analysis and planning for POC must consider the protection needs and threats faced by different groups of civilians including, but not limited to, women, men, children, older persons, youth, people with disabilities, ethnic, religious and minority groups, as well as displaced populations. Community engagement needs to happen at every stage of the implementation cycle. Special consideration should be given to the end of protection initiatives and how these can be transitioned to the community or other third parties. Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) can support uniformed and civilian personnel in their interactions with communities, local authorities and other local actors. They can assist with information gathering, threat or needs assessments, conflict mediation, early warning, local-level protection planning, coordination of and follow up on field visits and patrols/operations and strengthening the resilience of local communities.
30. **Gender-responsive POC:** All strategies, actions, plans and programmes related to the implementation of the POC mandate must be gender-responsive. This requires appreciating that there are gendered differences in status and power and that this informs and shapes the immediate and long-term protection needs of women and men, girls and boys. Gender-responsive POC takes account of these differences by adjusting POC efforts in ways that appropriately respond to or eliminate a threat or mitigate the risk to civilians. This approach utilizes a gender analysis,¹¹ including a gender-responsive conflict analysis, to inform all POC efforts and should be integrated across the three tiers of the mission's POC initiative. A gender analysis facilitates the identification of specific roles and capabilities (including women's and girls' varied roles in peace and conflict), risks and vulnerabilities of all community members as well as the appropriate POC intervention. Gender-responsive POC is inclusive of and supports the women, peace, and security mandate (WPS) priorities such as increasing meaningful engagement of women and women's organizations, at all levels of conflict prevention, management and resolution efforts.
31. **Undertaken with mainstreamed child protection concerns:** The specific protection needs of children (boys and girls) must be considered and responded to when implementing the POC mandate, including by mainstreaming child protection considerations into joint

¹⁰ As required by the UN Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning (2023).

¹¹ Gender analysis is an analytical framework that assesses the impact of policies or actions on women, men, boys, girls, and non-binary people by investigating the unequal social, political and economic power dynamics that exist within society. It includes power variables (e.g., age, (dis)ability, etc.) and recognizes the cumulative and reinforcing effects brought to bear by these different systems of power.

analysis (threat assessments, early warning), information-sharing, joint planning and community engagement.¹²

32. **Do no harm:** All mission components must be mindful in their activities and engagement with individuals and communities not to expose civilians to risk or to cause harm, including by exposing civilians to possible reprisals for cooperation with the mission. Confidentiality must be respected for any information that could be used to identify sources. In addition, cases of human rights violations and abuses can be reported, referred or pursued only if the sources of information grant their informed consent and upon assessment that the disclosure of information would not pose a protection risk for the victims, witnesses or other individuals. When conducting police and military operations, all efforts must be taken to mitigate harm to civilians. Sexual exploitation and abuse is strictly prohibited and must be addressed in accordance with relevant procedures.¹³ Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse is a requirement for the effective protection of civilians.
33. **Enabled by technology and informed by data:** New technologies can help peacekeepers anticipate, prevent and respond to threats to civilians, as well as to better engage local populations. POC should be at the centre of decisions related to the deployment and tasking of assets, and in the acquisition, analysis and sharing of derived information. New enabling technologies can support missions' POC efforts and help build collective mission capacity for data-driven, evidence-based analysis, planning and decision-making.

C.3 Operational Concept

34. Peacekeeping operations mandated to protect civilians have a range of instruments and approaches at their disposal. These are categorized in three tiers which are mutually accommodating and reinforcing and are implemented simultaneously and strategically in accordance with the mission mandate, mission phase and the circumstances on the ground. There is no inherent hierarchy or sequencing between the tiers. The protection of civilians' mandate is implemented at all levels of the missions and all components of the mission have a role to play in each of the tiers. Action across all three tiers will emphasize prevention and pre-emption as well as the primary responsibility of the host state to protect civilians. The three tiers of POC action are:
 - Tier I: Protection through dialogue and engagement
 - Tier II: Provision of physical protection
 - Tier III: Establishment of a protective environment
35. Across all three tiers, UN peacekeepers utilize both armed and unarmed approaches to protect civilians. Unarmed Approaches to Protection (UAP) include the full range of protection activities undertaken by civilian and uniformed personnel that do not involve the projection of military power, or the threat or use of force.¹⁴ UAP should be carried out as part of a larger comprehensive and integrated approach that includes high level political engagement and the threat or use of force by uniformed peacekeepers.
36. The protection of civilians requires actions with both short- and long-term outlooks, based on an analysis of the environment, the phase of the conflict, if any, and the mission's life cycle, as well as the nature of the threat. The strategic approach to POC, and the three tiers, are therefore implemented along four phases:

¹² DPKO/DFS/DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations (2017.11), in particular, paragraphs 10 and 19.4.

¹³ ST/SGB/2003/13 Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

¹⁴ These can include conflict resolution activities at national and local level; human rights monitoring, investigations, reporting and capacity building; engagement with armed actors to persuade them to cease or at least mitigate harm to civilians; protection through unarmed presence to deter violence against civilians; capacity building of protection actors, including state security forces and civil society; as well as other related activities.

- (i) prevention: where no clear threat to civilians has been identified (longer term),
 - (ii) pre-emption: where likely threats are identified and attacks against civilians are anticipated (short term),
 - (iii) response: where threats to civilians are imminent or occurring (short term), and
 - (iv) consolidation: where violence against civilians is subsiding (longer term).
37. The phases do not necessarily occur in sequential order and approaches relevant to different phases may be undertaken simultaneously or independently. Activities and objectives under each phase will vary along with the specific content of each country-specific mandate. Within one mission, different approaches may be necessary in different geographical areas depending on the situation on the ground. Actions across all three tiers may be taken within each operational phase.

a. Tier I: Protection through Dialogue and Engagement

38. Tier I activities include active, structured and regular dialogue with perpetrators or potential perpetrators of violence against civilians; conflict resolution and mediation between parties to the conflict; advocating with the host government, its security institutions and other relevant actors to intervene to protect civilians; local conflict resolution and social cohesion activities; reconciliation initiatives; strategic communication; investigation; advocacy; reporting on human rights and other protection concerns; and other initiatives that seek to protect civilians through communications, dialogue and direct or indirect engagement.
39. Tier I reinforces the **primacy of politics** in the resolution of conflict and the role of peacekeeping in the pursuit of **sustainable solutions**. The Mission's overall political strategy should contribute to the POC mandate and POC considerations should underpin the Mission's political efforts. Dialogue and political engagement with political, security or other actors or spoilers who may instigate or have influence over potential perpetrators of violence shall be utilized to prevent and mitigate threats to civilians, including through calls for compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Good offices, political engagement, advocacy and dialogue should immediately be used to prevent threats of attacks on civilians before they become imminent, or to end them once they occur. Prevention through regular dialogue and engagement is the most effective way to reduce the need for reliance on physical protection by the mission.
40. To advance the protection of civilians, the mission should advocate for the systematic integration of human rights and other specific protection-related concerns, including those related to gender and children, into peace processes and peace agreements. All relevant mission components must engage host state interlocutors on their responsibility to protect civilians and protect, promote and respect international humanitarian law (where relevant) and international human rights law and to hold alleged perpetrators accountable. At UN Headquarters, the Secretariat will support the mission by engaging international actors including UN entities, the Security Council, Member States, regional and subregional organizations and others who may positively influence those involved in the conflict to ensure the protection of civilians.
41. Dialogue and engagement are carried out by all mission components, civilian and uniformed, at the local and national levels. It can include engagement with communities, including women's organizations and networks, and potential perpetrators, including non-state armed actors.
42. Local engagement may allow for early detection of threats or tensions that can inform mission early warning systems and prevention actions. Engagement with communities should be an inclusive, two-way exercise that begins with listening to communities about

their protection needs and capacities. It should identify, support and bolster existing structures and mechanisms to resolve and respond to conflict and be inclusive of the protection needs of all community members.¹⁵ Where appropriate, it should also reinforce trust by building relations between authorities and the population and preventing security vacuums. Engagement strategies should consider potential risk or harm that engagement may pose to individuals and communities and how to address them.

43. The mission can support inclusive **dialogue and mediation efforts**, including community-based mechanisms, such as informal justice mechanisms, which aim to peacefully settle disputes that may otherwise trigger intercommunal conflicts. In situations where other actors may be better placed to provide support or where the mission does not have access or if its presence may put civilians at risk, it can support third party organizations. Missions should identify links between local, national and regional level conflicts and threats to civilians and seek to address the threats at multiple levels, while aiming to address root causes of conflict.
44. The mission should **engage with the host state security sector** on the protection of civilians. The mission's aim should be to assess risks stemming from institutional and governance weaknesses within the security sector and seek to develop and support the implementation of security agreements, policies and mechanisms, including at the local level, aiming at fulfilling the state's primary responsibility to protect civilians. The mission should, as appropriate, advocate for the deployment by host state authorities of national security forces to locations where their absence results in increasing threats to vulnerable groups.
45. Appropriate approaches to **engagement with non-state armed actors (NSAGs)** on the protection of civilians, including the role of different mission components, will be decided at mission level with guidance from DPO on request.¹⁶ When engaging with non-state armed groups on POC, the mission's aim should be to prevent or stop attacks on civilians, change a group's behaviour so that they no longer threaten civilians, seek a group's meaningful commitments to desist from attacks on civilians, and improve understanding and respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as to diffuse tensions, identify grievances and build confidence between parties to the conflict.
46. **Monitoring and reporting** on protection concerns, which creates a transparent and objective basis for dialogue with all parties to the conflict, should be used to positively influence the actions and behaviours of state authorities and non-state armed groups or to engage other influential actors. This includes human rights monitoring, reporting and investigation, including public reporting and advocacy at national and local levels, which should incorporate a gender analysis. Human rights monitoring and reporting enables the identification of protection threats and needs that inform mission POC strategies and activities, and also forms the basis for accountability. Similarly, the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence (MARA) and the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict (MRM) can contribute to influencing actors on protection concerns. Collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data is crucial to effective monitoring and reporting and therefore should be prioritized whenever possible.
47. The mandatory application of the **United Nations human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces** may also be used as leverage to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law, international human

¹⁵ Including women, men, children, older persons, youth, people with disabilities, ethnic, religious and minority groups, as well as displaced populations and other marginalized communities.

¹⁶ The DPA/PMD and DPKO/DPET aide mémoire on Engaging with Non-State Armed Groups for political purposes (2017) sets out some of the options and considerations that missions should take into account when designing a strategy to engage with NSAGs.

rights law and international refugee law by non-UN security forces, including police, military and other security actors. All UN support to non-UN security forces, including in the context of fulfilling the protection of civilians' mandate, must be implemented in compliance with the HRDDP. Mitigating measures under the HRDDP, such as background checks of individuals and units, strategic and policy advice on security sector reform, capacity building of host state security forces, joint planning of operations and after-action reviews, have a direct impact on the implementation of the protection of civilians' mandate.

48. **Public information activities and strategic communications** will be used to prevent or stop attacks on civilians by influencing behaviour, contributing to shape perceptions and control narratives, and responding to issues such as hate speech, misinformation and disinformation, which may lead to threats to civilians. Public information can be used to encourage respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law, strengthen support to peace and reconciliation initiatives, promote gender equality, and provide a reliable and impartial source of information. The mission's communication strategy must include concrete objectives and activities on POC using contextually appropriate media and languages to target specific actors, including potential perpetrators and communities at risk. Information shall be provided equally to women and men, girls and boys. The mission must engage with the media on the POC mandate and communications must also be used to manage expectations about the role and capacities of the mission.

C. Tier II: Provision of Physical Protection

49. Tier II encompasses activities by all mission components to physically protect civilians, whether through armed or unarmed approaches, including protective presence, interpositioning, the threat or use of force, or facilitating safe passage or refuge. While Tier II notably includes activities by uniformed components involving the show or use of force to prevent, deter, pre-empt and respond to threats to civilians, civilian mission components can also act as a protective presence through their regular, visible, direct engagement with civilian populations at risk. All actions under Tier II should be informed by an integrated analysis, including gender analysis, and implemented as part of a comprehensive and integrated approach, with close coordination between civilian and uniformed components, to jointly determine priority areas for deployment, presence and actions; to guide the objectives and conduct of police and military operations; to inform operational and contingency planning; and to undertake complementary activities such as political and community dialogue and engagement.
50. To prevent and deter threats to civilians, uniformed mission components must have a **proactive posture and mindset**. Even when a threat is not identified, the mission should have a visible presence, particularly in high-risk areas and those where state security forces are not present, as an important deterrent and confidence-building measure. This presence should be accompanied by assurances to the population of the mission's intent to protect civilians from physical violence and the establishment of community engagement and alert mechanisms in coordination with civilian components, particularly CLAs where they are deployed. The protection of civilians must be prioritized in decisions on location, posture, length and type of deployment and patrolling and must be systematically included in operational orders. Joint threat assessments and effective and timely information-sharing, early warning and coordination among civilian and uniformed components at senior and working levels, as well as consultation with other relevant protection actors, will facilitate preventive actions and effective responses.
51. When a **concrete threat of an attack against civilians is identified**, proactive and timely measures must be taken to eliminate or mitigate the threat before violence occurs, including

through credible **deterrent actions** such as reinforced presence and patrolling, show of force, securing key sites, interpositioning, psychological operations and proactive military and police operations, which may extend to pre-empting and neutralising the source of the threat in accordance with the mandate, rules of engagement (ROE), and directives on use of force (DUF). Contingency plans shall be developed in advance to enable rapid response.

52. When **physical violence against civilians is either imminent or in progress**, the mission has a responsibility to act to the full extent of its capabilities by **deploying rapidly to secure the civilian population**, including through the dispatch of quick reaction forces. Peacekeepers must be ready at all times to act swiftly and decisively, in accordance with their ROE or DUF, with the full degree of force needed to protect civilians. While doing so, efforts should be taken to avoid or minimize casualties. While every reasonable effort must be made to resolve the situation by other means, there will be circumstances where the use of force is the most effective and adequate course of action at an early stage. Where armed force is used, it must be limited in its intensity and duration to ensure that civilians are protected and civilian casualties avoided or at least minimized. In accordance with the mission's ROE and DUF and consistent with DPKO/DFS Guidelines on the Use of Force by Military Components in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations¹⁷ and the DPKO/DFS Policy on Formed Police Units in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations¹⁸, the use of force should be graduated, unless this would place the civilians to be protected or mission personnel themselves at risk of death or serious bodily injury, or clearly be ineffective in the circumstances. In this context, the level of force used by the mission may be higher than the level of the force threatened or used by the attacker, if necessary to achieve the authorized objective.
53. Security activities and operations to deter, prevent or stop attacks on civilians may be conducted either jointly or in coordination with the host state security forces (or other third-party forces, if the mandate permits) or unilaterally, as appropriate. In cases where operations are conducted jointly, all activities must be in conformity with the HRDDP.
54. When carrying out any police and/or military operations UN peacekeeping operations must take steps to protect civilians and **mitigate potential harm to civilians** that could arise from those operations, before, during or after. As a starting point, mission ROE and DUF contain a number of important restrictions on the use of force, for example collateral damage must be avoided or in any case minimized, fire must be limited in duration and intensity to that necessary to achieve the authorised objective and unobserved indirect fire is prohibited. Beyond the minimum obligations of international humanitarian law (where applicable), peacekeeping operations shall anticipate, prevent, track, minimize and address direct and indirect harm to the safety and security of civilians or civilian objects and infrastructure.
55. Efforts to mitigate harm to civilians shall inform operational planning and the conduct of operations and shall be taken before, during and after the implementation of operations. Before an operation, a full **risk assessment** must be conducted and **contingency plans** for the protection of civilians developed in systematic consultation with the POC Adviser and relevant civilian components and, where appropriate, host state authorities and UN and non-UN humanitarian actors. This exercise will identify and analyse direct and indirect negative consequences, including civilian displacement, impact on livelihoods, health and education, possible reprisals against the civilian population and resulting explosive remnants of war. Mitigation measures to address these consequences shall be identified and included in

¹⁷ DPKO/DFS Guidelines on the Use of Force by Military Components in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2016.24).

¹⁸ DPKO/DFS Policy on Formed Police Units in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2016.10).

operational plans, contingency plans and other orders. This exercise should be informed by a gender analysis in order to address, integrate and account for the differentiated impacts of operations on different groups of the population. Operations should be followed by an after-action review that analyses the impact of the operations, including community perceptions, and identifies lessons learned for future operations.

56. Under the POC mandate, UN peacekeeping operations are mandated to protect civilians regardless of the source of the threat, including where that **threat is from elements of host state security forces** or their proxies. This includes the provision of physical protection by military and/or police components. However, it is recognized that a robust response to threats posed by the host state may be beyond the mission's capabilities, may result in insecurity for peacekeepers and can affect the host state's strategic consent to the mission. For an effective and sustainable restoration of security for civilians, from the early stages of deployment, missions must prioritize activities aimed at enhancing and supporting the intent, capacity and accountability of the host state to respect international humanitarian law (where relevant) and international human rights law and to fulfil its responsibility to protect civilians (activities under Tiers I and III of the POC concept).
57. Responses to specific threats to civilians posed by elements of host state security forces should normally include political engagement, early and at the highest levels, with the political, security and justice sectors, including by sharing information and analysis on the perpetrators and violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law monitored by the mission. However, where such engagement is fruitless, clearly ineffective or simply not an option in the time available, the mission must be prepared to intervene physically to protect civilians at risk. The rapid deployment and presence of mission forces may be sufficient to deter or stop host state security forces from harming civilians. In other cases, effective interposition of mission forces between civilians at risk and host state security forces may be necessary, combined with demonstration of resolve and determination to maintain position. In situations where host state authorities continue to refuse to recognize and address violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law or oppose the mission's efforts to protect civilians, DPO will provide guidance on request to the mission and will support advocacy efforts, including by engaging with the Security Council.
58. In cases of credible threats of physical violence against individual mission interlocutors (including, inter alia, human rights defenders, victims and witnesses of human rights violations, community workers, journalists, lawyers or other civil society representatives) or notable personalities or figures, missions may consider instituting specific measures to **protect individuals**. Such measures may include, for example, measures to prevent and address intimidation and reprisals for cooperation with the mission, advice and guidance on self-protection measures, documentation and reporting of cases and, in certain cases, the static deployment of armed units outside the individual's residence or the regular patrolling of its environs. Guidance on such measures must first be sought from UN Headquarters.
59. Conflict, violence and threats to civilians may cause **displacement of the population**, which further increases vulnerability to protection threats, including harassment, child and forced recruitment by armed groups, and sexual and gender-based violence. Vulnerable groups, including women and children, are often more affected by such threats. Peacekeeping missions should first seek to prevent displacement by addressing threats at their origin. However, should prevention activities fail to prevent displacement, missions may seek to ensure the protection of displaced populations during flight, in refugee or IDP camps or settlements, upon return to their places of origin or relocation.
60. Civilians at risk may seek the direct physical protection of a peacekeeping mission by

gathering outside or **seeking entry to UN premises**. In anticipation of such, all bases (however temporary) of UN peacekeeping missions must have contingency plans in place to provide physical protection in both scenarios in consultation with relevant partners including, as appropriate, the host state, the UNCT and humanitarian actors. In order of priority, physical protection should be provided:

- (1) On non-UN premises, including in camps or settlements, or with host communities;
- (2) In areas adjacent or close to existing mission premises identified for that purpose; or
- (3) In extremis, including due to a lack of preparedness or where the mission has insufficient police or military capacity to secure a site outside the mission compound, within existing premises. A decision to provide physical protection within UN premises must be taken by the Head of Mission, in consultation, if time permits, with the USG DPO. This option shall be enabled for the minimum duration possible, normally for the extent of the threat.¹⁹

61. Civilians at risk may also request the assistance of the mission in facilitating their **transfer, evacuation or relocation** to more secure areas. In consultation with the UNCT and humanitarian actors, missions should assist the safe and dignified movement of civilians at risk within available resources, through the provision of route and area security or conducting escorts or extractions, where feasible. The physical relocation of civilians by the mission should be limited to in extremis situations and consulted with UN Headquarters, time permitting.
62. Each situation described above may pose risks to the civilians to be protected and/or UN personnel. All such risks must be identified, and measures taken to eliminate or mitigate them, including through advance planning, political engagement or the allocation of specific mission resources.
63. Where displaced civilians reside in camps, sites or settlements, these should be protected when at risk of attack. Maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of such camps is essential, and protection risks for their inhabitants, such as the risk of child and forced recruitment, must be carefully addressed in accordance with humanitarian principles, in coordination with humanitarian actors and national law enforcement agencies, as appropriate. Where feasible, the mission should contribute to **creating the conditions for interim and durable solutions**, which can be achieved through informed and voluntary return, local integration, or settlement elsewhere in the country.
64. UN peacekeeping operations may be obliged to temporarily detain individuals in the course of carrying out their protection of civilians' mandates. Any such **detention**, in addition to complying with relevant international human rights laws, must be in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedure on the Handling of Detention in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions,²⁰ including safeguards relating to the detention of children, and relevant mission-specific policies or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) where they exist.
65. **UN Headquarters** shall contribute to Tier II activities by supporting and engaging with Troop and Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) on the necessary capacities, resources, training, capabilities and mindsets of deployed troops and police in line with the Operational Readiness Assurance Framework.²¹ Such efforts will include support to T/PCCs for screening and training on international humanitarian law and international human rights

¹⁹ The decision to relocate IDPs shall lie with the mission leadership, acting in close consultation with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). Relocations must be voluntary.

²⁰ DPO/DPPA/DSS Standard Operating Procedure on the Handling of Detention in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions (2020.13).

²¹ DPKO/DFS Policy on Operational Readiness Assurance and Performance Improvement (2015.16).

law, the operational requirements of the POC mandate and, where required, other relevant training. Headquarters shall also engage with Member States to ensure that there is political support for the activities of the mission.

b. Tier III: Establishing a Protective Environment

66. Tier III activities are frequently programmatic in nature and designed with committed resources for peacebuilding and conflict prevention/resolution objectives. Sometimes presented as separate mandated tasks under country-specific resolutions, activities under Tier III help create a protective environment for civilians, prevent the (re-)emergence of threats of physical violence, support the legitimacy of the host state and its capacity to protect civilians and support the (re-)establishment of the rule of law and criminal justice chain.
67. While Tier III activities can be undertaken at any time, they are particularly relevant in areas where conflict may be prevented, has subsided or when most imminent threats to civilians have decreased but protection gains need to be consolidated and future outbreaks of violence prevented. Tier III activities should therefore be prioritized as soon as conflict has subsided in a given area and conditions are conducive. They should also be undertaken with a view to ensure that adequate national and international capacities are present during and following the transition of peacekeeping missions, recognising that reconfigurations of UN presences may entail increased risks for civilians.
68. Activities that contribute to Tier III are generally planned and undertaken jointly with other partners, for example, as rule of law support activities within the ambit of the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law (GFP) arrangement or alongside or in coordination with programmes by the UNCT. When designing and delivering these joint activities, mission components should examine the extent to which they contribute to the protection of civilians in the short-, medium-, and long-term, design them in a way that maximises the protective impact and identify and mitigate any risks to civilians associated with the activity.
69. Many Tier III activities are conducted in support of host state authorities and their responsibility to protect civilians. These can include **security sector reform** and **capacity building** in areas such as professionalism and integrity, administrative systems to support the delivery of state services, legal and policy frameworks, human rights, gender equality, accountability mechanisms, democratic governance, civilian oversight, engagement with stakeholders, weapons and ammunition management, and the maintenance of public order and safety, in adherence with the rule of law and international human rights law.
70. Establishing a protective environment also includes support to political processes, including the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, and ensuring that they are implemented in a way that furthers the long-term protection of civilians. It includes the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, with particular attention to children; the implementation of community violence reduction programmes; the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms; the survey and clearance of explosive ordnance; the cessation of illicit exploitation of natural resources; the prevention of illicit proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and the countering of serious and transnational organized crime.
71. A key aspect of Tier III is strengthening of the **rule of law** through fighting impunity and strengthening criminal accountability for serious crimes, improving law enforcement and judicial processes, including investigations, victim and witness protection and programmes on reparations and rehabilitation of victims; restoring, extending and strengthening state authority in the criminal justice sector; improving prison conditions; and strengthening

security to reduce the risk of prison riots, mass escapes and the radicalization of detainees.²²

72. At the local level, Tier III includes enhancing community protection capacities and specialist referral resources to meet the particular needs of the conflict affected population; building capacity of civil society, women's organizations, journalists and human rights defenders; contributing to creating the conditions conducive to voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); and economic development activities. It can also include rehabilitation of basic infrastructure through Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and programmatic funding. Activities at the local level must be implemented in coordination and consultation with local communities in order to address the different protection needs of women, men, girls and boys and to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness as POC tools. Such activities should also be coordinated with relevant humanitarian and development actors in the mission area. Working together with the UNCT and humanitarian actors and depending on the specific mandate, the Mission can help establish security conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the provision of host state services.

C.4 Implementing the Mandate

73. As a whole of mission-mandate, protection of civilians' analysis, planning and response is a shared responsibility within the mission under the authority and guidance of mission leadership. It requires structured and regular information-sharing and joint assessment, analysis and planning of activities and actions among civilian and uniformed components, as well as systematic engagement and coordination with UNCT and humanitarian actors. All missions with a POC mandate shall establish **POC planning and coordination fora** at the Mission HQ and Field Office/Sector levels. In addition to all relevant mission components, these fora should include, as appropriate, OCHA and the protection cluster. Where relevant, other representatives of the UNCT and other humanitarian actors may also be included.
74. All missions with a POC mandate shall also have **POC Advisers and POC focal points**²³ to support the mission leadership in POC analysis, planning and response and coordinate POC mandate implementation, including liaison and engagement with the UNCT and humanitarian protection actors, including the protection cluster. The post of the POC Adviser should be placed in the office of the Head of Mission to facilitate coordination across components as well as enable proximity to high-level and strategic decision-making.
75. Missions with a POC mandate shall develop a **POC strategy**. The strategy should set out the required strategic objectives; assess threats, risks and capacity; prioritize among threats; and define the mission approach, activities, roles and responsibilities for POC as well as coordination mechanisms both internally and with other actors. The mission's POC strategy must be informed by an age and gender-sensitive analysis and its core elements must be integrated into mission planning documents, including the mission concept, strategy/plan, component/section level planning documents, conflict analysis, results-based budget and Comprehensive Performance Assessment System (CPAS), as appropriate. In exceptional cases, Heads of Missions can decide to fully integrate the required elements of POC strategies (as above) into other mission planning documents (without having a

²² DPKO/DFS Policy on Prison Support in United Nations Peace Operations (2015.11) and DPKO/DFS Policy on Justice Support in United Nations Peace Operations (2016.22).

²³ POC focal points are personnel from the mission sections/components that support the coordination and mainstreaming of POC into mandated activities. They are distinct from the Mission POC Focal Point, who carries out the responsibilities of a Senior POC Adviser when there is no dedicated Senior POC Adviser post in the mission.

standalone POC strategy) but this should not in any way dilute or reduce the prioritization of POC. Guidance from UN Headquarters should be sought before such a decision is made. The POC strategy should be reviewed annually following the mandate renewal and revised and updated accordingly as necessary. It should also be reviewed and revised in response to significant changes in the operating context.

76. As missions cannot protect all civilians at all times in all places, mission components must jointly identify the **priority threats** to address at the Mission HQ and Field Office/Sector levels, in close consultation with communities, humanitarians and other actors. This integrated assessment and prioritization, which shall be reflected in the mission POC strategy, will form the basis of the mission's strategic approach to POC and must be reviewed on an ongoing basis to guide the use of mission resources for POC. Missions shall prioritize threats to civilians that pose the highest level of risk to civilians. Prioritization of threats does not, however, equal a choice between addressing and not addressing them. Missions should consider complementary use of resources and actions across the three tiers to address various threats simultaneously. Planning for POC requires the collective contribution of all components (including uniformed, substantive and support components) to design and execute appropriate courses of action.
77. At the Field Office/Sector level, missions shall establish structured and regular **information-sharing** and **early warning** mechanisms to enable shared analysis and understanding as well to coordinate response. These mechanisms should involve community members, including women, taking into account their particular security threats and concerns. At the Mission HQ level, a forward-looking and data-driven **threat assessment** conducted by the mission POC coordination structure will be shared at least quarterly with senior leadership and UN Headquarters in order to ensure strategic coherence and enable dialogue as appropriate with Member States and the Security Council on major threats of violence against civilians.
78. At all times, peacekeeping operations with a POC mandate must show a high level of readiness for POC, including through the development and management of relevant contingency plans, in-mission guidance and SOPs, coordination mechanisms, information management, early warning and response tools and processes, strategic communication and training activities and other preparedness activities such as rehearsals and table-top exercises. These mechanisms will be set out in the mission POC strategy. Integrated Mission Training Centres should be utilized for conducting and supporting POC related training and exercises.
79. As required, the mission's POC activities shall be supported and prioritized by the Director/Chief of Mission Support, including enabling technology and ensuring appropriate logistical support to deployments of civilian and uniformed components in priority POC areas. Any mission asset can and should be mobilized to implement the POC mandate, as necessary.

D. PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

80. In missions with a POC mandate, all relevant personnel, civilian and uniformed, and, in particular, senior leadership, including in UN Headquarters, have roles and responsibilities with respect to the implementation of the POC mandate. **For a full description of those roles and responsibilities, see Annex A to this policy.**
81. The Secretariat is institutionally - and the Secretary-General individually - accountable to

the political organs of the UN for the effective implementation of the Organization's mandates, including those of peacekeeping operations. This accountability cascades in the Organization so that **senior leaders at UN Headquarters and in mission are responsible** for both their own strategic actions and guidance and for ensuring that organizational and individual performance management systems are fully utilized to ensure that all relevant personnel in missions are accountable for their responsibilities for the delivery of POC mandates. Security Council resolution 2436 (2018) called for a comprehensive and integrated performance policy framework that identifies clear **standards of performance** for evaluating all UN civilian and uniformed personnel working in and supporting peacekeeping operations, including POC-mandated peacekeeping operations. The Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework (IPPAF) (2022) captures the key peacekeeping policies and standards and explains the consequences of failures to meet them, the incentives and recognition for outstanding performance, as well as the related steps that are taken by all parties for different types of personnel and areas.²⁴

82. In accordance with the requirement to prioritize resources for POC, the strategic and operational plans of peacekeeping missions with a POC mandate shall reflect clear objectives, expected accomplishments, performance indicators and actions with defined responsibilities, towards its implementation, in line with the mission's POC strategy. **POC objectives and indicators** shall be agreed by the mission components and reflected in CPAS and/or other strategic planning documents. These plans form the framework against which the mission will monitor, evaluate and account for its organizational performance in the implementation of its POC mandate. Dedicated mission-wide monitoring of POC mandate implementation shall be undertaken regularly.
83. In a peacekeeping operation, the **Head of Mission is accountable** to the Secretary-General, through the USG for Peace Operations, for the implementation of the mandate of the mission, including its POC mandate. In turn, the Head of Mission will delegate the relevant responsibility, authority and accountability. Ensuring accountability thus requires that the Head of Mission hold those reporting to him or her accountable for the proactive and effective performance of their responsibilities in the implementation of the POC mandate. **All relevant personnel** in missions with POC mandates shall include specific and achievable goals and/or actions related to their responsibility for the delivery of the POC mandate in their appropriate performance management document. These goals should be derived from the mission strategic and operational plans, including the mission POC strategy. Performance of personnel shall be monitored and evaluated accordingly.
84. Senior leaders in missions with POC mandates who have a Compact, including DSRSGs and Force Commanders at the ASG level, shall include a **strategic objective on POC in their Compact** aligned with mandate priorities, the mission's strategic objectives and their oversight role. Senior leaders, including Police Commissioners, Chiefs of Staff and Directors/Chiefs of Mission Support (D/CMS) in missions with POC mandates, shall include a **priority objective in their workplan** reflecting their specific responsibilities for the implementation of the POC mandate, aligned with the strategic objectives of the mission. Similar responsibilities, based on the mission strategic and operational plans, should be included in the workplans and performance appraisals of all other relevant staff, as appropriate.
85. Some personnel serving in UN peacekeeping operations with POC mandates, in particular **members of national military contingents or formed police units**, are not appraised through UN performance management systems. Nonetheless, they are expected to perform their responsibilities to implement the mandate of the mission effectively and with

²⁴ Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework, para 9.

professionalism and integrity. The performance of Police Units, and Force Headquarters and subunits in implementing the POC mandate are measured in accordance with relevant SOPs. Police Commissioners and Force Commanders must ensure that subordinate units are ready, able and willing to implement the POC mandate. Performance issues related to the implementation of the POC mandate should be brought to the attention of UN Headquarters.

86. There should be continuous learning on the protection of civilians, including through **regular after-action reviews and lessons learned assessments**. Reflections on POC should be included in the end of assignment reports of senior management.
87. In situations where civilians have been killed or subject to physical violence (including sexual violence) in proximity to a UN base or in a situation where the mission knew or should have known about an imminent threat to civilians and failed to respond within their capabilities, **an inquiry or after-action review must be undertaken** as soon as possible to identify gaps in integrated mission information gathering, analysis, coordination and/or response. A full investigation followed by a board of inquiry shall be initiated in case of a POC-related contravention of the ROE or DUF. Where necessary, UN Headquarters will support an investigation or conduct an independent investigation. After any evaluation or investigation, remedial or corrective measures must be taken to avoid reoccurrence and/or improve the POC response of the mission.
88. In accordance with relevant UN rules, regulations and procedures, in the case of poor performance of duties or misconduct related to the implementation of the POC mandate, by civilian or uniformed personnel, the full range of relevant administrative processes, remedies and consequences will be applied. Any situation associated with POC that involves alleged misconduct, including contravention of the ROE or DUF, must be referred for a determination on the need for an additional and separate investigation into the alleged misconduct, in accordance with applicable procedures.

E. REFERENCES

Normative or Superior References

- United Nations Charter (1945)
- Security Council resolution on the Protection of Civilians: 1265 (1999), 1270 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1674 (2006), 1894 (2009), 2145 (2014), 2222 (2015), 2286 (2016), 2417 (2018), 2475 (2019), 2573 (2021)
- Security Council resolution on Children and Armed Conflict: 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014), 2225 (2015), 2427 (2018), and 2601 (2021)
- Security Council Resolutions on trafficking in persons in conflict situations: 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017)
- Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, in particular resolutions: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), and 2467 (2019).
- Reports of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group: A/55/305 (2000), A/63/19 (2009), A/64/19 (2010), A/65/19 (2011), A/66/19 (2012), A/72/19 (2018)
- ST/SGB/1999/13 Observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law
- ST/SGB/2014/1 UN Staff Rules and Regulations
- ST/AI/2010/5 Performance Management and Development System

- ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1 Protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations
- ST/SGB/2003/13 Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse
- A/67/775 Human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces,
- United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (2001)
- United Nations Policy on Human Rights Screening of United Nations Personnel (2012)
- United Nations Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning (2023)

Related policies, procedures or guidelines

- DPO Guidelines on Gender and Peacekeeping-Intelligence (2022.07)
- DPO UN Engagement Platoon Handbook (2022.11)
- DPO/DFS SOP on Assessment and Evaluation of Formed Police Unit Performance (2022.10)
- DPO Policy on Joint Mission Analysis Centres (JMAC) (2020.06)
- DPO/DPPA/DSS Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) on the Handling of Detention by UN Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions (2020.13)
- DPO Guidelines on Joint Operations Centres (JOC) (2019.21)
- DPO Policy on Joint Operations Centres (JOC) 2019.20)
- DPO/DOS/DMSPC Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework (IPPAF)
- DPO/DPPA/OHCHR/OSRSG-SVC Policy for United Nations Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2019.35)
- DPO Policy on Peacekeeping-Intelligence (2019.08)
- DPO Manual on Community-Oriented Policing in UN Peace Operations reference (2018.04)
- DPKO/DFS Joint Mission Analysis Centre Field Handbook (2018.03)
- DPKO/DFS Policy on Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2018.01)
- DPKO/DFS Guidelines on the role of United Nations police in protection of civilians (2017.12)
- DPKO/DFS/DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations (2017.11)
- DPKO/DFS Guidelines on the Use of Force by Military Components in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2016.24)
- DPKO/DFS Policy on Formed Police Units in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2016.10).
- DPKO/DFS Policy on Justice Support in United Nations Peace Operations (2016.22)
- DPKO/DFS SOP on Evaluation of Force Headquarters in Peacekeeping Operations (2016.16)
- DPKO/OMA SOP on Force and Sector Commander's Evaluation of Subordinate Military Entities in Peacekeeping Operations (2016.02)
- DPKO/DFS Policy on Operational Readiness Assurance and Performance Improvement (2015.16).
- DPKO/DFS Policy on Prison Support in United Nations Peace Operations (2015.11)
- DPKO/DFS Guidelines on Protection of Civilians: Implementing Guidelines for Military Components of United Nations Peacekeeping Missions (2015.02)
- OHCHR/DPKO/DPA/DFS Policy on Human Rights in UN Peacekeeping Operations and Political Missions (2011.20)

Other related references

- Reports of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict
- Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations: Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges - Victoria Holt, Glyn Taylor and Max Kelly DPKO/OCHA (2009)
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee Statement on the Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action (2013)
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (2016)
- International Committee of the Red Cross, Professional Standards for Protection Work (2020)
- UN Strategic Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security 2011-2020 (2011)
- DPO Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security Resource Package (2020)

F. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

89. Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Protection of Civilians Team within the Policy and Best Practices Service (PBPS), a branch of the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET) within DPO.

I. CONTACT

90. This policy was developed by the Protection of Civilians team within the Policy and Best Practices Service, a branch of the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training within the Department of Peace Operations (pbps-poc-unhq@un.org). It was developed through close consultation within DPO as well as with DOS, UNOCC, OCHA, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNHCR, and OLA policy focal points.

J. HISTORY

91. In 1999, the United Nations Security Council passed its first resolution on the protection of civilians (S/RES/1265, 1999) and, for the first time, gave a peacekeeping operation the explicit mandate to take necessary action to protect civilians under threat of physical violence (S/RES/1270, 1999 on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL). Requests from the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/64/19, 2010) and the Security Council (S/RES/1894, 2009) recognized the need for operational guidance to inform the implementation of POC mandates. This led to the development of the Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in 2010 and the first DPKO/DFS Policy on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping in 2015. These documents drew on operational experience and have formed the core of doctrine and guidance on the protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping. The policy was updated in 2019 to reflect the recommendations of the General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and broader commentaries and recommendations on UN peacekeeping, such as the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (S/2015/446), the Report on Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers (2017) and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on Action for Peacekeeping (2018). This policy supersedes the 2019 DPO Policy on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping.

APPROVAL SIGNATURE:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. van der ..." followed by a stylized flourish.

DATE OF APPROVAL:

17 April 2023

Annex A: Roles and Responsibilities

1. Overarching responsibilities for all senior leaders in implementing POC mandates

- a. To take all necessary and available actions, to use all necessary and available means and to exercise his or her full authority to ensure proactive, coordinated, efficient and effective implementation of POC mandates;
- b. To ensure that workplans for substantive and relevant support sections and field offices have clearly defined POC objectives and tasks based on the strategic plans of the mission, including the mission's POC strategy;
- c. To issue clear, timely and relevant guidance and instructions to guide the implementation of the POC mandate by the different sections, field offices, and/or units, including when the operational environment presents new POC challenges;
- d. To hold those reporting to him or her accountable for the performance of their respective POC responsibilities by using applicable performance accountability frameworks and, where appropriate, including POC responsibilities in job terms of reference and workplans;
- e. To ensure sufficient, practical and context-specific training and exercises on POC for all personnel;
- f. To ensure that all reports of POC underperformance are reported and investigated in accordance with applicable procedures;
- g. To ensure compliance with the Human Rights due diligence policy (HRDDP) and to put in place processes and create the necessary conditions for the implementation of this policy;
- h. To promote effective and appropriate coordination and complementarity with relevant humanitarian and development actors on POC in line with respective mandates and principles;
- i. To ensure that POC mandate implementation is informed by a gender analysis and age considerations and clearly communicate to those reporting to her or him the requirement for the integration of these considerations in POC strategies, objectives, tasks, and activities.

2. Core responsibilities of the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations in implementing POC mandates

- a. To ensure, in collaboration with the USG/DOS, that appointed senior leaders fully understand POC mandates through briefings and mandatory pre-deployment and continuous training;
- b. To ensure, in collaboration with the USG/DOS and OHCHR, that adequate pre-deployment and induction training material on POC, UN standards of conduct, international humanitarian law and international human rights law is made available to all relevant UN personnel;
- c. To support Heads of Missions' efforts at political outreach and engagement relating to the POC mandate and host state responsibility to protect civilians, including through strategic-level engagement with the Security Council, T/PCCs, host states, regional organizations and other Member States with political leverage to prevent and halt threats to civilians;
- d. To ensure, with field missions, the appropriate prioritization of POC in relevant directives, mission concepts, police and force concepts of operations (CONOPS), POC strategies, Comprehensive Performance Assessment System (CPAS), Results-based budgeting frameworks (RBB), mission-specific rules of engagement (ROE) and police directives on use of force (DUF), statement of unit requirements (SUR), memoranda of understanding with Troop and Police-Contributing countries (T/PCCs) and other mission documents, in consultation with OLA, OHCHR, DOS and other relevant protection actors;
- e. To ensure, with the USG/DOS and field missions, that all components are operationally

- ready, able and willing to perform their responsibilities to implement POC mandates and to work to address any gaps, including through regular reviews of POC performance; periodic review of cross-cutting POC training requirements and provision of pre-deployment and in-mission training, scenario-based exercises, simulations/rehearsals and table-top exercises;
- f. To ensure provision of technical advice on specific POC concerns to missions and sharing best practices and tools across missions;
 - g. To provide overall leadership and ensuring accountability for the integration of gender considerations in all POC processes and activities;
 - h. To ensure, in collaboration with the USG/DOS, the conduct of assessments into incidents of alleged failure to protect civilians and to effectively address the relevant findings and recommendations of any Boards of Inquiry or other investigations in relation to POC-related incidents, including through communication and follow-up with relevant T/PCCs.

3. Core POC responsibilities for civilian senior mission leadership: Heads of Mission (HOMs)/Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs), Deputy Heads of Mission, including Deputy SRSGs (DSRSGs), and Chiefs of Staff

The SRSG/HOM retains the ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the POC mandate by the mission. She/he is responsible for setting **the overall vision, strategy and operational direction of a mission and making informed decisions on resource allocation in the face of competing priorities. She/he should be supported by an established and effective mission resource allocation structure that should meet on a regular basis to review and prioritize mandate implementation activities and to allocate/re-allocate, monitor and prioritize/re-prioritize available resources as needed.**

While retaining this responsibility, in terms of the role of the civilian component, the SRSG/HOM can delegate certain tasks, including to his or her deputies, the chief of staff, chiefs of section, **Heads of Field Offices and the Director/Chief of Mission Support. Where relevant, a DSRSG/RC/HC will help ensure strategic coherence and coordination of the protection approaches between the mission and humanitarian and development partners.**

Core responsibilities of civilian senior leadership for the implementation of POC mandates include:

- Strategic
 - a. To ensure that POC is prioritized in key mission documents and plans including the Mission plan, CPAS, CONOPS, result-based budgeting (RBB) and component workplans;
 - b. To ensure that the Mission has a mission-wide POC strategy, that roles and responsibilities for implementing POC mandates across mission components are clearly articulated and that component specific workplans are based on this POC strategy;
 - c. To ensure that the performance assessment frameworks of heads of civilian components and sections and of sector commanders explicitly include responsibilities, objectives and indicators for delivering the mission's POC strategy.
- Political/substantive
 - a. To ensure that the mission's political strategy reflects and complements its POC

mandate and that the mission's good offices are leveraged to prevent and mitigate threats to civilians;

- b. To emphasize the host government's primary responsibility to protect civilians and, where the mission has a mandate to do so, to ensure that assistance and support are provided to the host government to strengthen its capacity to do so;
 - c. To engage politically to promote protection and prevent threats to civilians, including through engagement with national and regional actors, non-state armed groups, and communities, including women's organizations.
- Operational
 - a. To ensure that timely decision and action are taken to protect civilians and to prevent threats to civilians;
 - b. To ensure an overall framework for coordination and cooperation between police, military, substantive and support mission components, including for the joint planning and integrated execution of operations;
 - c. To ensure regular training and exercises, including annual simulations, scenario-based and table top exercises and rehearsals take place and contingency plans are developed;
 - d. To ensure the establishment and functioning of integrated mission threat assessments and early warning and response mechanisms;
 - e. To ensure that a gender analysis is used to inform early warning analysis, risk and threat assessments as well as strategic and operational planning and interventions;
 - f. To ensure that allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including CRSV and grave violations against children, are documented and that they inform early warning analysis, risk and threat assessments as well as strategic and operational planning;
 - Resources/mission support
 - a. To ensure that resource priorities for POC are identified and included in missions' budgetary processes;
 - b. To ensure regular engagement with other senior mission leaders and UN Headquarters on any identified resource gaps specific to POC;
 - c. To ensure that POC is prioritized in mission support concepts and plans.
- 4. Core POC Responsibilities of the Director/Chief of Mission Support**
- a. To prioritize POC in decisions regarding the allocation, deployment and use of mission assets and resources within the operational exigencies;
 - b. To respond to POC-related requests as a priority, understanding the unpredictability and urgent nature of the issue;
 - c. To participate, as necessary, in coordination mechanisms related to the implementation of the mission POC strategy;
 - d. To ensure that the mission's capacities for implementing the POC mandate are adequately resourced, including the deployment of uniformed and/or civilian components to remote locations for temporary or extended periods of time.
- 5. Core POC responsibilities of the Force Commander**
- a. To develop and implement a strategy and operational plans for the military component to fulfil its responsibilities for implementing the POC mandate, in line with the mission plans and POC strategy, and in consultation with civilian and police components, including POC coordination mechanisms;
 - b. To ensure that Sector, company and unit commanders civilian and police components,

- under the coordinating authority of Heads of Field Offices, where applicable;
- c. To issue, disseminate and ensure compliance with all necessary orders, directives and guidance to effectively implement the POC mandate, and to ensure that Sector Commanders have developed POC-related plans and issued necessary orders;
- d. To ensure prioritization of resources for POC-related tasks;
- e. To ensure and periodically review the military component's operational readiness and preparedness for POC and to identify and address any gaps in capacity, training and resources;
- f. To ensure, along with the Police Commissioner and civilian sections, the development of an overall framework for coordination, planning and cooperation between the Force, UN Police (including formed police units) and civilian components, including as participants in POC coordination structures
- g. To ensure that training exercises, simulations, scenario-based and table top exercises and rehearsals on POC take place at least once per year, with civilian participation where possible, and that contingency plans are developed, reviewed and revised;
- h. To ensure that all personnel under her/his command have a common understanding of the POC mandate and the actions that should be taken to protect civilians, including through specific in-mission training, and that they are operationally ready, able and willing to perform their POC responsibilities and to identify and seek to address any gaps in capacity, training and resources;
- i. To ensure that threat assessments, situational awareness and operational planning on POC are informed by a gender analysis that prioritizes regular engagement between the Force and local communities, including with civil society groups such as youth groups and women's groups, in close coordination with relevant civilian components, while ensuring that such engagement does not expose civilians to harm;
- j. To ensure follow up of cases of human rights violations by national security forces to advocate for accountability, in close coordination with human rights components and Senior Child Protection and Women's Protection Advisers;
- k. To provide information and early warning to mission coordination mechanisms on threats to civilians and information on allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law to the human rights component and to the specialized protection capacities (i.e. child protection and CRSV);
- l. To order the conduct of proactive preventive measures as well as response measures to early warning and alerts, including as a response to recommendations arising from integrated coordination mechanisms;
- m. To ensure that POC Advisers are included in military planning processes both to ensure that military operations are planned to effectively protect civilians and to contribute to CHM measures;
- n. To ensure that the military is systematically preventing, tracking, mitigating and addressing harm to civilians resulting from the mission's own military operations, including those conducted jointly with host state forces;
- o. To oversee that the coordination of the military's participation in the various mechanisms for the implementation of the POC mandate is effectively carried out by the Deputy Force Chief of Staff Operations (DFCOS Ops) at the Force headquarters level and by the Sector/Battalion Chief of Staff at the Sector/Unit level, unless specifically otherwise designated;
- p. To ensure periodic evaluations of subordinate units in line with the DPKO/DFS standard operating procedure (SOP) on Force and Sector Commanders' evaluation of subordinate military entities in peacekeeping operations.

6. Core POC responsibilities of the Police Commissioner

- a. To develop and implement a strategy and operational plans for the police component to fulfil its responsibilities for implementing the POC mandate, in line with the mission plans and POC strategy and in consultation with the military and civilian components,

- including POC coordination mechanisms;
- b. To ensure that FPU commanders understand the integrated approach to POC and work in close coordination with military and civilian components, under the coordinating authority of Heads of Field Offices, where applicable;
 - c. To issue, disseminate and ensure compliance with all necessary orders, directives, and guidance to effectively implement the POC mandate;
 - d. To ensure prioritization of resources for POC-related tasks;
 - e. To ensure and periodically review the police component's operational readiness and preparedness for POC and to identify and address any gaps in capacity, training and resources;
 - f. To ensure, along with the Force Commander and civilian sections, the development of an overall framework for coordination, planning and cooperation between UN Police (including formed police units), the Force and civilian components including as participants in POC coordination structures;
 - g. To ensure that training exercises, simulations, scenario-based and table top exercises and rehearsals on POC take place at least once per year, with civilian participation where possible, and that contingency plans are developed, reviewed and revised;
 - h. To ensure that all personnel under her/his command have a common understanding of the POC mandate and the actions that should be taken to protect civilians, including through specific in-mission training, and that they are operationally ready, able and willing to perform their POC responsibilities and to identify and seek to address any gaps in capacity, training and resources;
 - i. To ensure that threat assessments, situational awareness and operational planning on POC are informed by a gender analysis that prioritizes regular engagement between UN Police and local communities, including with civil society groups such as youth groups and women's groups, in close coordination with relevant civilian components, while ensuring that such engagement does not expose civilians to harm;
 - j. To ensure that UN Police pursue a community-oriented and peacekeeping-intelligence-led approach to POC, as per relevant policy and guidance, in line with the "do no harm" principle;
 - k. To ensure follow up of cases of human rights violations by host state police elements to advocate for accountability, in close coordination with human rights components and Senior Child Protection and Women's Protection Advisers;
 - l. To provide information and early warning of threats to civilians to mission coordination mechanisms and information on allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law to the human rights component and to the specialized protection capacities (i.e. child protection and CRSV);
 - m. To order the conduct of proactive preventive measures as well as response measures to early warning and alerts, including as a response to recommendations arising from integrated coordination mechanisms;
 - n. To ensure that POC Advisers are included in police planning processes both to ensure that police operations are planned to effectively protect civilians and to contribute to CHM measures;
 - o. To ensure that the police are systematically preventing, tracking, mitigating and addressing harm to civilians resulting from the mission's own police operations, including those conducted jointly with host state forces;
 - p. To mainstream POC, international humanitarian law and international human rights law into mentoring, monitoring, advising, capacity building and operational support and any other relevant activities conducted with host state police counterparts;
 - q. To ensure periodic evaluations of police units in line with the DPO/DFS standard operating procedure (SOP) on Assessment and Evaluation of Formed Police Unit Performance;
 - r. To oversee that the coordination of the police's participation in the various mechanisms for the implementation of the POC mandate is effectively carried out at the

headquarters level and the at the field/sector level through appropriate delegation.

7. Core responsibilities of POC Advisers

In missions that have a POC Adviser²⁵, the Adviser's function is to provide advice, support and guidance on the implementation of the POC mandate; facilitate the development, and implementation of the mission POC strategy and related guidance for the protection of civilians by all components; and coordinate all POC efforts undertaken by mission civilian, police and military components, in liaison with other protection actors. This includes responsibilities:

- a. To ensure overall compliance of the Mission's POC efforts with relevant UN or DPO and DOS policies and guidelines;
- b. To ensure that senior mission leadership is regularly updated on current and emerging threats against civilians and response options to inform timely decision-making;
- c. To ensure that a comprehensive and integrated approach is adopted on all POC matters in order to effectively leverage resources within the Mission for POC objectives;
- d. To provide support to relevant components and sections, including police and military, at Mission HQ and Field Office level to ensure that protection of civilians concerns are adequately reflected in the planning and execution of mission operations;
- e. To ensure close coordination and strengthening of cooperation with relevant partners including development and humanitarian actors in POC analysis, implementation of the strategy and local protection plans;
- f. To ensure that adequate POC analysis is included in relevant mission planning, performance and reporting systems;
- g. To ensure that POC guidance, analysis, reporting, and briefings are informed by gender analysis;
- h. To coordinate the establishment/monitoring and implementation of POC coordination forums;
- i. To work with the relevant staff in the mission to conduct and support after action reviews and lessons learned studies on the mission's POC efforts;
- j. To support the assessment of training needs on protection of civilians issues within the mission, as well as the design and delivery of tailored POC modules with relevant mission components, in close consultation with the Integrated Mission Training Centre.

8. Core POC responsibilities of Heads of Field Offices and civilian components

In line with the mission plan and POC strategy, field offices are expected to develop strategic, operational and contingency plans for integrated activities in support of the implementation of the POC mandate. These POC responsibilities and objectives must be reflected in the terms of reference, individual workplans and evaluations of Heads of Field Offices and heads of civilian mission components.

Heads of Field Offices ensure overall coherence of POC mandate implementation in their area of responsibility (AoR), and coordination among civilian sections and between the civilian, police and military components.

Recognizing that the specific responsibilities of mission components vary according to the particular mandate and structure of a peacekeeping mission, this section sets out illustrative responsibilities of components who play a particular role in implementing the POC mandate. These can be adjusted in accordance with mission-specific POC strategies.

²⁵ In missions without a Senior POC Adviser, many of these functions will be carried out by a POC mission focal point

9. Core POC responsibilities of Heads of Field Offices

- a. To exercise their coordinating authority to ensure an integrated approach to POC at the field office level;
- b. To provide strategic guidance to field offices on the implementation of the POC mandate in line with the mission plan and POC strategy in the AoR of the field office and based on the particular threats in the AoR, in consultation with the POC Adviser;
- c. To emphasize the host government's primary responsibility to protect and, where the mission has a mandate to do so, to coordinate field office assistance and support to the host government in order to strengthen its capacity to do so;
- d. To develop a field office-specific strategy and workplan on the implementation of the POC mandate in the AoR, including through engagement with political actors, armed actors and communities;
- e. To ensure coordination between relevant components (civilian, police and military) of information-sharing, analysis and response to threats through POC coordination mechanisms at field office level;
- f. To ensure that field office level threat analysis, early warning and response mechanisms are in place and to escalate threats and situations to mission HQ when necessary;
- g. To ensure outreach to relevant humanitarian and development actors to promote effective and appropriate coordination and complementarity on POC;
- h. To ensure that any POC related guidance, strategies, information, analysis, or outreach has been adequately informed by a gender analysis.

10. Core POC responsibilities of Political Affairs Components

- a. To ensure the development, regular update and implementation of a mission-specific political strategy that includes political activities and public messaging for POC;
- b. To promote political solutions and prioritize POC in mission political strategy/messaging;
- c. To engage perpetrators or potential perpetrators of violence against civilians in structured and regular dialogue;
- d. To analyse and share information on political trends and emerging tensions to inform early warning, risk and threat assessments, contingency and operational planning;
- e. To use good offices to promote the host government's primary responsibility to protect civilians;
- f. To advise, support and implement inclusive political dialogue activities for POC in coordination with POC coordination mechanisms.

11. Core POC responsibilities of Human Rights Components

- a. To support POC data-driven analysis, planning and decision-making through documentation, investigation and reporting on allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, where applicable, including sexual violence and violations against children, in particular where there are no dedicated child protection and/or CRSV mission capacities;
- b. To share relevant information and trend analysis with mission coordination and analysis bodies, including POC coordination mechanisms, to inform early warning, prevention, risk and threat assessments, as well as planning at the Mission HQ and Field Office levels, with a view to mitigate the risk of violence against civilians;
- c. To engage with parties to conflicts (both State and non-State actors) to promote the upholding of their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, raise allegations of violations and abuses in particular of the rights to life and physical integrity, and seek corrective action, including accountability, with a view to build and maintain a protective environment in the long-term;
- d. In high-risks contexts, to consider establishing a protection programme for individuals who engage with the mission, including human rights defenders, victims and witnesses

- of human rights violations, community workers, women's organizations, journalists, lawyers and other civil society representatives, in consultation with UN Headquarters. Develop concrete measures and tools to prevent and address intimidation and reprisals as well as to ensure adequate documentation and internal reporting of incidents;
- e. To strengthen, in line with the mission's mandate, the capacity of host state authorities to protect civilians, including support to security forces (defence, police and gendarmerie) to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, to judiciary personnel to perform their functions, and to lawmakers to support institution-building/reform and legislative frameworks;
 - f. To inform the SRSG and High Commissioner for Human Rights of any allegations of violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law by UN personnel;
 - g. To provide secretariat functions for the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) Task Force and support the development of risk-assessments.

12. Core POC responsibilities of Civil Affairs Components

- a. To ensure regular engagement with local communities and local authorities for early warning and conflict resolution activities, particularly with civil society groups such as youth groups or women's groups, in close coordination with relevant civilian, police and military components;
- b. To support the establishment and development of community alert networks (CANs) and community protection plans (CPPs) to enhance early warning and conflict prevention;
- c. To ensure that Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs), where they are deployed, have the necessary training and resources to effectively support civilian and uniformed components in the implementation of POC activities;
- d. To gather, analyse and share information on root causes of conflict, local dynamics and interests of various actors to inform early warning, risk and threat assessments as well as contingency and operational planning;
- e. To support peace and reconciliation initiatives to mitigate the risk of escalation of violent conflicts, reduce threats to civilian populations and promote social cohesion;
- f. To sensitize local and national authorities, civil society actors, community leaders and international partners on local conflict patterns as well as actions required to address root causes, overcome obstacles and reach agreements;
- g. To support conflict management roles of local authorities by fostering inclusive dialogues and building trust between local authorities and their constituents;
- h. To support infrastructure development to mitigate conflicts caused by competition over natural resources;
- i. To build confidence of local communities on UN police and military activities and POC mandate implementation.

13. Core POC responsibilities of JMACs

- a. To monitor, collect and evaluate information relevant to the implementation of the POC mandate, including information from a variety of sources;
- b. To generate timely integrated analysis products, including trend / incident analyses; threat assessments; forward-looking assessments; scenarios; profiling; and risk mapping. This includes (but is not limited to) analysis of conflict dynamics and trends, as well as possible or emerging threats to the civilian population;
- c. To ensure that analysis and forecasting incorporates a gender analysis and that reporting consistently includes data disaggregated by sex and age;
- d. To ensure that the peacekeeping-intelligence cycle supports POC outcomes, including through the incorporation of POC-related information requirements in Mission

- Information Acquisition Plans;
- e. To share information on conflict trends and emerging threats to civilian populations with relevant mission components, POC coordination mechanisms and non-mission protection actors, as appropriate, as directed by senior leadership and in accordance with the JMAC policy, to inform early warning, risk and threat assessments;
 - f. To provide senior mission leadership with an understanding of issues and trends and their potential implications for POC mandate implementation;
 - g. To ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality in the acquisition, handling and sharing of information (including source protection), and the appropriate dissemination of final products;
 - h. To participate in and where possible provide forward-looking analysis to regular coordination forums on protection, such as protection working groups (PWGs), Senior Management Groups on Protection (SMG-PS), and other similar meetings.

14. Core POC responsibilities of JOCs

- a. To consolidate, maintain and disseminate, as appropriate and in a timely manner, information on threats to civilians in the mission area, including providing timely operational information to mission POC coordination and early warning fora and mechanisms;
- b. To ensure that situational awareness is informed by a gender analysis and that reporting consistently includes data disaggregated by sex and age;
- c. To act as a crisis management centre and support an integrated mission response in the event of a crisis involving the protection of civilians;
- d. To coordinate and facilitate joint operational planning and execution to protect civilians, in missions where the JOC serves a coordination function for cross-component operations;
- e. To ensure timely operational reports to senior mission managers and UNHQ on situations where civilians are under threat, including through ad hoc issuance of Special Incident (“Flash”) Reports and inclusion in integrated Situation Reports.

15. Core POC responsibilities of Security Sector Reform Components

- a. To engage in regular analysis of the threats to civilians deriving from the weaknesses of the national security governance system and from specific security institutions, including the defence sector;
- b. To advise mission leadership and coordinate engagement with national authorities and international partners, where relevant, to ensure that the development of national SSR policies is consistent with the overarching objective of the host state’s responsibility to protect civilians, and to ensure that international support to national security forces prioritizes POC needs and objectives;
- c. To advise and implement approaches, as appropriate, to reduce risks to civilians stemming from national security forces, including through support to relevant accountability mechanisms and confidence building measures;
- d. To provide advice and coordinate with the mission military component in the planning and review of joint operations with national security forces to ensure that these are aligned with the broader objectives of SSR and contribute to strengthening the commitment and capacity of the host state to protect civilians.

16. Core POC responsibilities of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Components

- a. To share relevant information and analysis on non-state armed groups with mission coordination and analysis bodies to contribute to early warning, risk and threat assessments with a view to mitigate the risk of violence against civilians;
- b. To advocate for the protection of civilians in all engagements with armed forces and groups;

- c. To support the implementation of a DDR programme as part of a peace process, taking into consideration protection of civilians;
- d. To ensure that the implementation of a DDR programme is informed by a gender analysis in order to effectively support the protection of civilians;
- e. To prioritize or sequence the implementation of DDR and Community Violence Reduction (CVR) activities in such a way as to address first the areas where the threat to civilians is the most acute (“hotspots”);
- f. To implement CVR programmes and, where possible, provide alternative livelihoods to members of armed groups and communities, including youth at risk of being recruited into armed groups, to prevent them from engaging in violence;
- g. To bolster the capacity and social cohesion efforts of communities of return to integrate demobilized combatants.

17. Core POC responsibilities of Justice and/or Corrections Components

- a. To engage in regular analysis on the functioning of rule of law institutions and rule of law-related dynamics and developments that are likely to have wider political and security implications;
- b. To assess the functioning of the criminal justice sector and identify the capacity and willingness of these actors to respond to serious crimes committed against civilians, including through the investigation and prosecution of crimes and the arrest and detention of suspects;
- c. To support the restoration of basic rule of law services in priority areas where the absence of functioning rule of law institutions results in increasing threats of violence against civilians;
- d. Without prejudice to state sovereignty and in complementarity with ordinary justice mechanisms, to engage with state and/or local institutions to support community-based mechanisms that aim to peacefully settle intercommunal disputes;
- e. To ensure the safe, humane and secure detention of those apprehended by the mission for serious crimes perpetrated against civilians and other high-risk detainees;
- f. To engage with domestic institutions to strengthen judicial oversight;
- g. To assist in/support the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of conflict-related serious crimes committed against civilians, and support the safe, secure and humane detention of such perpetrators.

18. Core POC responsibilities of Mine Action Components

- a. To assess, analyse and share information, including with POC coordination mechanisms, on explosive ordnance contamination to highlight critical risks to civilians that take into consideration gendered and age-related risks;
- b. To share relevant information gathered through regular engagement with local communities while carrying out survey and/or risk education;
- c. To recommend potential mine action projects that could support protection of civilians and/or confidence building measures to reinforce humanitarian and political priorities;
- d. To manage the delivery of risk education, clearance of explosive ordnance and survivor assistance;
- e. To engage with state and/or local institutions to build capacity to mitigate the threat posed by explosive ordnance;
- f. To support weapons and ammunition management efforts, where relevant;
- g. To support the implementation of a mine action programme as part of a peace process, where relevant.

19. Core POC responsibilities of Strategic Communications and Public Information Components

- a. To include key messages on the protection of civilians in strategic mission documents and plans on public information;

- b. To develop and disseminate messaging that explains the mission's role in protecting civilians and manages expectations;
- c. To use public information tools to encourage respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law as well as peace and reconciliation and discourage attacks on civilians;
- d. To use strategic communications tools to influence behaviors, shape perceptions, and promote narratives contributing to POC, including through proactive efforts to counter disinformation and misinformation and hate speech;
- e. To gather and share relevant information with mission POC coordination forums, for example on the use of disinformation, misinformation and hate speech.

20. Core POC responsibilities of Strategic Planning Units

- a. To integrate POC into strategic and operational mission planning processes;
- b. To support whole-of-mission planning and coordination of mission-mandated activities, including through collaboration among POC advisers, police, military and other mission personnel;
- c. To provide advice, as required, for the development or revision of mission POC strategies, in order to ensure alignment with wider strategic documents and plans;
- d. To ensure that POC priorities and activities are adequately reflected in strategic planning documents, including the mission concept, strategy/plan, conflict analysis, results-based budget and CPAS, as appropriate, and that these are aligned with the mission's POC strategy;
- e. To work with colleagues to ensure the integration of POC indicators in CPAS, and to help monitor and report on mission impact in areas of POC;
- f. In the context of transitions, to ensure that POC is included in planning processes and strategies. Support the identification of clear, realistic and measurable benchmarks, informed by the host state's capacity to protect civilians, and in coordination with UN, international, national and local stakeholders.

21. Core POC responsibilities of Legal Advisers

- a. To provide advice on the applicable legal framework(s) and consequent implications for the implementation of the POC mandate and the planning and conduct of operations;
- b. To advise and support on the interpretation of the mission mandate, ROE, DUF, SOFA and other key documents that guide the implementation of the POC mandate;
- c. To advise and assist in the drafting of mission-specific SOPs and other key documents that guide the mission implementation of the POC mandate;
- d. To provide training to mission uniformed personnel on key POC, international humanitarian law and international human rights law compliance and provisions.

22. Core POC responsibilities of Child Protection Advisers

In missions that have a Child Protection Adviser, her/his function is to implement the child protection mandate of UN peace operations, including by advising and facilitating the mainstreaming of child protection into the broader protection efforts of the mission. In support of POC mandate implementation, she/he will have the following responsibilities:

- a. To advise senior mission leadership, including SRSG/HOMs, DSRSGs, Force Commanders and Police Commissioners, and police and military focal points, on child protection issues and relevant actions to be taken;
- b. To monitor and share information, including with POC coordination mechanisms, on protection threats faced by children and grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict;
- c. To engage in dialogue with parties to the conflict on the signing and implementation of Security Council mandated action plans to halt and prevent grave violations against children;

- d. To support the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups, as part of action plan dialogue, peace negotiations and peace agreements, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes or other relevant processes;
- e. To advocate for protective, preventive and remedial measures in relation to other violations of children's rights identified as key child protection concerns by the mission (i.e. security detention of children and use of schools for military purposes);
- f. To advocate with host state governments, diplomatic and donor communities, regional and international organizations, including through the release of public advocacy reports on children affected by armed conflict;
- g. To provide training, guidance and expertise on child protection issues, tools and methodologies, in close cooperation with the Integrated Mission Training Centre;
- h. To contribute to the development of the mission's POC strategy and other plans related to its implementation.

23. Core POC responsibilities of Women's Protection Advisers

In missions that have a Women's Protection Adviser, her/his function is to implement the CRSV mandate of UN peace operations, including by advising and facilitating the mainstreaming of CRSV concerns into the broader protection efforts of the mission. In support of POC mandate implementation, she/he will have the following responsibilities:

- a. To advise senior mission leadership, including SRSG/HOMs, Deputy SRSGs, Force Commanders and Heads of United Nations Police (UNPOL) components, and police and military focal points on the implementation of the CRSV mandate and on relevant CRSV issues and actions to be taken;
- b. To ensure the integration of information and analysis of specific CRSV threats faced by women, men, girls and boys into POC analysis and decision-making for timely and effective preventive actions by the Mission;
- c. To provide advice on POC activities and courses of action to ensure that they take into account risks and threats of CRSV;
- d. To monitor and analyse CRSV concerns with a view to provide up-to-date CRSV risk analysis and early warning for use by the mission in protecting civilians;
- e. To engage in dialogue with parties to conflict on the signing and implementation of commitments to halt and prevent CRSV, in line with Security Council resolutions, supporting parties to conflict in the implementation of commitments to address CRSV, and regularly reviewing progress with parties to conflict and the UN system;
- f. To advocate for timely, dignified and quality assistance for CRSV survivors;
- g. To provide training, guidance and expertise on CRSV prevention and response through POC mechanisms, in close cooperation with the Integrated Mission Training Centre;
- h. To contribute to the development of the mission's POC strategy and other plans related to its implementation.

24. Core POC responsibilities of Gender Advisers

In missions that have a Gender Adviser, her/his function is to implement the gender equality and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, including by advising and facilitating the mainstreaming of gender and WPS concerns into the broader protection efforts of the mission. In support of POC mandate implementation, he/she will have the following responsibilities:

- a. To advise senior mission leadership, including SRSG/HOMs, Deputy SRSGs, Force Commanders, and Heads of the United Nations Police (UNPOL) components, and police and military focal points on the integration of gender and WPS considerations into all Mission POC mechanisms, processes and activities;
- b. To provide strategic advice and technical support on the implementation of gender analysis, including a gender-responsive conflict analysis, and the meaningful

- participation of women, across the three tiers of POC action;
- c. To ensure the integration of information and analysis of specific gender-based threats and gender-responsive early warning indicators into POC analysis, planning, reporting and decision-making;
 - d. To provide technical advice and support that ensures mission POC activities and courses of action are gender-responsive and integrate WPS considerations;
 - e. To support training efforts, provide guidance and expertise on gender equality and WPS, including how to conduct and integrate a gender analysis in POC activities, in close cooperation with the POC Adviser and Integrated Mission Training Centre;
 - f. To provide strategic advice and technical support to the POC Adviser on gender-responsive POC and contribute to the development of a gender-responsive POC strategy and related implementation plans;
 - g. To contribute to the development of the mission's POC strategy and other plans related to its implementation.