



Lesson 3.9

Media Relations and Use of Social Media



Content

- Peacekeeping and role of media
- Impacts of media reporting
- Public Information Office (PIO)
- UNMO responsibilities relating to the media
- Do's and Don'ts of media relations
- Managing an interview
- Sample media questions
- UN Guidelines on the use of Social Media



Learning Outcomes

- Explain the importance of media relations
- Describe the role of the Public Information Officer (PIO) in the force media strategy
- Explain how UNMO should behave during a media interview
- List the types of information that can be released to the media
- List the essential UN guidelines for the personnel on the use of social media

Introduction – Example of Interaction with Media



Video 1: UN Peacekeeping Challenges



[Link: UN peacekeeping operations need to evolve in light of new challenges](#)

Videos 2 and 3: Interaction with Media



[Link: Head of the observer team discusses meeting at Syrian foreign ministry](#)



[Link: HAMA, SYRIA: UN OBSERVERS on PATROL \(UNSMIS\)](#)

- What are the main challenges that UNPKO is facing today?
- Were the UN peacekeepers providing factual, accurate, and impartial information, or were they sharing personal opinions about the situation on the ground?
- In your opinion, how can the media impact the success of a UNPKO?



Media



- **Emotive topics**
 - Conflict
 - Violence
 - Natural disaster
- **Changed Media**
 - Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, X, others)
 - YouTube
 - Blogs, etc.
- **Journalists**
 - Experience /Unskilled
 - International, local or independent
 - Impartial, sympathetic, hostile, critical



Impacts of Media in UN Environment



- Real time reporting



- Quick dissemination of information

- Builds trust (positive behaviour)



- Undermines credibility (negative behaviour)



Dealing with Media



- Provide reliable and impartial Information



- Provide public information about peacekeeping efforts



- Understand impacts of peacekeepers' conduct, actions

Roles of Public Information Office (PIO)



- Develops an overall communication strategy
- Advises mission personnel



- Produces information
- Ensures information outreach through appropriate platforms



- Employs local journalists and other local staff
- Works with the MPIO

Core Points for UNMO Relating to News Media



- Support mandate
- UN Guidelines
- Talk to media, if cleared
- If appropriate, redirect to PIO or MPIO

UNMO Responsibilities in Media Relations



- Understand mission SOPs related to media relations
- Seek guidance from the Sector and Mission PIO
- Keep reports timely and accurate
- Inform PIO of media inquiries
- Obtain the name and organisation of reporter
- Be prepared to deal with media unexpectedly
- Refrain from making public announcements



Do's of Media Relations



- Factual, impartial, and precise
- Respectful
- Refer to men and women (gender-neutral language)
- Polite and professional
- Short sentences
- Refer to superiors and (M)PIO





Don'ts of Media Relations



- Divulge information of critical incidents
- Share personal opinions
- Speculate
- Attribute nothing as off the record
- Inform operational security
- Show favouritism
- Make promises



Managing an Interview



- Look at the reporter
- Listen carefully
- Politely decline questions you are unauthorised to answer
- Be aware of the background in video, camera shots
- Nothing is off the record

Questions about yourself – Generic Answers



What is your name?

— *My name is*

Where are you from?

— *I come from*

How old are you?

— *I am years old...*

How long have you been here?

— *I have been here months..*

Questions about Work – Generic Answers



What do you do?

I am here to work with the UN. My country is helping the UN to bring peace

What do you do here? Can you explain your duties?

Explain your duties

Do you think your presence is useful?

We are working to help to bring peace and stability to this country. I believe that is useful



Questions Seeking Opinion



Do you like being here?

I miss my friends and family, but I am glad I can help make things better here. It is a good experience for me, even if the conditions are difficult



How soon will we have peace?

I don't know the answer to that. It depends on many factors. Please ask the Mission's PIO



Fighting is still going on. What do you think will happen?

I can't answer that question. The Mission's PIO can assist you with that



Aren't you afraid things will get worse?

I'm an UNMO and a peacekeeper. I have been trained to do this job, and I'm confident that the mission is doing everything possible to advance the peace process



Tough Questions



Why are you favouring the xx faction by giving them arms?

The UN is impartial. We do not favour any side, nor do we provide arms



Your colleagues were seen with teenage prostitutes last night, and we have photos. Why are you taking advantage of our girls?

Our rules are very strict: we can't go out with prostitutes. If you have evidence, please take it to the Conduct and Discipline Office



What if you leave and the criminals return?

It is not up to us when we leave, but our purpose here is to help build the capacity of your local authorities to take responsibility for your security

UN Guidelines for Use of Social Media



UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT GUIDELINES FOR THE PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

July 2023

UN Personnel* have an important role to play as the face of the Organization, including on social media.

The UN respects the inviolability of all individuals' personal views and convictions, including their political and religious convictions, as well as their right to freedom of expression through their own personal social media accounts. Staff members as international civil servants are required to be mindful at all times that their conduct on social media must be consistent with the principles set out in the *United Nations Charter*, and must comply with the *United Nations Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service*, *United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules*, *Status, basic rights and duties of United Nations staff members*, and with the *Media Guidelines for United Nations Officials*. Non-Staff personnel must also display a high level of mindfulness and integrity when using social media and comply with the principles set out under the terms and conditions of their engagement as well as the *Administrative Instructions* that govern their modality of engagement such as *ST/AI/2020/10 for United Nations Internship Programme*, *ST/AI/2013/4 for Consultants and Individual Contractors*, *ST/AI/231/Rev.1 for Non-Reimbursable Loan Experts*, *ST/AI/1999/6 for Grats Personnel*, and the *MOU and Conditions of Service guidelines for UN Volunteers*.

These guidelines are a reminder of the value of fact, discretion, care and good judgment when using personal social media.

*for the purpose of this guidelines, personnel refers to all staff and non-staff categories

UN Personnel are encouraged to promote a better understanding of the objectives and work of the Organization through social media and to advocate for the ideals, principles, and values enshrined in the *United Nations Charter*, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and other decisions taken by the Organization. Any comments or statements posted by UN Personnel on personal social media should be consistent with the ideals of peace, respect for fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person, and the equal rights of men and women, respect for all cultures, and must not discriminate against any individual or group of individuals.

An individual's activity on personal social media, even when unrelated to official duties, may reflect on the Organization and may expose the United Nations to reputational risk. All staff as international civil servants and non-staff in line with their engagement with the UN Secretariat have a duty to be and appear to be both independent and impartial. As such, personnel must ensure that the expression of their personal views and convictions on social media does not adversely affect their official duties, reflect poorly on their status as UN personnel, or call into question their duty of loyalty, impartiality, and responsibility to the Organization.

- Think before posting
- Not exempt from impartiality
- Use of name and UN emblem is prohibited
- Be aware of privacy settings
- Don't use professional email ID
- Don't use a pseudonym or false name
- Be mindful when sharing and liking





Summary of Key Messages

- A positive or negative image of the UN can emerge through the media
- PIO supports the peace process by working with the media
- UNMO should adhere to UN guidelines for media relations when speaking to reporters about their work and responsibilities
- UNMO always speak “on record”
- UNMO must use social media responsibly



Learning Activity 1

Plenary Quiz (True or False)

1. UNMO responsibilities in Media Relations include, among others:

- Understand mission SOPs relating to media relations.
- Seek guidance from sector and mission PIO and MPIO regarding the strategy for UNMO to engage with the media at team sites, particularly following critical incidents.
- Be prepared with responses to unexpected media inquiries.

() True
() False

Learning Activity 1



2. The following "Don'ts" will guide UNMO when interacting with the media:

- Do not offer personal opinions about the UN activities.
- Do not disclose any information about the mission's security plans or procedures.
- Do not appear to support or favour one side over another.
- Do not make promises about what will or will not be done.

() True

() False

Learning Activity 1



3. Essentials for personal use of social media in a UN mission environment include:

- The use of the name and emblem of the UN to further personal or third-party interests is allowed during your deployment.
- You can use a pseudonym or false name to make comments or publish content related to the UN to protect you during your deployment.

() True

() False



Learning Activity 2

Group discussion

Total Time: 15 min

Preparation: 8 min

Discussion : 7 min

- How the news media contributes to the success of a UNPKO?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of UNMO in Media Relations?
- List 5 Do's and 5 Don'ts when engaging with the media

