

# MODULE 3

## LEARNER’S HANDOUT

### Role of Military Child Protection Focal Points Military Occupation of Schools

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#### AIM

The aim of this exercise is to enhance learners’ understanding of how military contingents may respond to situations at the tactical level to protect children’s rights and promote an integrated and comprehensive response to child protection in the mission area.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the role of the military component in support of child protection in the United Nations mission area, with regard to the illegal occupation of schools
- Recognize appropriate military responses to realistic situations at the tactical level and identify legal sources of authority and obligation to take action
- Describe the operational framework for collaborating with host country forces and partners, and the approach to be adopted to share concerns and take action, as appropriate
- Discuss the roles and functions of other mission components and external partners in dealing with child protection issues
- Recognize the processes and issues related to coordination among mission actors
- Identify the military tasks involved in an integrated mission response to mitigate the risk of grave violations against children

#### BACKGROUND

This scenario is based on a real-life event that occurred in 2017, involving MONUSCO, which had a mandate to conduct offensive operations at the time. Names and locations have been removed/altered.

#### MISSION-SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES/GUIDELINES

For the purposes of this exercise, use MONUSCO Force Commander’s Directive – Protection of Children by MONUSCO Force (2021), Mission Y Rules of Engagement, and other documents handed out during Module 2.

#### SETTING

The area of Fizi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo links the inland part of South Kivu province with Lake Tanganyika. It is hilly with bush, open agricultural land and small, mostly secluded villages as well as down-river valleys that feed the lake. Legal and illegal mining is carried out in several places – many of them highly disputed. Smuggling is a critical factor and many local boat owners and fishermen make a living by transporting materials across the lake.



Local teachers, village elders, female groups and priests play an important role in the communities. Infrastructure is very poor and the area is easily infiltrated. Destructive forces, such as local, self-proclaimed protection organizations, dissident splinter groups and non-aligned armed groups (hereafter referred to as “armed groups”), harass the local population. Located in the mission’s Southern Sector, this area does not have sufficient UN troops to cover the whole province and armed groups move relatively freely. Elements of the host government’s security forces (the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (known by their French acronym, FARDC), and Police) have been conducting joint operations with the MONUSCO Force. Although incidents resulting from their indiscipline and human rights violations have been gradually decreasing, they are still common.

Recently, a collection of local armed groups (Mayi Mayi) aligned together and mounted an offensive against the host government’s security forces (FARDC/Police) and UN Forces, which almost removed their presence from Uvira (the regional capital and UN Battalion HQ). The Southern Sector brigade launched a counteroffensive to block the Mayi Mayi in order to allow the FARDC to regroup, and prepare and mount operations to force the Mayi Mayi to withdraw.

### SITUATION

During the mission’s Senior Management Group daily update, the Child Protection Section/Unit mentioned that it had received a report from UNICEF the previous day, stating that Captain Willy’s Mayi Mayi group have occupied a high school in Swima (10 km west of Uvira). Captain Willy had indicated that the Mayi Mayi group needed to use the school for seven days. He has a history of abducting and sexually abusing children.

After the meeting, the Force Commander asks you – the Force HQ military Child Protection Focal Point – to confirm the situation with the Southern Sector and to brief him on what the military component was doing about it and how the UN may be able to influence the Mayi Mayi group.

The FARDC in the Fizi area are fully committed to preparing for their future operations against the Mayi Mayi.

#### UN Forces in the area:

- The nearest unit is PAKBATT 2 (Pakistan battalion) in Swima. It has three company bases and one rapidly deployable company held at four hours’ Notice to Move
- The Force has unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) that can be deployed within 24 hours

#### Other organizations in the area:

- The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food programme (WFP) have personnel on the ground
- Doctors Without Borders (MSF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are known to operate in the area

### REQUIREMENTS



On the basis of the situation described, learners, working in assigned groups, should discuss and analyse the scenario(s) and prepare a 10-minute presentation to be delivered in plenary to the Force Chief of Staff and the Senior Child Protection Adviser (CPA).

The presentation should address:

- 1) All violations related to children’s rights, human rights, international humanitarian law in the situation
- 2) The legal basis and any policy guidelines on child protection that should inform the Force Commander’s decision
- 3) Whether there is imminent and/or physical threat. What would happen if no action is taken
- 4) The objective that the joint forces are trying to achieve and the options for achieving it
- 5) The specific action that can be taken to support possible victim(s) and mitigate the impact on the local community?
- 6) The mission components and external actors to be informed of the event, and why? Also, how to share information with the stakeholders concerned

### CONDUCT OF THE EXERCISE

The groups have 120 minutes (2 hours) to discuss the situation(s), formulate recommendations and prepare the presentation/report. Each group will have 10 minutes to present their solutions in plenary. The trainer(s) will review the written report and provide feedback to each group separately.

To support the formulation of recommendations by the groups, trainers/facilitators will play the following roles and be available to answer questions and provide other information:

- (1) Force Chief of Staff (FCOS)
- (2) Sector/Brigade HQ (for UN PAKBATT Commander)
- (3) Representatives from Doctors Without Borders (MSF) and/or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- (4) Senior Child Protection Adviser
- (5) Staff from the Human Rights Division

During this exercise, role players will engage in face-to-face interaction with learners. However, in real life, some of these actors would have to be contacted by radio or telephone.

