Concept Note:

Contributions of Special Political Missions to the Protection of Civilians

Date: 25 May, 9:30 am
Location: Virtual Event [MS Teams]

The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are pleased to invite you to a public event entitled “Contributions of Special Political Missions to the Protection of Civilians.” The virtual policy forum will be convened as part of Protection of Civilians Week, in the margins of the 2021 Security Council Open Debate on Protection of Civilians. The event will provide an opportunity to hear from practitioners on the ground how special political missions are engaging in this critical work.

Opening remarks:
Ms. Rosemary A DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Moderator:
Ms. Teresa Whitfield, Director, Policy and Mediation Division, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

Panel discussion:

1. Ms. Fiona Frazer, Head of the Human Rights Unit, UNAMA
2. Ms. Kiki Gbeho, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UNSOM
3. Ms. Danielle Bell, Head of the Human Rights Office, UNAMI
4. Ms. Khadijata Lo N’Diaye, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UNITAMS
5. Ms. Wafaa Saeed, Director a.i. of OCHA's Coordination Division

Background
United Nations special political missions play an important role in the protection of civilians, including through political engagement to prevent and resolve conflict, promoting and protecting human rights, and advancing the rule of law. Special political missions also work to promote and protect the rights of children and women, who are especially impacted by
conflict, including through engagement with parties to conflict to undertake specific commitments and measures to end and prevent violations and abuses. While special political missions are not mandated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to use force as a measure of last resort to protect civilian under imminent threat of physical violence, and do not have military and police components to carry out such tasks, their political engagement, efforts to promote and protect human rights, including advocacy, monitoring and reporting, and engagement to advance the rule of law help foster accountable institutions and a protective environment for civilians. Special political missions can also contribute to broader protection outcomes, such as an enabling environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles and the safe, informed and voluntary return or local integration of refugees and displaced persons in coordination with humanitarian actors.

As part of this event, special political missions will share their experience in this area, with contributions from human rights and humanitarian partners, describing how they have leveraged their mandates to advance peaceful and sustainable solutions, promote and protect human rights, and ultimately help create a protective environment for civilians.

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Please register for the event using this link by 10:00 am on Monday, 24 May 2021. The joining instructions will be sent by e-mail. Only registered participants will be able to join the event.