

# MODULE 3

## LEARNER’S HANDOUT

### Role of Military Child Protection Focal Points Offensive Operations

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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 offensive operations at the tactical level
- 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 Beni bisects the boundary between North Kivu and Ituri provinces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The area has intensive agricultural land, intermixed with jungle forestry. The area produces large amounts of coffee, is abundant in natural resources, and relies on mining. The central city is Beni with smaller villages link to the main road by dirt tracks. Many villages are separated from the outside community and have little to no government



interface. 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 the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Patriotic Resistance Front of Ituri (known by its French acronym, FRPI), dissident splinter groups, and non-aligned armed groups harass the local population. MONUSCO Force has reinforced its presence in the area, but has not yet been able to isolate and neutralize the ADF and the FRPI. Elements of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (known by their French acronym, FARDC) have been conducting joint operations with the MONUSCO Force.

Recently, the ADF has been building up forces in the area in response to MONUSCO Force’s targeting of its smuggling operations, thus severely impacting its financial resources. The ADF has launched several probing attacks on UN bases, resulting in significant UN casualties; it is known for using children – often armed with rocks and machetes – as suicide waves in its initial attack; it operates through several temporary camps which are highly mobile. To support its raids, ADF’s fighter camps are separate from the logistics camps. The logistics camps contain the majority of ADF’s women and children.

### SITUATION

You are the Force Child Protection Focal Point at Force HQ. You attended the morning briefing when the following flash report was presented by the U3 in the situation update brief:

*Last night, a UN Patrol base was attacked by the ADF and forced to withdraw to Beni with casualties. It is assessed that the ADF could attack Beni in the next 72 hours.*

The Force Commander has already been in a video teleconference with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Force Commander states that he/she has been authorized to order an immediate counter-attack to prevent the city of Beni from falling under ADF control. The Force Commander has therefore authorized immediate airstrikes and artillery fire on ADF positions.

The mission Senior Child Protection Adviser missed the morning briefing and speaks with you afterwards. The Senior CPA is concerned about the number of children in the armed group (as fighters, cooks and porters in the logistics camp) and stresses the need to minimize casualties during the offensive operations that are being planned.

As the Force Child Protection Focal Point, you take the Senior Child Protection Adviser’s concerns to the Force Chief of Staff, who says that the offensive operation must go ahead. The plan is to isolate the logistics camps, while striking the fighter camps. Mission staff are still in communication with the ADF leadership, trying to persuade them to cease their actions. The Force Chief of Staff wants you to:

- Focus primarily on what measures can be taken to reduce the impact on children and families in the armed group, both in advance of the attacks, but also once the attacks have begun, and after they have concluded the immediate operation

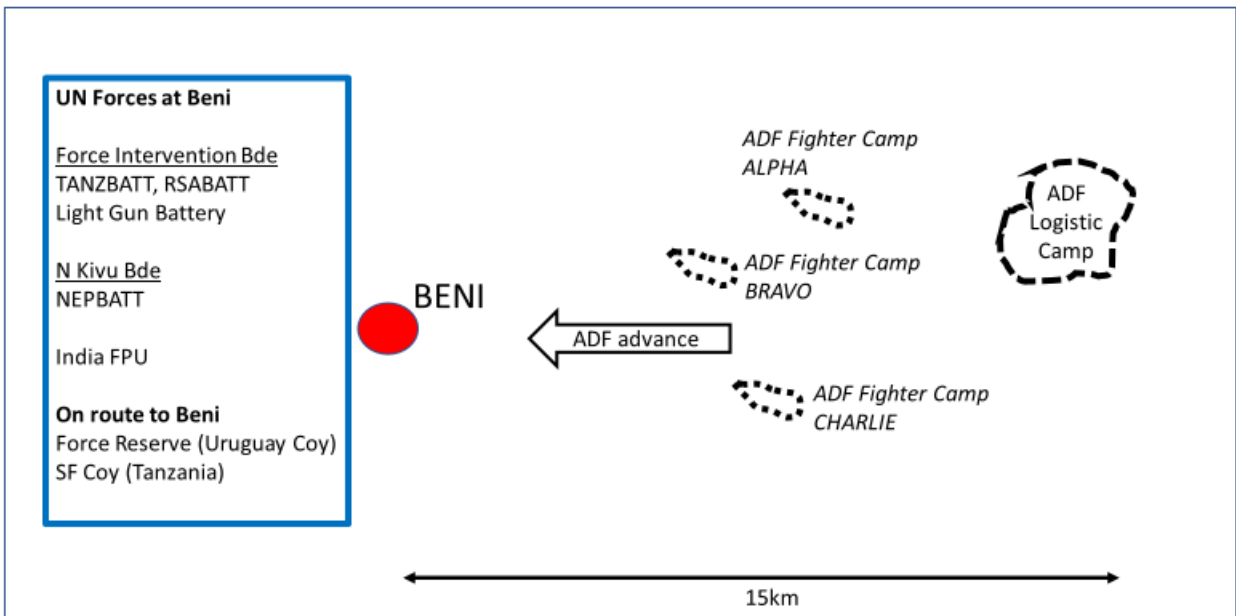


- Determine which control measures can be used for fires and maneuvers.

The plan is still in its early stages; however, the first strikes will occur in the next 48 hours.

**UN Forces in the area:**

- Sector Centre forces are being re-deployed to protect Beni
- The Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) has two light-role infantry battalions in the sector, TANZBATT and RSABATT. The Brigade Commander intends to use these units to provide flank protection and isolate the logistics camps, so as to enable the Force Reserve Company (Uruguay) and SF Company to neutralize the fighter camps
- MONUSCO Force has eight attack helicopters, which will be conducting four strike runs per day
- The FIB has a battery of light guns, which will be used to support the operation
- Force unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) lines 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 operating from Beni
- Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are known to operate in the area of Beni, from time to time



## 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.

The presentation should address:

- 1) The legal basis and any policy guidelines on child protection that should inform the Force Commander’s decisions
- 2) Strikes (indirect fire) against the ADF that are already taking place. What actions should the mission and the Force take to reduce their impact on women and children in ADF camps during this phase?
- 3) UN ground operations will start shortly. How can the impact on women and children in ADF camps be reduced?
- 4) How can the impact on women and children in surrounding villages be reduced?
- 5) As a result of the operation, the Force is likely to have to take charge of a significant number of children associated with the ADF – at least for an initial period of time. What actions should be taken in that regard?

## 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. An additional 10 minutes should be allocated at the end to highlight the actions that were actually taken by Force HQ in a similar situation.

