

Lesson 2.1



Overview of Mandated Tasks for UN Peacekeeping Operations

Aim, Relevance and Learning Outcomes

Aim

To introduce and explain the range of tasks mandated to UN peacekeeping operations and note how these have evolved and changed in recent years.



Trainer Tips: Note, lesson 2.1 gives an overview of mandated tasks that will be explained in more detail in other lessons in Module 2.

Relevance

Peacekeepers are deployed to implement Security Council mandates developed according to the planning cycle and principles introduced in Module 1. All UN peacekeepers share a responsibility to carry out the specifically mandated tasks of the peacekeeping operation to which they are deployed.

Each UN peacekeeping mandate specifies particular tasks to assist the host country to achieve a lasting peace. Mandated tasks focus on peace and security and support partners in humanitarian and development work.

Peacekeeping has evolved in response to the changing nature of threats to international peace and security and a willingness of UN Member States to support and provide resources for peacekeeping operations. Recent years have seen an increase in the number of violent conflicts, with a pervasive sense of insecurity around the world, requiring a collective rethink about what sustainable peace means and requires.

This lesson provides an overview of the different tasks mandated to UN peacekeeping operations. You need to be familiar with all UN peacekeeping tasks and how they support mission priorities.

Slide 1



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Aim

- To explain the duties and tasks mandated to UN peacekeeping operations and note how these have evolved and changed in recent years

Relevance

- Peacekeepers are deployed to implement Security Council mandates developed in accordance with the planning cycle and principles. All peacekeepers share a responsibility to carry out specific mandated tasks of their peacekeeping operation.
- Each UN peacekeeping mandate specifies tasks to assist the host country to achieve a lasting peace. Peacekeeping has evolved in response to the changing nature of threats to international peace and security.

UN CPTM 2025

Slide 1

Learning Outcomes

Learners will be able to:

1. Identify and distinguish between mandated tasks and explain how they have evolved.
2. Name different categories of mandated tasks for UN peacekeeping operations.
3. Describe two critical areas where UN peacekeeping operations play a limited support role – support to humanitarian and development actions – and identify who leads in these two areas.
4. List the four humanitarian principles and explain their importance for UN peacekeeping operations.

Slide 2



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and distinguish between mandated tasks and explain how they have evolved.
2. Name different categories of mandated tasks for UN peacekeeping operations.
3. Describe two critical areas where UN peacekeeping operations play a limited support role – support to humanitarian and development actions – and identify who leads in these two areas.
4. List the four humanitarian principles and explain their importance for UN peacekeeping operations.

UN CPTM 2025

Slide 2

Lesson at a Glance



Minimum lesson duration: 45 minutes (including learning activity 2.1.1).

The Lesson	Pages	Slides
Overview Of Mandated Tasks	4-6	3
Required Learning Activity 2.1.1: Mandated Tasks	6-7	4
Traditional Peacekeeping Mandate	7-14	5
Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace	15-16	8
Protection Mandates	16-17	9
Cross-Cutting Priorities	18-19	10
Two Support Roles for UN Peacekeeping Operations	19-28	11-14
Lesson Closing	29	15
Handout – Summary of Key Messages	30-31	-

Optional Learning Activity

Optional Learning Activity 2.1.2: Humanitarian Space	<i>See Learning Support 2.1</i>
--	---------------------------------



Trainer Tips: See 2.1 Learning Support for tips on starting the lesson, learning activity instructions, optional learning activities, learning evaluation and references.

The Lesson

Overview of Mandated Tasks

Each UN peacekeeping operation is different. A wide range of tasks may be mandated by the Security Council to respond to the specific requirements of the situation in the host country.

This lesson provides an overview of main mandated tasks and priorities for UN peacekeeping operations. Peacebuilding activities are discussed in more depth in Lesson 2.2 while protection mandates are covered in Lessons 2.3–2.6. Cross-cutting priorities are covered in Lessons 2.7–2.9.

Mandated tasks associated with traditional peacekeeping operations were covered in Lesson 1.1 and include:

- Supervision or monitoring of a ceasefire agreement
- Provision of a security umbrella
- Support to political processes for peace.



Key Message 1: Traditional UN peacekeeping mandated tasks include:

- Supervision or monitoring of a ceasefire agreement
- Provision of a security umbrella
- Support to political processes for peace.

Slide 3



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Traditional Peacekeeping Mandates

- Supervision or monitoring of a ceasefire agreement
- Provision of a security umbrella
- Support to political processes for peace



UN CPTM 2025 Slide 3

As discussed in Module 1, threats to global peace and security have changed in nature and scope and UN peacekeeping has evolved in response.

Key characteristics of threats to peace and security include:

- Terrorism
- Violent extremism
- Intercommunal violence
- Armed actors deliberately targeting civilians
- Deep divisions in societies where long-standing unaddressed grievances make violent conflict restart and continue
- The effects of climate change exacerbating factors influencing violent conflict including inequality, exploitation and discrimination.



Key Message 2: The range of tasks assigned to UN peacekeeping operations by the Security Council has expanded because patterns of conflict have changed. These changes are to best address emerging threats to international peace and security. Traditional monitoring and observation tasks and provision of a security umbrella continue, but there is a growing emphasis on support to:

- Political processes for peace
- Protection of civilians
- Sustaining peace.

Trends in more recent Security Council mandates include:

- **Traditional monitoring and observation tasks**, such as ceasefires and troop withdrawal, continue to be relevant. Uniformed personnel, particularly military observers, have a primary role. Examples of missions that include traditional monitoring and observation tasks are the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).
- **Provision of a security umbrella** continues to be a priority task for all UN peacekeeping operations. It enables the successful achievement of other parts of a mandate.
- **Facilitating and supporting political processes for peace** has resulted in the development of specific priorities that are now consistent across multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations. This lesson describes these priorities, and they are discussed throughout Module 2.



Trainer Tips: Build learners’ understanding of the complex terrain of UN peacekeeping mandated tasks step by step. What you introduce in this lesson does not have to be fully absorbed at once: key content will be deepened in later lessons. For a clear, decade-by-decade historical overview of the changing nature of UN peacekeeping and the emergence of multidimensional peacekeeping operations, visit the ‘Our History’ web page on the peacekeeping.un.org website. The UN Peacekeeping 70 Years of Service & Sacrifice web page is also available on the peacekeeping.un.org website.

As you will remember from Module 1, most contemporary UN peacekeeping operations are **multidimensional** and cover a broad set of tasks.

Required Learning Activity 2.1.1

Slide 4



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks

Required Learning Activity 2.1.1: Mandated Tasks

Purpose: To clarify and deepen understanding of mandated tasks carried out by UN peacekeeping missions

Time: 15 minutes

UN CPTM 2025Slide 4

Mandated Tasks	
Method:	Match mandate definitions with related tasks
Purpose:	To clarify and deepen the understanding of the mandated tasks carried out by UN peacekeeping missions and to recap and review information introduced in Module 1 to bridge into more in-depth coverage in Module 2.
Time:	15 minutes
See 2.1 Learning Support for instructions.	

Traditional Peacekeeping Mandates

Supervision or Monitoring of a Ceasefire Agreement

Slide 5



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Supervision or Monitoring of a Ceasefire Agreement

- **Ceasefire Agreement:**
 - Refers to a temporary stoppage of war or any armed conflict for an agreed-upon timeframe or within a limited area
- **Monitoring has two steps:**
 - Observation
 - Verification

UN CPTM 2025 Slide 5



Key Message 3: Supervision or monitoring of ceasefire agreements continues to be relevant in both traditional and multidimensional peacekeeping missions.

A **ceasefire agreement** is a type of peace agreement that refers to a temporary stopping of war or any other armed conflict for an agreed time or within a limited area.

Each party agrees to suspend aggressive actions without making concessions. These are military agreements, designed to stop warring parties from continuing military actions and to allow political negotiations to find a more lasting solution.

Ceasefire agreements are short-lived and fragile. Further agreements must quickly follow if the ceasefire is to hold.

Monitoring ceasefire agreements involves actions by a third party to gather information on all engaged parties' compliance with an agreement.

Monitoring involves two steps:

- **Observation:** passive watching and inspection of the actions of the engaged parties.
- **Verification:** assessing the engaged parties' compliance with the terms of the peace agreement. Verification goes beyond simply observing. It involves assessing and judging compliance and reporting violations.

Monitoring ceasefire agreements is crucial to a peace process. Parties to a conflict can only make more formal peace agreements through cooperation and political attention to the root causes of the conflict. Low levels of communication and trust can sabotage a peace agreement.

Monitoring a ceasefire and other peace agreements helps build trust and communication at a time when these are missing or scarce, strengthening conditions for lasting peace.

Roles in Monitoring Ceasefire Agreements

While monitoring ceasefire agreements is the primary purpose of traditional UN peacekeeping, the same monitoring and verification tasks may also be required in multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations, involving:

- Monitoring and reporting on parties' compliance with commitments for a ceasefire or demilitarized zone.
- Investigating complaints of violations.

These actions reassure parties to a conflict that others will not exploit a ceasefire for military advantage. The military component of the mission leads in the supervision or monitoring of a ceasefire agreement.

Military: the military component's main peacekeeping task may be to monitor and supervise, observe and report on a military arrangement, such as a truce or ceasefire agreement or a demilitarized or buffer zone. With the agreement of the parties to the conflict, these military tasks may involve:

- Observation, monitoring and reporting using the following:
 - Static observation posts
 - Regular patrols
 - Overflights
- Inspections and investigations of suspected violations.
- Supervision of the ceasefire and support to verification activities
- Interposition as a buffer and confidence-building measure

Interposition is a UN military presence between the warring parties to prevent hostilities. It may lead to the creation of buffer or separation zones in which only UN personnel are allowed. Buffer and separation zones force parties to stop fighting and pull back. In some situations, parties may agree to weapons-free areas on either side of the buffer zone. This further contributes to reducing tensions and increasing confidence in the peace process.

Civilians: members of the civilian components, e.g. political affairs officers and gender advisers, may collaborate with the military in these core tasks.

Police: the police component sometimes assists with observer functions, e.g., police monitor the buffer zone as part of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

Provision of a Security Umbrella

Slide 6



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Provision of Security Umbrella

- A security umbrella: collective measures and actions taken to protect civilians, property and State institutions against threats of physical violence.
- Foundation for other peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding actions.
- Primary role of the military component. Formed police units (FPUs) work with the military component to secure a safe environment.
- Civilian units support the building of national military, police and government structures.

UN CPTM 2025Slide 6



Key Message 4: The provision of a **security umbrella** is core business for all UN peacekeeping operations. It establishes a foundation that enables conditions for other peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding actions and success.

A **security umbrella** refers to the collective measures and actions taken to protect civilians, property and State institutions against threats of physical violence. The result is a secure and stable environment.

Providing security and maintaining public order is the responsibility of a host State, led by its national police, law enforcement and intelligence services.

The provision of a security umbrella is complex and difficult. The aftermath of violent conflict is a very challenging environment, especially when the conflict is internal to the State, localized or regional in nature. State capacity to provide security to people and keep public order is often weak. Violence may continue or recur in parts of a host country. Ethnic, religious and regional lines may divide the society. Grave human rights violations and abuses may have been committed during the conflict. These developments complicate national reconciliation.

Security is generally a precondition for other key elements outlined in peace agreements:

- The safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons
- The disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants
- The free flow of people and goods
- Delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Specific roles for UN Peacekeeping Operations in Providing a Security Umbrella

Traditional and multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations are mandated to provide a secure and stable environment. Following an intra-State conflict, a **security and public order vacuum** often exists in a country.

A multidimensional UN peacekeeping operation may be called on to **help fill the vacuum** for a short time when a State is unable to fulfil this role, until its authority is restored.

UN peacekeeping operations may:

- Support national law enforcement agencies
- Provide security at key government installations, ports and other vital infrastructure
- Establish security conditions necessary for the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian aid
- Provide mine action assistance.

By providing a secure and stable environment, UN peacekeeping operations:

- Help secure the peace processes
- Allow the mission to carry out other parts of its mandate
- Ensure partners can work in a safe environment – UN, national, humanitarian and development partners
- Ensure communities can begin to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

A mission's **military component** leads in providing a stable security umbrella. The military component's ensuring of a safe and secure environment is particularly important for:

- The safety and security of a mission and its personnel
- The protection of civilians from threats of physical violence.

In the context of a security and public order vacuum, both **military and police components** may:

- Take on the host State's role to provide security and maintain public order
- Strengthen the State's ability to protect civilians by building the capacity of its national military and police services.

Formed police units (FPUs) may work with the military component to secure a safe environment by performing the following tasks:

- Providing a visible deterrent presence
- Controlling movement and access through checkpoints
- Providing armed escorts for safety and to facilitate access
- Conducting cordon and search operations
- Controlling crowds
- Confiscating weapons.

In multidimensional peacekeeping missions, the **civilian components** work to strengthen the State's ability to provide security and ensure such work is carried out with full respect for the rule of law and human rights. Civilian units contribute to the building of national military, police and government structures through their involvement in areas such as:

- Security sector reform (SSR)
- Rule of law
- Human rights
- Protection of civilians, child protection and prevention of conflict-related sexual violence.

As legitimate and capable national military, police and government structures emerge, they increasingly take over from the mission to fulfil their responsibility to ensure security and public order.

The UN draws together and coordinates different partners to help support the host State in key peacebuilding areas following a conflict.

Certain activities to (re-)establish a protective environment are mandated by the UN Security Council as peacekeeping priorities.

These activities are aimed at preventing more conflict and supporting lasting peace. They include:

- Mine action – including demining and removal of unexploded ordnance
- Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of combatants

- Security sector reform and governance (SSR&G)
- Rule of law related activities, including judicial and corrections or prisons work
- Electoral assistance
- Support to restoration and extension of State authority.

Facilitating and Supporting Political Processes for Peace

Slide 7



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Facilitating and Supporting Political Processes for Peace

- **Political Process:**
 - Steps to end conflict
 - Maintain peace – involves peace negotiations and peace agreements
- UN peacekeeping operations facilitate the political process by promoting dialogue and reconciliation, and supporting the establishment of legitimate and effective institutions of governance
- Important for a lasting settlement or longer-term political solutions

UN CPTM 2025 Slide 7



Key Message 5: Facilitating and supporting political processes for peace is a core purpose of UN peacekeeping operations. This role has grown in importance and involves different tasks and priorities in multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations.

A political settlement or political solution refers to an agreement on how to end conflict or maintain peace.

A political settlement can also refer to a shared understanding of how political power will be organized into State structures. In this latter case, political settlement links to State-building.

The political process refers to the series of steps taken to achieve a political settlement. It involves peace negotiations and peace agreements.

UN peacekeeping operations facilitate and support **political processes for lasting settlements and longer-term, durable political solutions to violent conflict.**

Roles of UN Peacekeeping Operations in Facilitating and Supporting Political Processes

Traditional UN peacekeeping operations DO NOT normally play a direct role in political efforts to resolve conflict.

Multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations DO normally play a direct role in political efforts to resolve conflict, typically by:

- Promoting dialogue and reconciliation
- Supporting the extension of State authority through SSR, rule of law, local peacebuilding and trust building
- Supporting the establishment and strengthening of legitimate and effective institutions of civilian governance, accountability and responsiveness, including anti-corruption initiatives.

Civilian component: A mission's civilian component is responsible for leading on facilitating and supporting political processes, through measures such as:

- Providing good offices to the parties to a peace agreement
- Facilitating a political process through mediation
- Liaising with the host government, the parties to the peace process, their respective command chains and the international community
- Promoting national and regional political dialogue
- Supporting inclusive political processes
- Facilitating consultation with local people, communities and civil society to increase their contributions to national processes and discussions
- Supporting reconciliation.

Senior mission leadership responsibilities include political engagement and advocacy with parties in support of the political process.

The **political affairs unit** sets up and maintains primary contacts with parties to a conflict, gathering information, resolving disputes and responding to queries. It leads in:

- Analysing and developing an understanding of the dynamics of the armed conflict that led to the need for a UN peacekeeping operation
- Following the evolution of the dynamics of the armed conflict
- Developing strategies to help parties in conflict resolve disputes through peaceful means.

The unit works to develop relationships with parties to the conflict and other key partners, which include the wider UN, diplomats, international and regional organizations, civil society groups and other leaders.

Civil affairs officers represent the mission by liaising with local communities and authorities to support social and civic conditions for peace. They promote engagement and confidence among local people in the peace process.

Civil affairs officers convene meetings between interest groups, reach out to different parts of society and work with civil society groups to support conflict resolution and mediation.

Military and police component: Military expertise is essential to the successful conduct of peacemaking and peace negotiations in situations of armed conflict. Military officers provide technical support to political mediators in traditional and multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations. This includes providing advice on:

- Practical arrangements for monitoring ceasefire agreements
- Proposals for possible use of military capabilities
- Determining the suitability of military arrangements for:
 - Weapons-free and demilitarized zones
 - Zones of separation
 - Effective disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants.

By providing a secure environment, military and police components provide a foundation for the peace process and help support and sustain it through the often-fragile early stages of peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

Slide 8



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Peacebuilding Activities

- Mine action – including demining and removal of unexploded ordnance
- Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants
- Security sector reform and governance (SSR&G)
- Rule of law
- Electoral assistance
- Support to restoration and extension of State authority

UN CPTM 2025 Slide 8



Key Message 6: Certain **peacebuilding activities** contribute to the (re-)establishment of a protective environment and are mandated by the UN Security Council to UN peacekeeping operations as priorities:

- Mine action – including demining
- Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of combatants
- Security sector reform and governance (SSR&G)
- Rule of law related activities – including judicial, corrections and prisons work
- Electoral assistance
- Support to the restoration and extension of State authority.

The effects of violent conflict on societies, communities and individuals last a long time. Sustaining peace is challenging for a country and region, even once the foundation for it has been established with the support of the international community, including the UN. Multidimensional peacekeeping missions often include peacebuilding mandates such as:

- Mine action – including demining
- DDR of combatants
- SSR&G
- Rule of law related activities – including judicial and corrections or prisons work
- Electoral assistance
- Support to restoration and extension of State authority.

Protection Mandates

Slide 9



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Protection Mandates

- Some peacekeeping operations have protection mandates that are integrated into the work of all components of the mission.
- These are:
 - human rights
 - protection of civilians (POC)
 - child protection
 - conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)



UN CPTM 2025 Slide 9

Multidimensional peacekeeping operations are often given what are called protection mandates that are integrated into the work of all mission components. These mandates include:

- human rights
- protection of civilians (POC)
- child protection
- conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

Human rights: involves the protection and promotion of human rights of all people, equally.

Protection of civilians (POC): involves integrated and coordinated activities to protect civilians from threats of physical violence by all mission components across the three tiers of POC action:

- Tier I – Protection through dialogue and engagement
- Tier II – Provision of physical protection
- Tier III – Establishment of a protective environment.

Child protection: addresses what are referred to as the six grave violations against children in armed conflict, which are killing and maiming children, recruiting and using children, rape and sexual violence against children, abduction of children, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access.

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV): includes incidents or patterns of sexual violence such as rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity. It can be carried out against women, men, girls or boys.

More than 95 per cent of all peacekeepers in 2023–2024 were deployed in missions with a mandate to protect civilians. This emphasis reflects the disturbing and widening reality of the disproportionate suffering of civilians from the effects of violent conflict, including when they are directly targeted by armed actors.

POC is a whole-of-mission mandate implemented in a coordinated and integrated manner by all military, police and civilian personnel in the following ways:

- Political leaders of peacekeeping missions talk to governments and other actors to mitigate and prevent conflict
- Civilian protection experts, including POC advisers, child protection advisers and women’s protection advisers, advise and coordinate protection issues, including demobilizing children associated with armed forces and armed groups, persuading armed groups to stop sexual violence and coordinating military operations to protect civilians
- Military and police personnel bring unique skills to provide physical protection
- Mine action and clearing areas of unexploded ordnance helps provide a secure environment
- Experts in strengthening the rule of law and human rights further ensure the establishment of a protective environment.

Human rights, POC, child protection and CRSV prevention are governed by distinct but mutually reinforcing protection mandates. These topics are covered in more detail in separate lessons later in this module.

Cross-Cutting Priorities

Slide 10



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Cross-Cutting Priorities

Cross-cutting issues include:

- Women, peace, and security
- Climate, peace, and security
- Strategic communications and information integrity



UN CPTM 2025 Slide 10



Key Message 7: The Security Council also mandates other specific priorities and agendas that cut across all peacekeeping work:

- Women, peace and security
- Climate, peace and security
- Strategic communications and information integrity.

Cross-cutting priorities are:

- Women, peace and security: gender equality, leadership of women and girls, protection and promotion of related human rights and their relation to peace and security
- Climate, peace and security: a more recent cross-cutting task in UN peacekeeping that examines the impact of climate change on peace and security activities
- Strategic communications and information integrity: strategic communications is purposeful or directed communication with the objective of building support for an organizational objective. Information integrity is information ecosystem in which freedom of expression is fully enjoyed and information is accurate, reliable, free from discrimination and hate.



Trainer Tips: *These cross-cutting thematic tasks mentioned in this section are covered in-depth in Lessons 2.7–2.9.*

Two Support Roles for UN Peacekeeping Operations

Slide 11



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Support Roles for UN Peacekeeping Operations

- Facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance
- Cooperating and coordinating with mission partners to support poverty reduction and economic development



UN CPTM 2025 Slide 11



Key Message 8: UN peacekeeping operations are mandated to play a critical but more limited role supporting:

- Humanitarian assistance
- Socioeconomic recovery and development.

The contributions of UN peacekeeping operations to humanitarian assistance and socioeconomic recovery and development (sustainable development) are limited because of:

- Mandate specifics
- Mission capacity
- Available resources.

Because of these limitations, rather than having a direct role, peacekeepers support and help UN and non-UN partners that do have specific humanitarian and development mandates.

Peacekeeping personnel do not provide humanitarian aid directly, but they help indirectly by making it safe for humanitarian partners to work and travel.

UN peacekeeping operations also support socioeconomic recovery and development by assisting the UN Country Team (UNCT) partners coordinate and support projects that address poverty and sustainable development.



Trainer Tips: Ask participants why it could be that UN peacekeeping supports but does not lead in these two areas. Coach them towards the answer that humanitarian and development actors are on the ground and have expert knowledge.

Other reasons that they may give or that you can add:

- **Other UN entities lead:** a mission respects organizational boundaries and aims to be a good partner with the UN Country Team (UNCT) in supporting the host State. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) leads on humanitarian coordination, while the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) lead on development.
- **Capacity and resources:** Member States do not give money to peacekeeping for this work, and missions do not have the expertise or funds.
- **Humanitarian actors need to protect humanitarian space:** They stay neutral, so they are at less risk and are not denied access to people in need.
- **Specific mandates:** UN peacekeeping operations have a peace and security mandate. They connect to but do not implement the humanitarian and development mandates of different partners.

Peacekeeping is complex. Events unfold at different levels. The more that peacekeepers understand how things work at different levels the more effective they can be on the job.

Support Role: Facilitating and Supporting the Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance

Slide 12



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Facilitating the Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance

- Humanitarian assistance: aid and action designed to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of crises caused by humans and natural disasters
- Includes basic supplies of drinking water, food, shelter, medical care, protection and assistance to refugee and internally displaced persons
- UN peacekeeping operations **support and facilitate** delivery

UN CPTM 2025 Slide 12



Trainer Tips: Ask participants to recall the information about humanitarian work covered in Module 1. Note points on a flipchart. Prompt questions to stimulate recall and reflection:

- What are the four humanitarian principles?
- Why must humanitarian work be visibly separate from peacekeeping?



Key Message 8: UN peacekeeping operations play a limited supporting role in humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian actors have their own distinct mandates. Humanitarian assistance is aid and action that:

- Saves lives
- Alleviates suffering
- Maintains and protects human dignity.

Humanitarian disasters can occur anywhere at any time, resulting in lost lives, displaced populations, communities unable to care for themselves and great suffering. In addition to violent conflicts, natural disasters such as earthquakes, drought and floods are becoming more extreme as a consequence of climate change, worsening the human impacts and need for humanitarian responses.

During and after natural disasters and conflicts, the international community provides humanitarian assistance to help with recovery and rehabilitation.

Humanitarian work also tries to prevent disasters and strengthen preparedness.

Humanitarian assistance includes:

- Basic supplies – drinking water and food
- Basic shelter
- Medical care
- Protection and assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).



Key Message 10: UN peacekeeping operations are not mandated to provide direct humanitarian assistance, but they are mandated to facilitate and support the humanitarian work of key actors including:

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and at the country level, the UN humanitarian coordinator and humanitarian country team.

Roles in Provision of Humanitarian Assistance

UN peacekeeping operations do not provide direct humanitarian assistance, but they do facilitate and support other partners who lead on humanitarian work.



Trainer Tips: Remind learners about the roles of mission partners introduced in Module 1. National partners, particularly national authorities, are always at the centre of political, peacekeeping and humanitarian processes.

Host country: A host government bears the primary responsibility for humanitarian assistance in its territory. It may set up a ministry or working group at the central level to coordinate humanitarian work by different partners. Alternatively, it may authorize government officials at regional levels to coordinate activities and be part of coordination meetings with humanitarians.

International or national non-governmental organizations (NGOs): International and national humanitarian NGOs will take on roles when a host country cannot take care of things itself. Humanitarian assistance may be more than a host government can coordinate. When a country faces an emergency, its needs may also be too great for one single agency to address.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): International humanitarian actors include the ICRC, which is a neutral, independent, impartial humanitarian actor.

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations:

- Help establish the security necessary for delivery of humanitarian assistance
- Consider the special needs of refugees, IDPs, women, children and elderly and disabled people
- Create conditions necessary for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees and IDPs.

Military: The military component is not structured, trained or funded to directly deliver humanitarian assistance, but may perform a supporting role by providing:

- A security umbrella allowing humanitarians can deliver aid successfully
- Security and protection for humanitarian relief operations.

Tasks may involve:

- Ensuring freedom of movement
- Providing armed escorts for humanitarian convoys
- Protecting humanitarian personnel and storage sites.

Police: The police component can help to develop community policing in camps for refugee or IDPs.

Other Parts of the UN System – Coordination of Humanitarian Action

The UN supports host government coordination of humanitarian work through various coordination mechanisms. The goal is to ensure UN humanitarian agencies and humanitarian actors work effectively together, with the host government and other partners.

OCHA: The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) leads UN humanitarian assistance. OCHA's goal is to help save lives, reduce suffering and restore livelihoods through well-coordinated humanitarian action.

UN Resident Coordinator: The UN resident coordinator (RC) is the highest-ranking representative of the UN development system at the country level. RCs lead UNCTs to coordinate UN support to countries for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As mentioned in Module 1, in multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations, the DSRSG may be triple-hatted as the UN resident coordinator and UN humanitarian coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC).



Key Message 11: Humanitarian space (also known as a humanitarian operating environment) refers to an area where delivering and receiving humanitarian aid is independent of military and political action. Humanitarian actors maintain a clear distinction between themselves and political–military structures to ensure the safety of personnel, the effectiveness of their actions and that they can be trusted by community members.

Humanitarian actors must keep a high level of visible independence from political–military structures, including UN peacekeeping operations. A clear distinction needs to exist and be maintained between:

- **Politically motivated actions** aimed at ending conflict, and progress towards peace and development
- **Apolitical or non-political humanitarian assistance** aimed at saving lives, relieving suffering and maintaining or restoring the dignity of people affected by conflict. This is the mandate of humanitarians.

Maintaining this distinction and providing humanitarian space helps ensure that humanitarian agencies have safe and secure access throughout a conflict zone and that people in need receive the assistance necessary for their survival and recovery.

Slide 13



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Four Humanitarian Principles

- **Humanity:** address human suffering, respect and protect the dignity and rights of all victims
- **Neutrality:** do not engage in hostilities or take sides
- **Impartiality:** zero discrimination (not on ethnic origin, sex, political opinions, race, religion, colour, etc.)
- **Independence:** independent of political, economy or military

UN CPTM 2025 Slide 13

Four Humanitarian Principles

The ICRC and the UN General Assembly have adopted four humanitarian principles (resolutions 46/182 and 58/114). Humanitarian space is created through respect for these four humanitarian principles which are humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. They imply the following actions:

- **Humanity:** Address human suffering wherever found. The most vulnerable people – children, women and the elderly – are given special attention. Respecting and protecting the dignity and rights of all victims is a shared responsibility.
- **Neutrality:** Provide humanitarian assistance without:
 - Engaging in hostilities
 - Taking sides in any controversies.

- **Impartiality:** Provide humanitarian assistance without discrimination. Ethnic origin, sex, nationality, political opinions, race, religion, colour – none of these matter. Relief of suffering must be guided by need, and priority is given to the most urgent cases of distress.
- **Independence:** Humanitarian action must be independent. It is not part of any other objectives – political, economic or military.

UN peacekeeping personnel must be able to recall, understand and respect humanitarian principles and humanitarian space.

Challenges in Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) to Support UN Humanitarian Activities

The military component often has assets and capabilities useful in support of humanitarian efforts, such as transport, engineering and logistical support. The military component may also be asked to directly provide life-saving support when the security environment prevents humanitarian access to certain areas. This would only apply until safe humanitarian access is restored.

In armed conflict and high-risk environments, using military assets to support humanitarian action becomes complicated. Complications increase if military actors are party to a conflict.

The military component of the mission must preserve the impartiality, neutrality and operational independence of humanitarians and their work. Use of military assets for humanitarian tasks should be coordinated by an appropriate civilian authority and should be part of a coordinated plan of emergency relief.

Detailed guidance is provided in *The Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies*.



Reference

- Guidance on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support UN Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (2003).

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)

UN peacekeeping operations often implement small projects called quick impact projects (QIPs). QIPs benefit local people by rebuilding infrastructure and providing short-term employment.

QIPs strengthen confidence in a mission, its mandate and the wider peace process. UN peacekeeping operations use QIPs to support mission objectives through this confidence building effect. They do not substitute humanitarian or development assistance.

Humanitarian actors may have concerns about projects being presented as humanitarian when they mainly serve political, security or reconstruction priorities. This concern applies to QIPs, civil-military coordination (CIMIC) projects, activities to win hearts and minds and security or recovery projects.

Coordination and consultation with humanitarian actors are essential.

Civil-Military Coordination

Effective and consistent civil-military coordination (CIMIC) is crucial to respecting humanitarian principles and humanitarian space. Blurred lines between political-military activities and humanitarian operations can put humanitarian operations at risk. Coordination and consultation between the military and civilian humanitarian actors help maintain the distinction. Two parallel and complementary forums exist for UN CIMIC:

- UN-CMCoord – led by OCHA
- UN-CIMIC – led by the military component.

UN-CMCoord connects the military component with humanitarian and development actors to promote respect for humanitarian principles.

An OCHA field office may include UN-CMCoord officers to strengthen relationships between the humanitarian community, the military component of a UN peacekeeping mission and other military forces in the host country.

UN-CIMIC connects the military with civilian components to support mission objectives and improve overall mission effectiveness across military, police and civilian components.

A military component of a UN peacekeeping operation may also have a UN-CIMIC officer among staff officers at the mission headquarters. UN-CIMIC officers:

- Are the first point of contact to the military for police and civilians
- Ensure mutual understanding between components
- Implement actions based on an agreed upon and appropriate framework or process.

UN-CIMIC officers need to go through UN-CMCoord to reach out to humanitarian and development partners.

Support Role: Supporting Poverty Reduction, Economic and Sustainable Development

Slide 14



2.1 Overview of Mandated Tasks 

Supporting Poverty Reduction and Economic Development

- Poverty reduction: policies to stimulate economic growth, raise incomes and indirectly reduce poverty
- Poverty eradication is important for lasting peace and sustainable development
- UN peacekeeping operations play a **support role** and cooperate, coordinate with partners



UN CPTM 2025 Slide 14

Poverty and slow economic growth increase the likelihood that a country will experience violence.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, providing a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. The agenda contains 17 interconnected sustainable development goals (SDGs).



Key Message 12: Socioeconomic recovery and development are critical to achieving lasting peace. UN peacekeeping operations play a limited support role in this area, cooperating and coordinating with mission partners who lead on sustainable development.

National governments are responsible for economic development of their nation and economic opportunities for their citizens.

Development partners to national governments include international, regional, public and private actors. Development partners lead in supporting socioeconomic recovery and development. UN peacekeeping operations cooperate and coordinate with national partners, the UNCT and external partners to support poverty reduction and economic development measures.

Poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) guide economic and financial support. A host country prepares PRSPs through a process that involves national stakeholders and international development partners.

The UN Country Team (UNCT) members and key external partners have resources and expertise for long-term initiatives to build institutions and strengthen capacity. The UNCT coordinates within itself and with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund through parallel poverty reduction initiatives. Within the UNCT, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) promotes inclusive and sustainable human development and works to reduce poverty in all dimensions.

Multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations may be mandated to cooperate with and coordinate the UNCT and key external partners, as part of support to the host State government (see *Lesson 1.5 Security Council Mandates in Practice* for details).

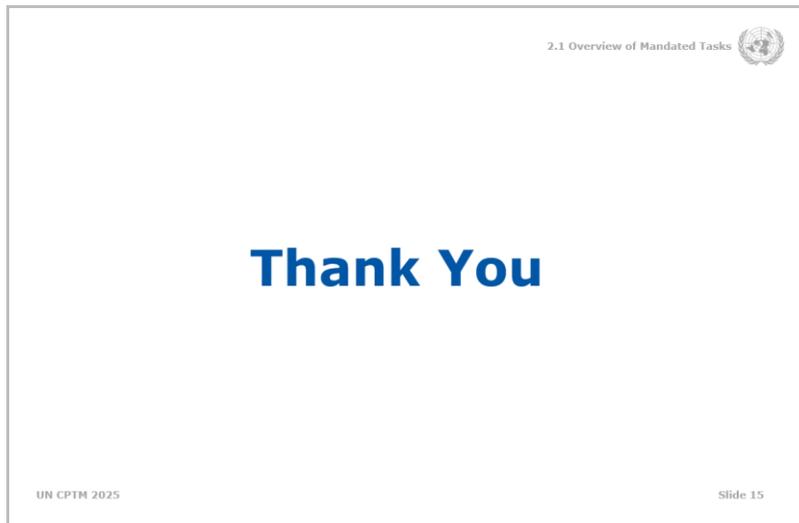
The **civilian component** assists the work of lead development partners by using:

- Their influence with national authorities to encourage key reforms
- The good offices of the special representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) / HOM and DSRSG/RC/HC to help mobilize donor funds and attention to key development priorities.

The **military and police components** provide security and ensure all development partners can work in a safe environment.

Lesson Closing

Slide 15



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: Traditional UN peacekeeping mandated tasks include:

- Supervision or monitoring of a ceasefire agreement
- Provision of a security umbrella
- Support to political processes for peace.

Key Message 2: The range of tasks assigned to UN peacekeeping operations by the Security Council has expanded because patterns of conflict have changed. These changes are to best address emerging threats to international peace and security. Traditional monitoring and observation tasks and provision of a security umbrella continue, but there is a growing emphasis on support to:

- Political processes for peace
- Protection of civilians
- Sustaining peace.

Key Message 3: Supervision or monitoring of ceasefire agreements continues to be relevant in both traditional and multidimensional peacekeeping missions.

Key Message 4: The provision of a **security umbrella** is core business for all UN peacekeeping operations. It establishes a foundation that enables conditions for other peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding actions and success.

Key Message 5: Facilitating and supporting political processes for peace is a core purpose of UN peacekeeping operations. This role has grown in importance and involves different tasks and priorities in multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations.

Key Message 6: Certain **peacebuilding activities** contribute to the (re-)establishment of a protective environment and are mandated by the UN Security Council to UN peacekeeping operations as priorities:

- Mine action – including demining
- Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of combatants
- Security sector reform and governance (SSR&G)
- Rule of law related activities – including judicial, corrections and prisons work
- Electoral assistance
- Support to the restoration and extension of State authority.

Key Message 7: The Security Council also mandates other specific priorities and agendas that cut across all peacekeeping work:

- Women, peace and security
- Climate, peace and security
- Strategic communications and misinformation, disinformation, malinformation and Hate Speech (MDMH).

Key Message 8: UN peacekeeping operations are mandated to play a critical but more limited role supporting:

- Humanitarian assistance
- Socioeconomic recovery and development.

Key Message 9: UN peacekeeping operations play a limited supporting role in humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian actors have their own distinct mandates. Humanitarian assistance is aid and action that:

- Saves lives
- Alleviates suffering
- Maintains and protects human dignity.

Key Message 10: UN peacekeeping operations are not mandated to provide direct humanitarian assistance, but they are mandated to facilitate and support the humanitarian work of key actors including:

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and at the country level, the UN humanitarian coordinator and humanitarian country team.

Key Message 11: Humanitarian space (also known as a humanitarian operating environment) refers to an area where delivering and receiving humanitarian aid is independent of military and political action. Humanitarian actors maintain a clear distinction between themselves and political–military structures to ensure the safety of personnel, the effectiveness of their actions and that they can be trusted by community members.

Key Message 12: Socioeconomic recovery and development are critical to achieving lasting peace. UN peacekeeping operations play a limited support role in this area, cooperating and coordinating with mission partners who lead on sustainable development.