Virtual side event

Protection of civilians in UN Peacekeeping Missions: a collective endeavor

Thursday, 27 May 2021
1.00-2:30 pm EST

When mandated by the Security Council, peacekeeping missions can play a crucial role in the protection of civilians (PoC). Today, almost all peacekeeping operations have a PoC mandate, which evidences the growing importance of peacekeepers in protecting civilians. Translating complex mandates into comprehensive, effective and tailor-made protection strategies remains a challenging task that demands collective efforts and careful planning.

This virtual side event will discuss best practices of peacekeeping missions in creating a protecting environment, based on a whole-of-mission approach. Learning from field experiences in Missions, the event aims at showcasing successful stories of joint efforts to protect civilians, with a focus on prevention, while also highlighting some of the challenges faced in the field. In particular, the event will address three main areas where joint efforts may yield positive results:

Employing and empowering Military Gender Advisors – the experience of Military Gender Advisors demonstrates the benefits of building a network of trained focal points among military units, responsible for the integration of gender perspectives in all components of the Mission. This approach contributes to the engagement with the local population, particularly with women leaders, who are uniquely placed to share the protection needs of their communities, and with children and the youth. The use of “Female and Mixed Engagement Teams” is yet another tool to gather information and to better understand the local concerns, thus contributing to more effective protection efforts.

Training for civilian protection - peacekeeping missions must have both the capabilities and the resources to discharge their protection responsibility. For that, peacekeepers need to be adequately trained to address the challenges in the field, taking into account the particularities of each conflict situation. Hence, pre-deployment training has to be complemented with on-site and context-specific training, a task that demands joint efforts from Member States and the United Nations.

From quick impact projects to long-lasting actions: ensuring a holistic approach to PoC – UNSC Resolution 1894 (2009) establishes that peacekeeping missions with protection mandates must incorporate comprehensive protection strategies into the overall mission implementation plans. The development of community projects may function not only as a mean to support the local population, but also as a way to minimize risks to women and children in vulnerable situations.
Objectives

The event will aim to:

- Highlight the collective nature of PoC efforts in peacekeeping missions;
- Exchange best practices of peacekeepers in promoting innovative approaches to protection, including through training;
- Explore the intersections of the agendas on Women, Peace and Security; Children and Armed Conflict; and Protection of Civilians in the implementation of PoC mandates in the field.

Panelists

- Colonel Syed Motaher Hossain, Senior Instructor, Bangladesh Institute for Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT)
- Commander Márcia Andrade Braga, UN Military Gender Advocate Award, 2019
- Colonel Sergio Estuardo Figuera Lemus, Ministry of National Defense, Guatemala
- Commissioner Nery Elizabeth Sayes Morán, Chief of the Human Rights Unit, National Civil Police of El Salvador
- Commander Carla Monteiro de Castro Araújo, UN Military Gender Advocate Award, 2020