

Lesson 1.6



How Peacekeeping Operations Work

Aim, Relevance and Learning Outcomes

Aim

To explain the basis of authority and the structures and components in UN peacekeeping missions, through which the mission mandate and implementation plans are realized.

Relevance

All peacekeeping personnel must understand how a UN peacekeeping mission works so that everyone involved can work well together. Working well with others in a mission is key to implementing the mandate. UN peacekeeping missions are unique in their nature. They are not the same as the military or other large organizations and can be uniquely complex.

Distinct management systems and command and control structures direct and guide peacekeeping work. These systems help the different parts of the mission work well together in a unified, whole-of-mission approach.

This lesson explains key parts of a UN peacekeeping mission structure. Knowing what these parts are and how they work is the responsibility of each peacekeeper. You must know who is in authority and be prepared to follow management systems and command and control structures.

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1.6 How Peacekeeping Operations Work 

Aim

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Relevance

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- Distinct management systems and command structures direct and guide peacekeeping work. These systems help the different parts of the mission work well together in a whole-of mission approach.

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Learning Outcomes

Learners will be able to:

1. Explain what authority, command and control (AC2) is and its role in establishing clear levels of authority and responsibility for each mission.
2. Explain the concept of operational authority as it is used in UN peacekeeping activities.
3. Describe the contributions of both substantive and support components in a peacekeeping mission.
4. Describe the general hierarchy of leadership and authority that may be present in a UN peacekeeping mission.

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1.6 How Peacekeeping Operations Work 

Learning Outcomes

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2. Explain the concept of operational authority as it is used in UN peacekeeping activities.
3. Describe the contributions of both substantive and support components in a peacekeeping mission.
4. Describe the general hierarchy of leadership and authority that may be present in a UN peacekeeping mission.

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Lesson at a Glance



Minimum lesson duration: 45 minutes (including required *Learning Activity 1.6.1*).

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| Handout - Summary of Key Messages | 22–23 | - |

Optional Learning Activity

Learning Activity 1.6.2: Absorbing the Abbreviations

See *1.5 Learning Support*



Trainer Tips: See *1.6 Learning Support* for tips on starting the lesson, required learning activity instructions, optional learning activities and learning evaluation.

The Lesson



Trainer Tips: Lesson 1.6 is full of abbreviations that shorten complex names, titles and phrases. Prepare participants by alerting them to the common use of abbreviations in peacekeeping contexts. Consider either a mix-and-match or a call-and-response exercise near the end of the lesson. The purpose is to reinforce learning and help evaluate learners' absorption of new content, including UN language.

Required Learning Activity 1.6.1

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Required Learning Activity 1.6.1: Importance of Having a Clear Strategic Direction

Purpose: To emphasize the role of clear guidance and strategic direction for effective UN peacekeeping missions

Time: 15 minutes

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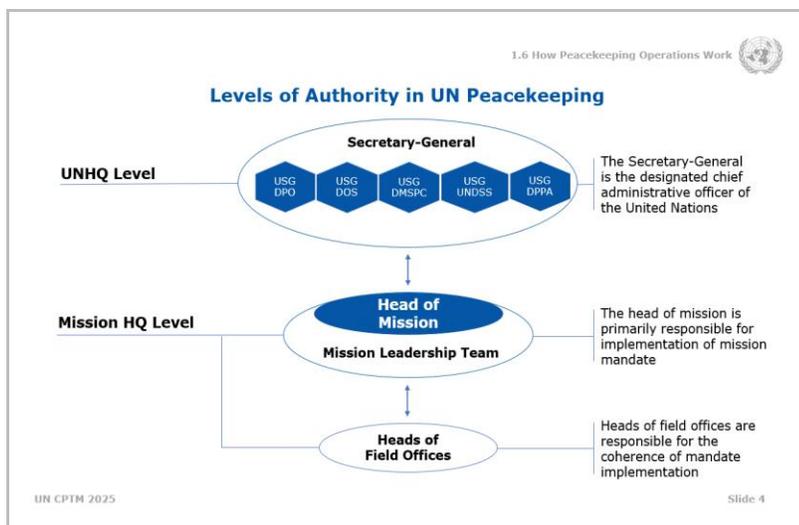
| Importance of Having a Clear Strategic Direction | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Method | Brainstorm and discussion |
| Purpose | To emphasize the role of clear guidance and strategic direction for effective UN peacekeeping missions |
| Time | 15 minutes |
| See 1.6 Learning Support for instructions. | |

Authority, Command and Control



Trainer Tips: The diagram on Slide 4 is useful for presenting this content because it shows: (a) new information and links between information already covered, and (b) an idea of the key levels of authority in a mission.

Slide 4



Key Message 1: The system of **authority, command and control (AC2)** derives from the Charter of the United Nations. It designates the Secretary-General the UN's chief administrative officer responsible for the functions entrusted by the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General confers responsibility and delegates authority for mission management to the head of mission (HOM). These authorities are governed by the policy on *Authority, Command and Control in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (AC2 Policy, Ref. 2019.23) and the framework at three distinct but overlapping levels: strategic, operational and tactical. Most of the authority and responsibilities at the strategic level are given to senior leadership at UNHQ and mission HQ in the field. This includes the HOM and other members of the mission leadership team (MLT).

The operational level involves personnel at both mission HQ and the subnational level, where most missions have field offices and/or military sector/regional HQ(s).

The Heads of the Military and police Components exercise what is known as UN operational command and control over the military and police Components. The tactical level refers to the management of military, police and civilian operations below the level of mission HQ and supervision of individual personnel.

Uniquely to UN peacekeeping operations, the command structure is relatively flat with significant decision-making authority and responsibility given to personnel at the mission level. The AC2 framework guides the integration of operations, assets, activities and personnel in support of mission mandate implementation.

The operational level mainly refers to the mission level of activities, overlapping with the strategic and tactical levels.

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1.6 How Peacekeeping Operations Work 

UN Operational Authority

- The UN has **operational authority** over **ALL** personnel in UN peacekeeping operations – including military and police
- Member States are not permitted to adjust or influence any tactical plans, decisions or operations



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Key Message 2: The UN has **operational authority** over **all** military, police and civilians in UN peacekeeping – including **all** tactical plans, decisions and operations.



Trainer Tips: Take time with the group to read the original definition of operational authority. It uses more formal language than the description here does. The original language is important because every word counts in understanding the intended meaning.

The UN has operational authority over everyone in a UN peacekeeping operation.

This includes all military and police personnel. For military and police personnel participating in UN peacekeeping operations, operational authority is:

- The authority transferred by Member States to the United Nations to use the operational capabilities of their national military contingents, units, formed police units and individual military and police personnel to undertake mandated missions and tasks
- Operational authority over such forces and personnel is vested in the Secretary-General and through him or her in the head of a specific mission, under the authority of the Security Council
- The Secretary-General exercises that authority under the overall authority of the Security Council.

Operational authority is a broad term. National military forces may use the same term in different ways.

For the UN it means:

- Member States still hold national responsibilities for their military and police, such as for pay, allowances, promotions and disciplinary action.
- Governments and national military and police authorities of Member States must not change or influence tactical plans, decisions or operations. This prevents confusion. Tactical plans, decisions and operations are supervised by the UN heads of the military and police Components in the mission area. Member States raise tactical operational matters with the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) at UNHQ in New York.
- National rules and regulations govern the conduct and discipline of military and police units in peacekeeping operations. UN rules and regulations also apply.

Disciplinary matters remain a national responsibility. The UN may take administrative steps against misconduct. These include the repatriation of military contingent members and staff officers. Guidance is found in the revised model Memorandum of Understanding (A/61/19 part III). The UN may also take disciplinary action against military or police experts on Mission. Guidance for this process is found in the *UN Directives for Disciplinary Matters Involving Civilian Police Officers and Military Observers*.

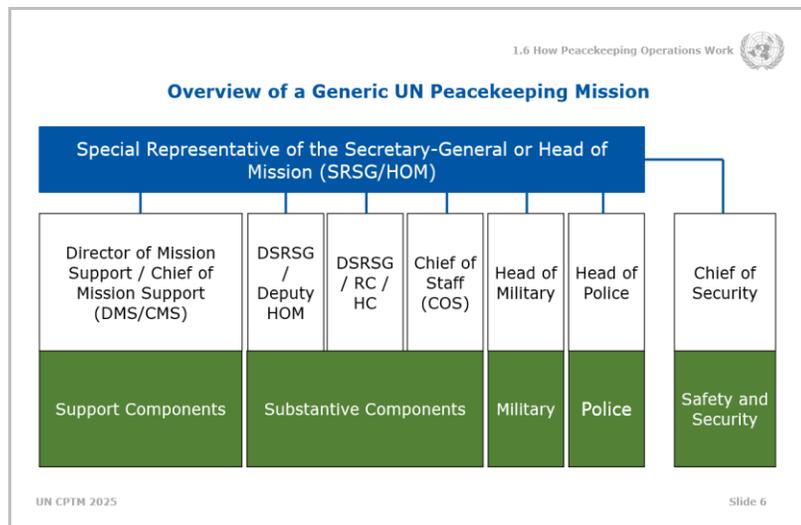


Reference

- Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Directives for Disciplinary Matters involving Civilian Police Officers and Military Observers*, DPKO/MD/03/0094 (2003).

Overview of a Generic UN Peacekeeping Mission Structure

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Key Message 3: There is no single standard structure of a UN peacekeeping operation. Each mission has its own distinct structure.

Components is an official term that means parts. A typical UN peacekeeping mission structure includes:

- Main positions of authority
- Substantive components
- Support components
- Integrated or joint structures.

The main positions of authority include the HOM and heads of the military, civilian and police personnel.

Substantive components are personnel who implement mandated tasks. These tasks benefit national partners and local people. Those receiving mission services are called mandate beneficiaries.

Support components are personnel who provide logistical and administrative support to substantive components.

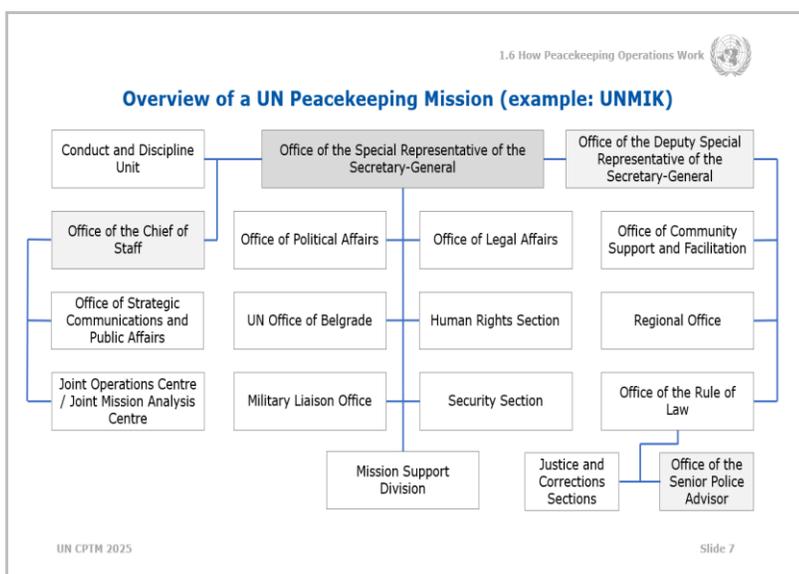
Substantive and support components are discussed in more detail later in this lesson.

Mandate beneficiaries are people or other groups the peacekeeping mission assists, as directed by the mandate.



Trainer Tips: The word *mandate* was used by the ancient Romans to mean something commanded. In UN language, a mandate authorizes a peacekeeping mission and is established in a Security Council resolution. The word is also used in other content covered in the Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials (CPTM), so emphasize to learners its original meaning and use.

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Key Message 4: Each mission is structured to suit specific mandates authorized by the Security Council. Mandates are different because they respond to particular conflicts.

All missions have substantive and support components that work together for mandate beneficiaries.

A variety of units and offices may be involved in both substantive and support components. The diagram in Slide 7 gives an example. Not all missions will involve all possible units. Different units are chosen for each mission in response to the requirements of the mandate.

Main Positions of Authority



Trainer Tips: The rest of Lesson 1.6 mainly covers the topic of the roles and functions of several levels of authority. Review what has already been discussed before moving on. Depending on learners' understanding so far, adjust the level of discussion of the following material.



Key Message 5: The main positions of authority in UN peacekeeping missions include:

- Special Representative of the Secretary-General/head of mission (SRSG/HOM)
- Deputy SRSG
- Chief of staff (COS)
- Director/chief of mission support (DMS/CMS)
- Head of military component (HOMC)
- Head of police component (HOPC).

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1.6 How Peacekeeping Operations Work 

Special Representative of the Secretary-General / Head of Mission

- Exercises operational authority over **all** personnel in UN peacekeeping missions
- Responsible for strategic vision and guidance



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Key Message 6: The Secretary-General appoints the head of mission (HOM).

The HOM is responsible for implementing the mission mandate and the management of all allocated resources. The HOM has operational authority over the whole peacekeeping mission. This authority is given to the HOM first by the Secretary-General and then in specific details by the under-secretary-generals of the DPO and Department of Operational Support (DOS).

Operational authority here refers to the HOM's **ultimate authority at the field level to direct all mission components**. The HOM directs how the mission components are used to carry out the mandate. This authority is transferred by Member States to the UN to use the operational capabilities of their national military contingents, formed police units (FPUs) and military and police personnel to undertake mandated tasks. In multidimensional peacekeeping missions, the HOM is always a civilian and is given the title special representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). **The SRSG is the highest UN official in the country of deployment.**

In traditional peacekeeping missions, the HOM is often, but not always, a senior military officer. In this circumstance he or she will have the dual responsibilities as both HOM and **head of the military component** (HOMC).



Example – Peacemaking: UN Mediators

The HOM of UNMOGIP (Chief Military Observer), UNTSO (Chief of Staff), UNDOF and UNIFIL (force commanders) have all been senior military officers who also serve as an HOMC.

The HOM in MINURSO and UNFICYP, both traditional missions, are civilian SRSGs. In both missions, the HOM is assisted by an HOMC, called the **force commander**.

As a direct representative of the Secretary-General, **the SRSG/HOM has two main areas of responsibility:**

- **The peacekeeping mission** – provides strategic vision, guidance, management and has authority over all mission components
- **Political dialogue and good offices** – to keep the peace process alive, lessen tensions, manage potential relapse to violent conflict.



Trainer Tips: *On 1 January 2019, the Secretary-General introduced a revised framework for delegating authority to better emphasize transparency, accountability and decision-making that aligns more closely with each mandate and programme delivery.*



Reference

- United Nations, Secretary-General's bulletin, Delegation of Authority in the Administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules, ST/SGB/2019/2 (2019).

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1.6 How Peacekeeping Operations Work 

Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General

- Is a civilian function
- Oversees delegated management aspects
- Two DSRSGs in multi-dimensional UNPKOs
- Principal DSRSG: political, operational and/or rule of law aspects
- Second DSRSG: Resident coordinator (RC) leading UNCT – may be triple-hatted as humanitarian coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC)

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Key Message 7: SRSGs usually have deputies to manage the scope and breadth of responsibility. Deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General (DSRSGs) are civilians.

Most multidimensional peacekeeping missions have two DSRSGs (deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General).

- One, often called the **principal DSRSG**, is responsible for **political, operational and rule of law** aspects of the mission. The principal DSRSG is the second in command and becomes the mission's officer-in-charge (OIC) when the HOM/SRSG travels. The HOM/SRSG delegates **management of mission operations to this DSRSG**.
- The second DSRSG often serves as a **resident coordinator (RC)** who **leads the UN country team (UNCT)**. In this role, the RC represents and coordinates the UN development work of the UN agencies, funds and programmes. The RC is the UNCT's main point of contact with heads of State and government.

Some integrated mission contexts may involve a humanitarian emergency. **The second DSRSG may also be appointed UN humanitarian coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC).** A DSRSG serving as RC and HC is described as being triple hatted.

The HC coordinates emergency and humanitarian response and operations.

The DSRSG/RC/HC will also occasionally serve as OIC when the two other senior leaders (SRSG and Principal DSRSG) are away from a mission. Additional duties of the HC are covered in *Lesson 1.8 Mission Partners*.

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1.6 How Peacekeeping Operations Work 

Chief of Staff

Works closely with the SRSG/HOM and is a civilian function

- Ensures effective direction and integrated management of all mission activities
- Ensures mission activities are in line with the strategic vision and guidance of the HOM
- Translates policy intent and high-level direction of mission leadership into viable tasks
- Works with mission components to ensure effective implementation
- Directs and oversees core integrated processes and mechanisms

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Key Message 8: Most peacekeeping operations have senior civilian support in the role of mission **chief of staff (COS)**. The COS is responsible for ensuring coherence across all mission units and performs a senior level staff and advisory function for the HOM and mission senior management.

The chief of staff (COS) works closely with the SRSG/HOM and is responsible for:

- Consistency across all organizational units in executing HOM directives
- Implementing the SRSG/HOM's strategic vision and guidance
- Coordinating the integration and control structures within mission HQ (and field offices, where relevant)
- Basic managerial tasks on behalf of the SRSG/HOM.

Heads of military and police components (HOMC and HOPC) may have an internal COS with similar responsibilities.

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Director/Chief of Mission Support

- Is a civilian function and referred to as the DMS/CMS
- Ensures provision of the necessary logistics and administrative support to mission
- Advises the SRSG/HOM on all matters relating to administrative, technical and logistical support

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The Director or Chief of Mission Support (DMS/CMS), a civilian, serves a critical function as the most senior UN official in the peacekeeping mission authorized to spend UN funds from mission budget.

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1.6 How Peacekeeping Operations Work 

Other Positions of Authority

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graph TD; SRSG[HOM/SRSG] --- HMC[Head of Military Component (HOMC)]; SRSG --- HOPC[Head of Police Component (HOPC)];
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| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Head of Military Component (HOMC) | Head of Police Component (HOPC) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercises UN operational control• May delegate UN tactical control of military personnel to subordinate military commanders• May also be HOM in traditional missions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercises UN operational control• May delegate specific authority for individual officers and FPUs to subordinate police officers• Normally appointed as the mission police commissioner |

Each have technical reporting links to UNHQ

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Key Message 9: While the SRSG/HOM has operational authority over the mission, the integrity of military and police chains of command must be maintained. Therefore, the SRSG/HOM only exercises authority over military and police personnel through the HOMCs/HOPCs, who exercise **operational command and control** over their respective components.

Head of the Military Component (HOMC)

- Reports to and is the principal adviser on military issues to the HOM.
- Has operational command and control over all mission military personnel, including military units or contingents, mission military experts and staff officers. The HOMC deploys and directs forces for specific tasks according to the mission mandate and in consultation with contingent commanders.
- May delegate UN operational command and control to subordinate command levels. May also delegate military personnel and units under UN tactical control of a subordinate military commander to allow local direction of personnel to assist with tactical missions and tasks.
- The HOMC exercises sole tasking authority over all combat units, i.e. attack helicopters and combat engineers. Tasking is done in coordination with and/or through the military staff committee (MSC) and mission air operations centre (MAOC), as necessary.

Head of the Police Component (HOPC)

- Reports to and is the principal adviser on police issues to the HOM.
- The HOPC establishes the police operational chain of command in accordance with the policy on AC2 (typically and as applicable: HOPC; regional command, subregional command, FPU and subunits). This police chain of command is guided by a field command framework.
- HOPC has operational command and control over all UN Police (UNPOL) in a peacekeeping operation. This covers individual police officers (IPOs), specialized police teams (SPTs) and FPUs. It also includes members of the standing police capacity (SPC) when they are deployed to the mission.
- May assign separate tasks within the mission area to individual officers. The HOPC may delegate this authority to subordinate police officers for specific purposes.

Reporting Links to UN Headquarters – HOM and HOPC

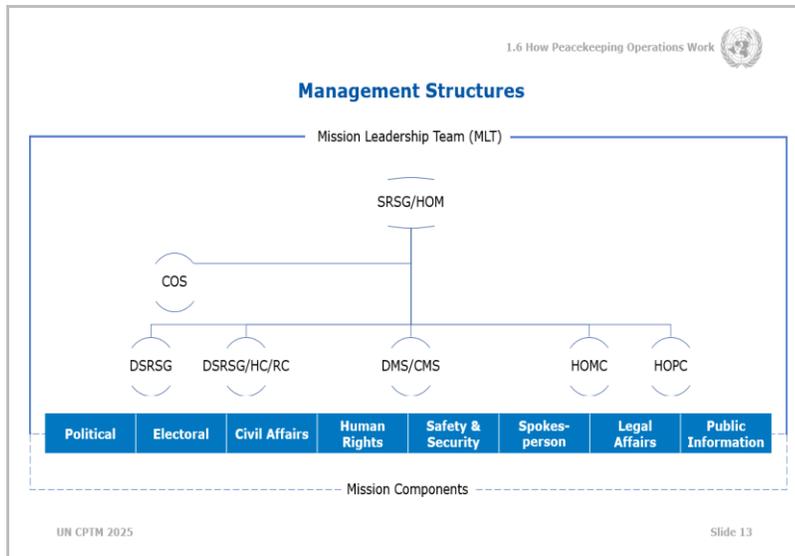
- The HOMC and HOPC each have technical reporting links to UNHQ; HOMC reports to the UN Military Adviser and HOPC to the UN Police Adviser.
- This reporting link ensures technical aspects of military and police field operations follow UN policies and standards.
- The reporting link also helps UNHQ in its official contact with Member States about military and police peacekeeping work.

Mission Integration and Control Arrangements



Trainer Tips: The following content explains how management draws the components of a mission together to work as one. Depending on learners' understanding so far, decide on the level of discussion of the following material.

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Mission Leadership Team

- The mission leadership team (MLT) is the mission's executive decision-making forum. It brings together senior decision makers from various components of a peacekeeping operation to support integrated decision-making among components. In integrated missions – those with a triple-hatted DSRSG serving as RC and HC for the UNCT – the MLT also supports integrated planning and decision-making with the UNCT.

The HOM establishes an MLT to set strategies and policy priorities and communicate intent throughout the mission. The MLT facilitates coordination and decision-making and provides direction, oversight and monitoring of sectoral and thematic strategies, or has other priorities determined by the mission mandate.

Substantive Components

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Substantive Components

- Substantive work refers to tasks outlined in the mandate
- Substantive components – military, police and civilians – carry out the mandated tasks and directly assist local and national partners



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Key Message 10: UN military, police and civilian components implement mandated tasks as the substantive components of UN peacekeeping operations.

Substantive has several meanings. In UN peacekeeping, it refers to components that are designed to implement tasks set by the mission mandate.

Substantive components directly assist local and national partners. By working together on mandated tasks, military, police and civilians help strengthen the foundation for sustainable peace.

Components and units need to work together on different tasks to support the same mandate. This need for collaboration challenges all peacekeeping operations.



Trainer Tips: Inform learners that more details on military, police and civilian components will be addressed in Lesson 1.7. Working as One in a UN Mission.

Support Components

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Support Components

- Necessary logistics and administrative support to the mission
- Combines military and civilian services



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Key Message 11: The support component of a mission is responsible for necessary logistics and administrative support.

Support refers to and combines both civilian and military services. The UN secures military support capabilities through lease arrangements with contributing Member States, while it contracts civilian services.

Logistics and administrative support for UN operations is complex compared with other logistical support models. The complexity addresses different requirements with needs varying for military contingents, civilian staff and military and police observers. For example, contingents deploy with varying levels of self-sufficiency.

A successful peacekeeping operation needs:

- Good logistics planning
- Strong communication
- Adequate resourcing
- Close integration of uniformed and civilian support.

Joint and Integrated Structures



Trainer Tips: The following content explains how management draws these together so a mission works as one. Depending on learners' understanding so far, decide on the level of discussion of the following material.

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Joint and Integrated Structures

- **Security Management Team (SMT):** supports the DO for security on matters related to safety and security of all personnel, including their dependents
- **Mission Planning Unit (MPU):** responsible for initiating, organizing and leading mission-wide planning processes under the guidance of the HOM and COS
- **Joint Operations Center (JOC):** supports mission decision-makers by providing integrated situational awareness through routine and special incident reporting
- **Joint Mission Analysis Center (JMAC):** responsible for collecting and analyzing information, including peacekeeping-intelligence related materials in support of mission decision-makers

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Key Message 12: Mechanisms for integration and control have been established for missions to facilitate achieving mission objectives. These are supported administratively either by the COS or DMS/CMS.

Security Management Team (SMT): the SMT supports the designated official (DO) for security on matters related to the safety and security of all UN personnel and their dependents in the mission area. The SMT typically comprises the head of each UN organization operating in the host country and includes key leadership from the peacekeeping mission.

Mission Planning Unit (MPU): the MPU is responsible for initiating, organizing and leading mission-wide planning processes under the guidance of the HOM and COS.

Joint Operations Centre (JOC) and Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC): the JOC supports mission decision makers by providing integrated situational awareness through routine and special incident reporting, the facilitated planning

and coordination of operations and crisis management support. The JMAC is responsible for collecting and analysing information, including peacekeeping-intelligence related materials, to produce integrated analysis and predictive assessments in support of MLT decision-making, contingency planning and crisis management. JOCs and JMACs must align their activities to avoid any gaps and overlap in the provision of situational awareness and analysis support to mission leadership.

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Joint and Integrated Structures

- **Mission Support (MSC):** within support component, it handles all requests related to integrated and logistical support
- **Crisis Management Team (CMT):** established when response procedures are activated for immediate deployment and must reinforce existing C2 systems
- **Integrated Mission Training Center (IMTC):** responsible for the development and implementation of an integrated comprehensive mission training plan

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Mission Support Centre (MSC): the MSC is a unit within the support component that handles all requests related to integrated and logistical mission support. The use of enabling units, and transportation and movement units such as military transport helicopters, is tasked through the MSC. However, the use of combat assets (such as combat aviation units or combat/field engineers) is tasked through the HOMC.

Crisis Management Team (CMT): the CMT is established in missions and at UNHQ when response procedures are activated for immediate deployment in a crisis. Although the host government has primary responsibility for the protection of UN personnel and property, missions establish the necessary crisis management arrangements to manage their own safety and security and to respond in an integrated manner during crises. Crisis management arrangements must reinforce existing command and control systems and should in no way undermine them.

Integrated Mission Training Centre (IMTC): the IMTC is responsible for the development and implementation of an integrated comprehensive mission training plan, on behalf of the MLT.

Lesson Closing

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Trainer Tips: *If you have time, summarize the lesson, recalling the aim and learning objectives. Mention that the key messages support the learning objectives. Ask participants if they have questions. Ensure you distribute the Handout – Summary of Key Messages to all participants.*

Handout - Summary of Key Messages

Key Message 1: The system of authority, command and control (AC2) derives from the Charter of the United Nations. It designates the Secretary-General the UN's chief administrative officer responsible for the functions entrusted by the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Key Message 2: The UN has **operational authority** over **all** military, police and civilians in UN peacekeeping – including **all** tactical plans, decisions and operations.

Key Message 3: There is no single standard structure of a UN peacekeeping operation. Each mission has its own distinct structure.

Key Message 4: Each mission is structured to suit specific mandates authorized by the Security Council. Mandates are different because they respond to particular conflicts.

Key Message 5: The main positions of authority in UN peacekeeping missions include:

- Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Head of Mission (SRSG/HOM)
- Deputy SRSG
- Chief of Staff (COS)
- Director/Chief of Mission Support (DMS/CMS)
- Head of Military Component (HOMC)
- Head of Police Component (HOPC)

Key Message 6: The Secretary-General appoints the Head of Mission (HOM).

Key Message 7: SRSGs usually have Deputies to manage the scope and breadth of responsibility. Deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General (DSRSGs) are civilians.

Key Message 8: Most peacekeeping operations have senior civilian support in the role of mission **Chief of Staff** (COS). The COS is responsible for ensuring coherence across all mission units and performs a senior level staff and advisory function for the HOM and mission senior management.

Key Message 9: While the SRSG/HOM has operational authority over the mission, the integrity of military and police chains of command must be maintained. Therefore, the SRSG/HOM only exercises authority over military and police personnel through the HOMCs/HOPCs, who exercise **operational command and control** over their respective components.

Key Message 10: UN military, police and civilian components implement mandated tasks as the substantive components of UN peacekeeping operations.

Key Message 11: The support component of a mission is responsible for necessary logistics and administrative support.

Key Message 12: Mechanisms for integration and control have been established for missions to facilitate achieving of mission objectives. These are supported administratively either by the COS or DMS/CMS.