

Lesson 2.3



Human Rights

Aim, Relevance and Learning Outcomes

Aim

To explain the duties of UN peacekeeping personnel in promoting and protecting human rights as a cross-cutting priority in UN peacekeeping operations.

Relevance

Peacekeeping personnel have the responsibility to protect and promote human rights through your work. Human rights are a core pillar of the UN. The promotion and protection of human rights are part of all UN peacekeeping mission mandates and structures.

The lesson explains the human rights responsibilities expected of you in the host country. You must be able to recognize human rights violations or abuses and know how to respond.

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2.3 Human Rights 

Aim

- To explain the duties of UN peacekeeping personnel in promoting and protecting human rights as a cross-cutting priority in UN peacekeeping operations

Relevance

- As peacekeeping personnel, you have the responsibility to protect and promote human rights through your work.
- Human rights are a core pillar of the UN.
- Promotion and protection of human rights are part of all UN peacekeeping mission mandates and structures.

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Learning Outcomes

Learners will be able to:

1. Distinguish between human rights violations and human rights abuses.
2. Identify the UN policies on human rights that are relevant to peacekeeping and explain their centrality to peacekeeping operations.
3. Identify human rights-related roles in a UN peacekeeping mission.
4. List actions to take when human rights abuses are observed and be prepared to take those actions when deployed.

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2.3 Human Rights 

Learning Outcomes

1. Distinguish between human rights violations and human rights abuses.
2. Identify UN policies on human rights relevant to peacekeeping and explain their centrality to peacekeeping operations.
3. Identify human rights-related roles in a UN peacekeeping mission.
4. List actions to take when human rights abuses are observed and be prepared to take those actions when deployed.

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Lesson at a Glance



Minimum lesson duration: 45 minutes including (learning activity 2.3.1).

The Lesson	Pages	Slides
Required Learning Activity 2.3.1: Trauma of War	4–5	3
Definitions	5–8	4–6
Legal Framework - Reinforcing Centrality and Legitimacy of Human Rights	7–8	6
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Optional Learning Activity	
Optional Learning Activity 2.3.2: Human rights – Violations and Abuse	<i>See 2.3 Learning Support</i>
Optional Learning Activity 2.3.3: Essential Information to Record	
Optional Learning Activity 2.3.4: Human Rights – The Basics	



Trainer Tips: See 2.3 Learning Support for tips on starting the lesson, required learning activity instructions, optional learning activities and learning evaluation.

The Lesson



Trainer Tips: Introduce the lesson topic, aim, relevance and expected learning outcomes. This lesson on human rights is the first to discuss protection mandates.

It serves as a foundational lesson to the lessons on protection mandates – protection of civilians (POC), Child Protection, prevention of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) – that follow. The topic of human rights is an over-arching theme that unifies other cross-cutting thematic peacekeeping tasks.



Key Message 1: Human rights are rights inherent (permanent and essential) to all human beings, whatever our nationality, residence, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status (see Lesson 1.4). We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination.

Required Learning Activity 2.3.1

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2.3 Human Rights 

Required Learning Activity 2.3.1: Trauma of War

Purpose: To identify human rights that are frequently at risk in conflict, ones that require urgent attention by UN peacekeeping personnel

Time: 15 minutes

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Trauma of War	
Method:	Testimonies, brainstorm and group discussion
Purpose:	To identify human rights that are frequently at risk in conflict, ones that require urgent attention by UN peacekeeping personnel
Time:	12–15 minutes
See 2.3 Learning Support for instructions.	

Definitions



Trainer Tips: Recap the basic definition of human rights from Module 1, Lesson 1.4. A repeat of the key messages on human rights from lesson 1.4 is an option to bridge into this lesson. Brainstorm with participants the differences between human rights **violations** and **abuses** and invite examples of each. Be prepared with notes from the following section of the lesson to debrief this brainstorm.



Key Message 2: Human rights violations and human rights abuses are different. UN peacekeepers need to know and recognize the difference.

Human Rights Violations

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2.3 Human Rights

Human Rights Violations

- When State officials ignore or act in ways that undermine or deny people’s human rights.
- Deliberate actions that result in human rights violations include:
 - Arrest and detention without a warrant or reasonable cause
 - Torture of a detainee in police or military custody
 - Rape of women and girls by soldiers
 - Police or military opening fire on peaceful demonstrators

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Human rights apply to every person. Human rights are seen to be protected when all people in a community or society are able to fully exercise them. States are supposed to protect these rights for their people.

International human rights law (IHRLs) defines a State's responsibilities to its citizens. Anyone in an official state capacity has a duty to protect human rights for the State. This includes police officers, soldiers, judges, local officials and other government representatives.

When people with this duty ignore it or act in ways that undermine or deny people's human rights, they fail in their duty. In doing so they violate human rights.

Therefore, a **human rights violation is a failure by the State** – through action or inaction – to perform its legally binding obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of its citizens.

Deliberate actions that result in human rights violations can include:

- Arrest or detention by a police officer without the proper documents (warrant) or reason (cause)
- Torture of a detainee in police or military custody
- Rape of women and girls by soldiers
- Police or military opening fire on peaceful demonstrators.



Examples

A lack of action resulting in human rights violations:

- A government not providing basic services to a group of internally displaced persons (IDPs), for example, food, water and adequate shelter
- A local Ministry of Education representative not taking measures so that girls can attend school
- The State failing to investigate, prosecute or properly punish cases of rape by government agents.

Human Rights Abuses

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2.3 Human Rights 

Human Rights Abuses

- Broader than human rights violations
- Human rights abuses are acts by non-State actors that prevent the enjoyment of human rights
- Non-State actors can include rebel groups, militias, corporations, or individuals



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The term human rights abuse is broader than the term human rights violation. Human rights abuses are acts by non-State actors that prevent people from enjoying their human rights. Non-State actors can include rebel groups, militias, corporations or individuals.

Legal Framework – Reinforcing the Centrality and Legitimacy of Human Rights

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2.3 Human Rights 

Legal Frameworks

Reinforcing Centrality and Legitimacy of Human Rights

- Charter of the United Nations
- International human rights law
- International humanitarian law
- Security Council resolutions



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Trainer Tips: *Module 1 introduced the international legal framework for human rights and humanitarian law. Recap with participants the main parts of the legal framework that obligate UN peacekeeping personnel to promote and protect human rights. Brainstorm specific details to help remind the entire group.*



Key Message 3: The legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights in UN peacekeeping operations includes the following, which reinforce the centrality and legitimacy of human rights in all UN work.

- Charter of the United Nations
- International Human Rights Law (IHRL)
- International Humanitarian Law (IHL)
- Security Council resolutions.

The Security Council has increasingly mandated peace operations and special political missions (SPMs) to protect and promote human rights before, during and after conflict and to protect civilians in armed conflict who are under imminent threat of physical violence.



Examples

Security Council resolution 1894 (2009) on protection of civilians (POC) in armed conflict stresses that targeting civilians on purpose and systematically violating humanitarian and human rights law that should have protected them may be a threat to international peace and security. It also says that protection activities have priority. It emphasizes the importance of comprehensive protection strategies that include accountability for human rights violations and abuses.

The effective implementation of a POC mandate requires timely and well-resourced human rights monitoring, advocacy and reporting.

Importance of Human Rights Protections

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2.3 Human Rights 

Importance of Human Rights Protections

Human Rights

"Human rights are not a luxury that can be left until we find a solution to the world's other problems. They are the solution to many of the world's other problems. From the climate emergency to the misuse of technology, the answers to today's crises are found in human rights. Human rights are innate to being human."

Secretary-General António Guterres

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Key Message 4: Human rights are at the core of the UN's work. Peace and security, development and human rights depend on and reinforce each other.

Human rights cut across all areas of UN work. They apply to peace and security, economic and social affairs, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

They are also a part of the Security Council's five peace and security activities: conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peacebuilding.

The abuse and violation of human rights are linked to conflict. Conflict as both a cause and a result. Respect for human rights is a foundation for lasting peace and security.

The UN protects and promotes human rights to:

- Prevent conflicts
- Achieve and keep peace
- Help a country and people recover after conflict.

Development, security and human rights depend on each other.

Human rights are a key part of promoting justice and reconciliation.

The UN will not approve, support or recognize amnesties for war crimes, crimes against humanity or grave violations of IHRL or IHL. However, a government and a rebel group may agree such amnesties in a peace agreement between them. In 2004, the Secretary-General stated that international tribunals were to be preferred to amnesties.



Example – UNMISS Human Rights Division

The UNMISS Human Rights Division assisted the UN-supported General Court Martial (a trial court) in Yei River County in South Sudan in May and June 2023. The support included assistance in preparing case files, organizing information and evidence, supporting victims and witnesses, providing referrals, offering legal advice, monitoring proceedings and reporting on adherence to fair trial guarantees. The General Court Martial sentenced 12 soldiers of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces to prison. They were convicted of crimes such as murder, rape, sexual harassment and grievous harm. The convicted soldiers were imprisoned for between three months and 10 years and were also ordered to pay fines. Most of them were demoted and dismissed from the South Sudan People's Defence Forces.

The success of UN peacekeeping depends on attention to human rights.

The performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations is largely and ultimately measured by how they contribute to the protection of human rights, including in situations of imminent threat of physical violence, and the prevention of the occurrence of further violations. The Security Council mandates most multidimensional peacekeeping operations to promote and protect human rights. Tasks that aim to ensure respect for human rights, and accountability for violations and abuses include:

- Monitoring, investigating and reporting on human rights violations and abuses
- Empowering the population to assert and claim their human rights
- Developing the capacity of the State and national actors and institutions to:
 - Implement their human rights obligations
 - Uphold the rule of law.

It is important to note that UN policies require all missions to advance human rights through the implementation of their mandate, even if they do not have an explicit human rights mandate or human rights component. This underlines the centrality of human rights to the work of all UN peace missions.

The Security Council includes cross-cutting thematic tasks in most mandates for UN peacekeeping operations on:

- POC
- Addressing conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)
- Protection of children
- Protection of women's rights through the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda.

All these cross-cutting thematic tasks are strongly linked to human rights. All peacekeeping personnel share responsibility to protect and promote human rights through their work.

Human Rights in UN Peacekeeping

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2.3 Human Rights 

Human Rights in UN Peacekeeping

- Integrate into everyday life
- Support national capacity
- Recognize human rights violations and abuses
- Respond correctly – at a minimum, by reporting



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Key Message 5: The UN's work supports the promotion, protection and respect of human rights in a country. This applies to UN peacekeeping operations as a whole and to all individual peacekeeping personnel.

Protecting and promoting human rights is everyone's responsibility. This requires:

- Integrating human rights into everyday work
- Supporting lasting human rights capacity.

Leaders, managers and commanders are responsible for knowing UN policies on human rights in UN peacekeeping.

It is their job to make sure all peacekeeping personnel:

- Recognize human rights violations and abuses
- Respond correctly – at a minimum, by reporting violations and abuses.

The conduct of peacekeeping personnel must follow human rights standards.

Roles and Responsibilities of UN Peacekeepers

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2.3 Human Rights 

Roles and Responsibilities of UN Peacekeepers

- If you see a human rights violation or abuse, at a minimum, take note of the facts
- Prepare a report following mission procedures
- Immediately report through the chain of command or management structure and the human rights component
- Always keep the human rights component informed

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Key Message 6: If a peacekeeper sees a human rights violation or abuse, he or she must take action to the extent possible.

What each peacekeeper can do **will be different** and **will depend on the situation**.

Prepare before you deploy: inform yourself about human rights in the context in which you are deployed.

If you see a human rights violation or abuse, at a minimum, **take note of the facts**, including:

- The date, time and place of the incident

- Who is involved – those committing the act, those affected by it and those witnessing it
- What happened – state how, when and where it happened, listing each thing that happened in the order you observed it
- Name and position of the perpetrator
- Names and addresses of the victims and any witnesses
- Any other important details.

Prepare a report following mission procedures. List the specific articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that have been violated or abused.

- **Immediately report** through the chain of command or management structure and to the human rights component. Always keep the human rights component and other relevant components informed about human rights issues.

Other possible actions peacekeepers can take when they see human rights violations or abuses:

- Make an **appropriate intervention** to stop violations or abuses, if the situation and mission mandate allow. The type of intervention depends on your role and mission mandate. Military personnel may take direct military action to protect the lives of civilians. Formed police units, which are part of UN Police (UNPOL), may also be authorized to use force per the directive on the use of force.
- **Consult with the human rights component on human rights issues.** Always report, share information and coordinate with the human rights component. Seek advice and consult on what actions to take. Always coordinate action with the human rights component because human rights work is complex and sensitive. Peacekeeping personnel have to take the maximum care so that they help instead of harm the victims and survivors of human rights violations or abuses.
- **Protect sensitive information and uphold confidentiality.** Make sure that sensitive information on the identity of victims, witnesses or sources is not unduly disclosed. This applies to gathering information and reporting. Revealing sensitive information can endanger safety and compromise confidentiality. Be careful when speaking in a group or in front of others.
- **Do not conduct a detailed interview.** If you do not have the specialized training and if it is not part of your role, you must not prompt or ask questions and conduct detailed interviews – particularly with children and victims or survivors of sexual violence. Make sure that you only note basic information. When approached by someone who wants to give information on an incident, listen respectfully and record what people saw or were told.

- **If working with local translators**, ensure their integrity and check their understanding about human rights. Make sure they have basic skills in interviewing on difficult topics.
- **Avoid raising false expectations with victims and witnesses.** Be frank and consistent when explaining the mandate and its limits.
- **Continue to follow the situation.** Examples of related actions include:
 - Repeat patrolling and observation
 - Visits to police stations
 - Engagement with local counterparts.

Roles and Responsibilities at Mission Level

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2.3 Human Rights 

Human Rights Component

- Advises SRSO/HOM
- Dual reporting line to SRSO/HOM and High Commissioner
- Monitor and investigate human rights violations/abuses
- Produce internal and public reports
- Advocacy and intervention
- Strengthen national/local capacity
- Coordination and mainstreaming of Human Rights in UNPKO, UNCT and Humanitarian Country Team

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Key Message 7: The human rights component is part of a UN peacekeeping mission's civilian component. It advises and coordinates on human rights.

The Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) has integrated human rights components in UN peace operations and political missions. This replaced a previous system of separate OHCHR field offices in countries where the Security Council deploys such operations.

The Head of the Human Rights component represents the High Commissioner for Human Rights (the Head of OHCHR) in the mission area.

The component:

- Advises the special representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) / HOM
- Has a dual reporting line to the SRSG/HOM and the High Commissioner
- Receives support, technical advice and guidance from OHCHR.

Core tasks of the human rights component are to:

- Monitor and investigate human rights violations and abuses
- Produce internal and public reports on human rights issues and activities:
 - Internal reports: for distribution and use only by the human rights component, the peacekeeping operation and OHCHR
 - Public reports: shared with the public, including the host society, international partners and the media.
- Advocate and intervene on human rights issues – from quiet diplomacy to public condemnation
- Strengthen the capacity of the host government, civil society and national human rights institutions to protect and promote human rights
- Coordinate human rights work and help integrate it into the core identity of the UN peacekeeping operation, UN Country Team (UNCT) and Humanitarian Country Team.

Human Rights officers carry out the mission's human rights mandate. They work with others to mainstream human rights.

Human rights teams on the ground work closely with other civilian and uniformed components. Priority partnerships are on:

- POC
- CRSV
- Child protection
- Legal and judicial reform
- Security sector reform and governance (SSR&G)
- Prison system reform.



Key Message 8: All parts of a mission contribute to human rights protection through daily tasks.

Some units work closely with the human rights component and integrate human rights in specifics of their work.

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2.3 Human Rights 

Components working closely with Human Rights Component

- Rule of law and justice
- Corrections
- Gender unit
- Women's protection adviser (WPA)
- Child protection adviser (CPA)
- Protection of civilians (POC) adviser

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Rule of Law (ROL) and Justice

- Rule of law (ROL) makes human rights possible. It prevents violations and discrimination in the justice system and combats impunity.
- ROL and justice units help develop ROL strategies and reform the justice system. They ensure that international human rights standards are the fundamental reference for legal analysis, assessment, programming and monitoring and evaluation.
- Judicial affairs officers advise and train people in the national justice system and monitor justice developments.
- Human rights and ROL/justice components have a strong partnership, often engaging with the same institutions in the justice system. Human rights components often monitor trials jointly with judicial affairs officers or share information on the handling of cases or judicial decisions.

Corrections

- Corrections officers deal with the prison system. They advise on policy and procedures to make things work better. These must be in line with international human rights standards on detention.
- Tasks include:
 - Rehabilitating cells and prisons
 - Supporting national authorities with the recruitment of prison personnel
 - Coaching and mentoring national corrections officers, including on proper treatment for detainees

- Coordinating with human rights components to monitor places of detention.
- The human rights component is responsible for the independent monitoring of detention facilities, prison conditions and management practices to ensure they align with international human rights standards.

Gender Unit

- The gender unit supports laws, policies, institutions and practices that safeguard the equal rights of women and girls and men and boys.
- The units work with national partners to implement human rights treaties, fight discrimination and strengthen women's participation in society.

Women's Protection Adviser (WPA)

- The women's protection adviser (WPA) is the dedicated lead capacity in UN peacekeeping missions to address CRSV. WPAs are guided by international human rights standards.

Child Protection Adviser (CPA)

- The CPA monitors and reports on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict as part of a monitoring and reporting mechanism.
- The CPA advocates for measures in response to violations of children's rights that are identified as key child protection concerns by missions.

Child protection advisers and units work in partnership, coordination and regularly exchange information with the human rights component on human rights violations against children.

Protection of Civilians (POC) Adviser

- The POC office supports efforts to integrate POC across the work of the mission and national counterparts.
- The human rights component contributes to POC through:
 - Monitoring and reporting on human rights violations and abuses
 - Analysis and sharing of relevant information with other components.

Other units that contribute to human rights protection in peacekeeping are described below.

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2.3 Human Rights 

Other Components supporting Human Rights

- Security sector reform (SSR)
- Civil affairs
- Electoral assistance
- Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR)
- Political affairs
- The SRSG/HOM and the DSRSG/RC/HC

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Security Sector Reform (SSR)

- Mission components that support security sector reform (SSR) ensure that reforms reflect human rights standards.
- Human rights are to be part of core training for new military forces and police services.
- Human rights are also part of SSR strategies that vet new forces and make security institutions accountable.
- SSR must be conducted in line with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN Support to non-UN Security Forces (2013).

Civil Affairs

- Civil affairs officers work with civilian officials and public administrators of the host State.
- All advising and training of civilian officials must cover human rights principles and how these apply to running a State.
- Civil affairs officers play a useful role in:
 - Gathering human rights-related information
 - Informing civil society actors and the population at large of their rights
 - Referring victims of human rights violations and abuses and situations requiring intervention to the human rights component.

Electoral Assistance

- The right to vote and to stand for election is a basic political right.
- Electoral assistance units ensure that electoral legislation and processes are fair and participatory. They ensure that people understand the electoral process and can register and vote without interference or discrimination. Special measures may help illiterate people claim their electoral rights.
- During an electoral period, the human rights component intensifies its monitoring, advocacy and reporting work.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

- The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) component is required to provide advice and support to national authorities to ensure that the design and implementation of DDR programmes are based on IHRL.
- The DDR component ensures that children and women receive special protection during the demobilization of military forces and armed groups.
- Children and women associated with armed forces and groups and female ex-combatants receive specific support from DDR programmes.

Political Affairs

- Political affairs officers:
 - Watch political developments in a country and advise mission leadership.
 - Work with human rights partners to prevent abuses and violations, using the information they gather on potential disputes and conflicts.
 - Negotiate peace agreements between parties in conflict. In that critical role, they support inclusion of human rights in such agreements.
- International human rights standards are applied in all interactions with the host government and parties to a conflict, including:
 - Representation and participation of minority groups in legislative and executive bodies
 - Rejection of blanket amnesties for human rights violators in peace agreements.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) / HOM

- The SRSG's/HOM's responsibilities include:
 - Upholding human rights in mandate implementation
 - Highlighting human rights in discussions and policy
 - Being a role model on human rights

- Consistently showing the UN's and the mission's commitment to human rights
- Promoting human rights, protecting people from violations and abuses, and ensuring a timely mission response when they occur.

The Deputy SRSR / RC / HC

- A DSRSG may be triple-hatted. This means that a single person in a single post takes on three key functions: the UN resident coordinator (RC) and humanitarian coordinator (HC) roles are added to the DSRSG role (DSRSG/RC/HC).
- The HC is responsible for managing UN humanitarian operations in a country.
- Humanitarian work is carried out in coordination with the human rights component. Human rights must be integrated into humanitarian activities and programmes. This includes:
 - Humanitarian needs assessments
 - Information-gathering processes
 - Existing protection and early recovery strategies.

Special Roles of the Police Component

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2.3 Human Rights 

Special Roles of the Police Component

- Mentor national police
- Vet, train and advise
- Carry out investigations
- Report to the human rights component
- UN Police must be prepared to intervene

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Key Message 9: Ensuring respect for human rights is central to the work of UN Police in UN peacekeeping. This role may include mentoring, vetting and advising, investigating, reporting and intervention.

The mandate of UNPOL is different for each mission:

- In some missions, UNPOL mentors the host country police services
- In more complex missions, mandates for UNPOL cover training, advising and helping to establish and enhance national police services
- In rare cases, UNPOL are responsible for law enforcement and policing.

Across all areas of work, in all aspects of their work, the police must ensure compliance with international human rights standards. This rigour in relation to human rights spans:

- **Mentoring:** The Security Council often mandates UNPOL to mentor national police. In their daily contact, UNPOL strengthens capacity to:
 - Arrest and detain, making sure arrests are legal, that the rights of arrested people are respected, and that detainees are registered and treated humanely
 - Ensure conditions of detention in police holding cells comply with UN minimum standards
 - Investigations and interrogations follow legitimate purposes and respect standard procedures.
- **Vetting, training and advising:** This important role is part of SSR. UNPOL may help with vetting, training and advising a new or restructured local police service. These are perfect opportunities to make sure core training covers human rights, and all members of a new police force understand and can apply human rights principles. Human rights officers often work with UNPOL to train local police services on human rights and advise on vetting procedures.
- **Investigating:** The human rights component may call on UNPOL expertise when investigating serious human rights abuses and violations. In some missions, UNPOL officers have been sent to work on investigative teams in the human rights component. UNPOL officers with specific skills, such as forensic skills, have supported human rights investigations.
- **Reporting:** UNPOL usually works beside national police throughout the host country. The UN expects them and military peacekeeping personnel to be the mission's eyes and ears on human rights. Peacekeeping personnel need to document all suspected human rights abuses and violations. Then they need to report to the human rights component and other relevant units such as the child protection and gender units for analysis and follow-up.
- **Intervention:** When confronted with a violation, UNPOL must also be prepared to intervene.

Special Roles of the Military Component

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2.3 Human Rights 

Special Roles of the Military Component

- Provide a safe and secure environment
- Provide physical protection to civilians
- Monitoring and reporting
- Support the human rights component and partners
- Be in contact with armed forces and groups
- Reinforce mission credibility
- Provide physical protection to civilians

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Key Message 10: Military peacekeeping personnel contribute in key ways to a mission’s human rights mandate, by ensuring a safe environment, physical protection, human rights monitoring and reporting, and supporting the human rights components and partners.

Safe Environment: Military peacekeeping personnel provide a safe and secure environment, which is important to deter human rights violations and/or abuses. They patrol, control borders, set up checkpoints and cordons close to refugee and IDP camps. They do this work alongside UNPOL.

Physical Protection: In most peacekeeping missions, military personnel are mandated to provide physical protection to civilians under threat of physical violence by using armed force. Military personnel must be prepared to intervene when confronted with human rights violations and abuses – in line with the mission mandate and the rules of engagement (ROE).

The force commander, the head of the human rights component and other component heads are expected to closely cooperate **to plan for possible crises, escalation of violence and upsurges in violations.**

Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting: Military peacekeepers are often the largest component, with a wide operational presence, and opportunities to observe and monitor armed groups and civilians. They can gather important information about human rights and note activity that can lead to violations. Human rights components analyse and respond to reports they receive from the military.

Supporting the Human Rights Component and Partners: Military peacekeepers provide escorts to human rights mobile teams and humanitarian convoys. They also share information with the human rights component and partners. Support to the work of the human rights component includes:

- Discussing challenges specific to an area
- Joint patrolling or field visits
- Exchanging relevant information on the conduct of activities and movements of armed forces and armed groups
- Providing advice on technical military issues
- Arranging meetings between human rights officers and armed forces or groups.

Reach and Influence: Military peacekeeping personnel are in contact with different regular and irregular armed groups. They can take up human rights issues with their counterparts, including local senior military personnel and leaders of armed groups. In some cases, they may have a direct role in training and reforming local armed forces. They can be role models for local armed forces, showing how law-abiding military personnel respect the human rights of the people they protect.

Reinforcement of Mission Credibility: Military peacekeeping personnel help maintain the credibility of a peacekeeping operation with local people and the international community. This contribution is enhanced when they protect human rights, prevent violations and set a standard for military conduct.

UN Partners Leading in Human Rights

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2.3 Human Rights 

UN Partners Leading in Human Rights


UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

OHCHR leads global human rights efforts, working closely with governments, UN entities and civil society.


UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The UN Human Rights Council periodically reviews the human rights record of all countries

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Key Message 11: The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has the lead responsibility in the UN system to promote and protect human rights. Its mandate comes from the UN General Assembly. The Human Rights Council is another important part of the UN human rights mechanism.

OHCHR leads global human rights efforts, working in close collaboration with governments, UN entities, other intergovernmental organizations and civil society.

It has offices and centres in many countries and regions.

OHCHR conducts human rights monitoring. This means actively collecting information on human rights concerns, checking whether it is correct and using it. OHCHR monitoring can be an early warning tool to assist national authorities and other relevant actors to take steps to prevent or reduce human rights abuses and violations.

The head of OHCHR is the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The High Commissioner regularly comments on human rights in the world. He or she has authority to investigate cases and issue reports.

Different parts of the UN monitor how States comply with international human rights treaties. OHCHR supports this monitoring.

OHCHR also supports human rights components of UN peacekeeping missions in several countries.



Example – Support on Human Rights Training

OHCHR conducts and supports the delivery of human rights training in UN peacekeeping missions to civilians and uniformed personnel on issues ranging from the monitoring and reporting of human rights abuses and violations, the application and implementation of UN guidance and policies (e.g. HRDDP, screening policy, detention) and the functioning of the UN human rights monitoring system (e.g. the role of UN human rights bodies based on the Charter of the United Nations or on other international treaties and the Human Rights Council).

The Human Rights Council

Another important part of the UN's human rights mechanism is the Human Rights Council. The Council periodically reviews the human rights record of all countries through its Universal Periodic Review. It also discusses and takes action on human rights concerns in any part of the world. The Council is an intergovernmental body, with 47 UN Member States elected by the UN General Assembly. It meets at the UN offices in Geneva.

UN Policies and Guiding Principles on Human Rights

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2.3 Human Rights 

UN Policies and Principles on Human Rights

- A Call to Action for Human Rights (2020)
- The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (2019)
- Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN Support to Non-UN Security Forces (2013)
- UN Policy on Human Rights Screening of UN Personnel (2012)
- UN Policy on Human Rights in UN Peace Operations and Political Missions (2011)

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Key Message 12: UN policies and principles guide work on human rights. Current policies and guiding principles include the Secretary-General's *A Call to Action for Human Rights*, the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and the UN Policy on Human Rights Screening of UN Personnel.

A Call to Action for Human Rights (2020)

Building on important initiatives such as the Human Rights Up Front initiative, the Call to Action is the Secretary-General's transformative vision for human rights.

Underpinning the work of the entire UN system, human rights are essential to addressing the broad causes and impacts of all complex crises, and to building sustainable, safe and peaceful societies.

Focusing on seven thematic areas, the Call to Action recognizes human rights as central to our most pressing issues:

- The urgent achievement of sustainable development
- The protection of all people regardless of their circumstances
- Tackling gender inequality once and for all
- Ensuring robust civic space for everybody
- Creating a healthy environment for future generations
- Ensuring a safe digital world
- All pitching in together to make this a reality.

The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (2019)

The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of UN work: peace and security, human rights and development. It reinforces the point that human rights are universal. They apply equally to everyone, and special measures are sometimes needed to ensure people living in different circumstances, such as living with disabilities, can realize their rights.

The strategy includes a policy and an accountability framework, with benchmarks to assess progress and accelerate change on disability inclusion. The policy establishes a vision and commitment for the UN system on the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN Support to non-UN Security Forces (2013)

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2.3 Human Rights 

Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP)

Any UN support to non-UN forces must:

- Follow the Charter of the United Nations
- Meet UN responsibilities to respect, promote and encourage respect for IHRL, IHL and international refugee law

HRDDP protects and promotes credibility, impartiality and legal interests of the mission

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Key Message 13: Adherence to the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) is essential to maintain the legitimacy, credibility and public image of the UN and to ensure compliance with the Charter and with the organization's obligations under international law. The UN expects all non-UN security forces to follow the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy describes the steps the UN needs to take to make sure another organization it plans to work with is trustworthy.

The 2013 policy states that all UN entities must ensure any support they provide to non-UN forces:

- Follows the Charter
- Meets UN responsibilities to respect, promote and encourage respect for IHRL, IHL and international refugee law.

The Due Diligence Policy requires the UN to take these steps before supporting a non-UN entity:

- Assess the risks of the non-UN entity committing grave violations of IHL, IHRL, International Refugee law or international criminal law
- Be transparent about the UN's legal obligations and principles
- Put in place a framework with procedures to monitor compliance
- Take action on grave violations.

The policy states that UN support cannot be provided where:

- It seems there is a real risk of the non-UN entity committing grave violations of IHL, IHRL, international refugee law or international criminal law
- The relevant authorities fail to take the necessary corrective or mitigating measures.

The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) is binding for the entire UN, not only for peacekeepers. It was established by the Secretary-General and the Security Council has repeatedly endorsed it.

All UN entities that plan to provide support to non-UN security forces must assess the risks involved in providing or not providing such support. This assessment needs to consider the risk of the recipients committing grave violations of IHL, IHRL, international refugee law or international criminal law. Furthermore, the UN has to consider whether any mitigation measures can reduce the risk of violations, e.g. by increasing training or excluding problematic units from the support given.

The HRDDP serves to ensure that the UN does not support or collaborate with host State elements involved in grave violations of IHL, IHRL, international refugee law or international criminal law.

The policy serves to protect the UN from legal liability for inadvertently aiding violations committed by others. Distancing the UN from State forces involved in grave violations also protects the UN's reputation and perceived impartiality.

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2.3 Human Rights 

Application of HRDDP

Any support by the UN to non-UN forces must follow HRDDP.
This includes:

- Conduct of joint operations
- Planning support
- Sharing of intelligence
- Training
- Capacity building
- Mentoring
- Technical cooperation
- Financial support

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Any support provided by the UN to non-UN security forces must follow the HRDDP. Relevant support provided by peace operations includes:

- Conduct of joint operations
- Planning support
- Sharing of intelligence
- Training
- Capacity-building
- Mentoring
- Technical cooperation
- Financial support.

Certain areas are exempted:

- Training and engagement on IHL and human rights
- Mediation-related support (e.g. transporting officers to peace negotiations)
- Medical evacuation.

The HRDDP also covers support provided to regional organizations, for instance, support to African Union peace and security operations. Missions have established task forces and standard operating procedures to help assess risks, coordinate engagement with supported entities and devise measures to reduce the risks. Both civilian and military personnel working with host State forces should be familiar with the mission-specific arrangements. The mission will work with host-State partners to bring the risk of violations down to an acceptable level. However, where support recipients continue to commit grave violations, the mission may have to temporarily suspend or altogether withdraw its support to them.



Example - MINUSCA

In 2023, MINUSCA continuously engaged with the Government to prevent and address violations perpetrated by the national security forces. The SRSG engaged at the highest level with the president or prime minister to inform them of decisions to suspend or withdraw UN support to non-UN security entities. The SRSG also facilitated dialogue with Central African Republic authorities on the implementation of the HRDDP and has shared key decisions with external partners as appropriate (e.g. with the African Union (AU), while engaging them in the implementation of major mitigating measures).



Trainer Tips: Other lessons in Module 2 detail different ways human rights policies apply in UN peacekeeping, addressing protection and women, peace and security. Learning from this lesson is to be taken forward to the rest of training.

UN Policy on Human Rights Screening of UN Personnel (2012)

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2.3 Human Rights 

UN Policy on HR Screening of UN Personnel

- Member States must screen all personnel they nominate or send to the UN
- Individuals who seek to serve must confirm they have not committed crimes or violated international law
- UN Secretariat manages the information exchange to screen candidates and nominees on human rights conduct

The 2012 policy ensures only individuals with the highest integrity serve with the United Nations

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The 2012 policy ensures only individuals with the highest integrity serve with the UN.

- Member States nominating or sending personnel to the UN are to screen them and certify that none have committed crimes or violated IHRL or IHL.
- Individuals who seek to serve with the UN are asked to confirm they have not committed crimes or violated international law.
- The UN Secretariat manages an information exchange to screen candidates and nominees on human rights conduct.

UN Policy on Human Rights in UN Peace Operations and Political Missions (2011)

The 2011 policy also applies to UN peacekeeping. It was jointly signed by the predecessors to the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the Department of Operational Support (DOS) and OHCHR. The policy guides the integration of human rights in UN peacekeeping and SPMs.

The goal is to maximize UN actions to:

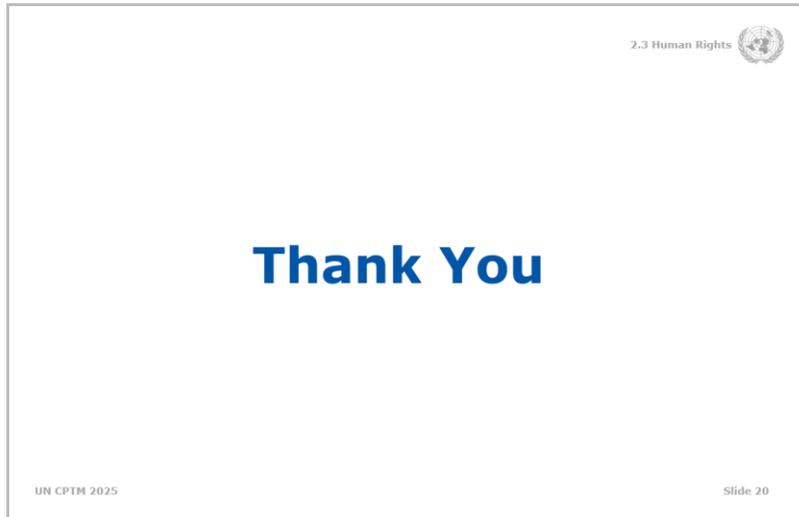
- Address the human rights dimensions of conflicts
- Build a foundation for lasting peace.

The policy states:

- There is a responsibility to ensure human rights are promoted, protected and respected, starting with the SRSG/HOM and senior mission leadership
- Mission human rights components or OHCHR help and advise the SRSG/HOM
- OHCHR provides expert guidance and support to human rights components
- All peacekeeping personnel need to understand and follow IHRL and IHL
- All peacekeeping tasks must respect, promote and protect human rights
- Various mission components have specific roles on human rights.

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: Human rights are rights inherent (permanent and essential) to all human beings, whatever our nationality, residence, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status (see Lesson 1.4). We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination.

Key Message 2: Human rights violations and human rights abuses are different. UN peacekeepers need to know and recognize the difference.

Key Message 3: The legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights in UN peacekeeping operations includes the following, which reinforce the centrality and legitimacy of human rights in all UN work.

- Charter of the United Nations
- International Human Rights law (IHRL)
- International Humanitarian law (IHL)
- Security Council resolutions.

Key Message 4: Human rights are at the core of the UN's work. Peace and security, development and human rights depend on and reinforce each other.

Key Message 5: The UN's work supports the promotion, protection and respect of human rights in a country. This applies to UN peacekeeping operations as a whole and to all individual peacekeeping personnel.

Key Message 6: If a peacekeeper sees a human rights violation or abuse, he or she must take action to the extent possible.

Key Message 7: the human rights component is part of a UN peacekeeping mission's civilian component. It advises and coordinates on human rights.

Key Message 8: All parts of a mission contribute to human rights protection through daily tasks.

Key Message 9: Ensuring respect for human rights is central to the work of UN Police in UN peacekeeping. This role may include mentoring, vetting and advising, investigating, reporting and intervention.

Key Message 10: Military peacekeeping personnel contribute in key ways to a mission's human rights mandate, by ensuring a safe environment, physical protection, human rights monitoring and reporting, and supporting the human rights components and partners.

Key Message 11: The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has the lead responsibility in the UN system to promote and protect

human rights. Its mandate comes from the UN General Assembly. The Human Rights Council is another important part of the UN human rights mechanism.

Key Message 12: UN policies and principles guide work on human rights. Current policies and guiding principles include the Secretary-General's *A Call to Action for Human Rights*, the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) and the UN Policy on human rights Screening of UN Personnel.

Key Message 13: Adherence to the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) is essential to maintain the legitimacy, credibility and public image of the UN and to ensure compliance with the Charter and with the organization's obligations under international law. The UN expects all non-UN security forces to follow the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP).