Protection of civilians in peace operations

unitar

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Course goal and outline

Over the past decades, the world has witnessed armed conflicts marked by systematic violence and mass atrocities against civilians. In recent years, hundreds of political conflicts around the globe have affected the lives of countless people. Millions of individuals have lost your lives, while tens of millions more have been displaced from your homes and forced to seek refuge in neighboring countries. In war-torn societies, civilians – and in particular women and children – have suffered from gross violations of human rights: mass-killings, detention, torture and rape, forcible resettlements and a range of political, psychological and economic techniques of intimidation have become part of deliberate conflict strategies and systematically applied as methods of warfare.

In the framework of the United Nations, notable efforts have been put in place to improve the effectiveness of protection of civilians. The concept of protection of civilians first appeared in the UN Secretary-General's Report on the Situation of Africa of 13 April 1998 (S/1998/318 or A/52/871), in which Kofi Annan identified the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict as a "humanitarian imperative". As part of this evolution, the notion of protection of civilians has been progressively incorporated in mandates of peace operations. The first mission provided with explicit protection language in the mandate – the UN Peacekeeping Operation in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) – was authorized in 1999 – inter alia – "to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence". By 2012, the majority of the nearly 100,000 uniformed UN peacekeepers deployed worldwide operate under such mandate.

The goal of the course on Protection of Civilians in Peace Operations is to advance a better understanding of the conceptual framework for the protection of civilians in peace operations. Course objectives will be reached using an interactive and dynamic variety of teaching methodologies including working groups, targeted discussions and individual assignments.

At the end of the course you will be able to:

- Define protection of civilians in the context of UN peace operations;
- Identify the legal instruments that discipline the protection of civilians in UN peace operations;
- Illustrate UN institutional framework for protection of civilians in peace operations;
- Analyze challenges related to planning and implementation of protection activities;
- Assess specific issues linked to prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence.

The course is composed of five modules that will be covered over five weeks – 09 January 2013 to 12 February 2013.

Module	Week	Period
Overview of the protection of civilians	1	09 Jan. 2013 – 15 Jan. 2013
International legal dimension of the protection of civilians	2	16 Jan. 2013 – 22 Jan. 2013
Protection of civilians concept in the context of UN peace operations	3	23 Jan. 2013 – 29 Jan. 2013
Ensuring the protection of civilians	4	30 Jan. 2013 – 05 Feb. 2013
Prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence	5	06 Feb. 2013 – 12 Feb. 2013

The platform will be open from 07 January to 15 February 2013.

To complete the course, you should successfully complete the activities required throughout the modules. In the table that follows, you have an outline of the contents, learning objectives and activities for each module.

Content, learning objectives and activities

Module	Content	Learning Objectives	Activities
MODULE 1 | Overview of the protection of civilians	The module introduces the fundamentals of protection of civilians. It describes the range of risks and vulnerabilities faced by civilian populations in conflict and post conflict environments and it defines the objectives of protection activities in the framework of UN peacekeeping operations. The module also distinguishes the different actors involved in protection activities, and discusses how failure to protect civilians undermines field mission credibility.	• Describe the range of risks and vulnerabilities faced by civilian populations on the ground; • Define the objectives of protection activities in the framework of UN peacekeeping operations; • Distinguish the different actors involved in protection activities that operate alongside a peacekeeping operation; • Explain how failures to protect civilians harm mission credibility and credibility of the UN.	• **Understanding protection** **Skills / Learning objective**: To allow you to reflect on the broad range of threats and vulnerabilities faced by civilian populations in conflict and post-conflict situations. *[Working groups]** • **Protection actors** **Skills / Learning objective**: To allow you to reflect on the multiplicity of actors involved in protecting civilians on the ground and their mandate (including the mandate of UN peacekeeping operations). *[Discussion forum]* • **The importance of protection of civilians** **Skills / Learning objective**: To allow you to reflect on the importance of protection of civilians in peacekeeping operations. *[Discussion forum]*
MODULE 2 | International legal dimension of the protection of civilians	The module discusses the legal dimension of protection of civilians and its implications for field missions and individual peacekeepers – in particular with regard to the use of force. The module illustrates the critical language embodied in mission's mandates envisaging the protection of civilians and analyzes how it is translated on the ground.	• Identify the specific bodies of international law that constitute the normative framework of peace operations; • Translate critical language contained in mission's mandates envisaging protection of civilians; • Differentiate between other relevant instruments that guide the work and priorities of peacekeepers and the protection of civilians.	• **Legal dimension of the protection of civilians** **Skills / Learning objective**: To allow you to compare the specific instruments of international law governing the protection of civilians and your applicability in peacekeeping operations. *[Journal entry]** • **Other relevant legal instruments** **Skills / Learning objective**: To allow you to reflect on the specific documents that set the priorities of peacekeepers and the protection of civilians. *[Discussion forum]*

Module	Content	Learning Objectives	Activities
MODULE 3 | Protection of civilians concept in the context of UN peace operations	The module illustrates the *UN Operational Concept on Protection of Civilians*, detailing its tiers, phases and corresponding protection activities in the framework of a UN peace operation. It also analyzes key challenges associated with the protection of civilians in complex environments.	• Illustrate the *UN Operational Concept on Protection of Civilians*; • Analyze key challenges associated with the protection of civilians in complex environments.	• **The *UN Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping Operations* – part one** **Skills / Learning objective:** To allow you to translate the mandate of a peacekeeping operation into specific activities to be carried out on the ground. *[Working groups]** • **The *UN Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping Operations* – part two** **Skills / Learning objective:** To allow you to organize protection activities according to specific phases. *[Working groups]** • **The challenges in the implementation of protection activities** **Skills / Learning objective:** To allow you to reflect on the challenges related to the implementation of protection activities on the ground. *[Discussion forum]*
MODULE 4 | Ensuring the protection of civilians	The module focuses on operational planning and examines its major steps. In particular, it discusses how to prioritize risks and allocate resources and assesses the importance of expectation management and information gathering and sharing.	• Illustrate operational planning; • Analyze major challenges related to prioritization of risks and allocation of resources; • Assess the importance of expectation management and modalities for information sharing and gathering.	• **Operational level planning** **Skills / Learning objective**: To allow you to practice operational planning in a given situation. *[Working groups]** • **Expectations management and information sharing** **Skills / Learning objective**: To allow you to reflect on the measures that the mission should put in place to manage expectations and share information with relevant stakeholders. *[Discussion forum]*

Module	Content	Learning Objectives	Activities
MODULE 5 | Prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence	The module focuses on prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence. It first defines sexual violence, exploitation and abuse and analyses specific modalities for protection. In a second step, the module discusses prevention and awareness raising mechanisms, to finally discuss the special duty of peacekeepers, UN police forces and other UN staff deployed in a peacekeeping operation to prevent and report all forms of sexual violence, exploitation or abuse.	• Define sexual violence, exploitation and abuse; • Discuss the incidence of sexual violence in armed conflicts; • Illustrate specific modalities for protection from sexual violence, exploitation and abuses; • Outline the special duty of peacekeepers in preventing and protecting civilians from sexual violence, exploitation and abuse.	• **Sexual violence, exploitation and abuse** **Skills / Learning objective**: To allow you to distinguish among the terms sexual violence, exploitation and abuse. *[Discussion forum]* • **Sexual violence and gender relations** **Skills / Learning objective:** To allow you to distinguish among the terms sex and gender and to recognize the linkages between sexual violence and gender roles in a society. *[Journal entry & Discussion forum]* • **Sexual violence in armed conflicts** **Skills / Learning objective**: Allow you to reflect on possible measures (preventive, pre-emptive and responsive) to address the phenomenon of sexual violence in armed conflicts. *[Working groups]** • **"Zero Tolerance" Policy on sexual violence, exploitation and abuse** **Skills / Learning objective**: Allow you to reflect on the possible consequences – at the individual and mission level – of the engagement of peacekeepers (military, civilian and police officers) in sexual exploitation, violence and abuse. *[Discussion forums]*

(*) Graded activities.

Each module has five components:

- **What are we talking about?** – It introduces the topic of the module through a short video.

- **Lesson** – It is the core mandatory learning component. The content of the lessons are summarized through "**highlights**", i.e. re-caps of the most important information of each module.

- **Activities** – The activities enable you to practice and apply the concepts learned in the lessons. The activities progressively build on each other; therefore it is highly recommended that you complete them in each module. Activities comprise working groups, discussion forums and journal entries.

- **Ask & Talk** – It provides you with a space where to make queries, clarify doubts, reflect on specific issues or share ideas/experiences with other participants. The Ask & Talk is conducted in the form of a discussion forum.

- **Module evaluation** – This is where we invite you to tell us your opinion about each module. We invite you to complete the questionnaire at the end of each module, providing us with valuable feedback on the learning experience. Opinions and inputs will help UNITAR improve the quality of the course.

The course also comprises:

- **Pre-post course learning assessments** – They comprise ten questions each, covering fundamental issues related to the protection of civilians in peace operations. They reflect the specific objectives set for the course. The pre-post learning assessments aim at:

    o *Gathering pre-requisite information* to ensure you have the background required for the course;
    o C*omparing knowledge and skills* after the learning event to that prior to the learning event;
    o E*stablishing* a *baseline measurement* of your knowledge in order to quantify change at the end of the learning period.

    Please note that the scores in the pre-post course learning assessments do not count for the final grade. Pre-post learning assessments are intended as a resource – *for you and us* – to assess the progresses made at the end of the course.

- **Expert corner** – It is a space that allows you to interact directly, in a synchronous mode, with an expert in the field of protection of civilians.

- **Resources** – They include a set of useful materials/links that you can refer to at any point in the course (cybrary). These resources can further improve your understanding of protection of civilians and enhance your contributions to discussion forums, exercises and individual assignments. Resources include also a glossary of terms and a glossary of acronyms.

Learning material

Lessons and **activities** are the core learning components in the course. They guide you so as to achieve the course's learning objectives. Supporting materials are also available to assist your learning process.

Lessons

Lessons are the core mandatory learning component and provide the required knowledge to complete the activities. The lessons will help you to complete the course activities. Lessons are available in pdf format.

A summary of the core messages is available in the form of **highlights**. Highlights focus on key points. All highlights in the course are flash-based. Each highlight may have an average of between 10 and 15 slides. You may interrupt the reading at any point. The system keeps track of the position and – upon return – it automatically re-directs you to the point where you previously stopped.

Activities

The **activities** provide you with the opportunity to practice and apply the concepts learned in the lessons. The course features two types of activities:

- **Core activities** – They are linked to a specific scenario and are run through working groups, hosted on GoogleDocs.
- **Additional activities** – They comprise discussion forums and journal entries.

Core activities are assessed and graded, whereby additional activities are assessed (i.e. you will receive detailed feedbacks by the facilitator) but are not graded (i.e. you will not receive a specific mark for them). Nevertheless, additional activities may be considered as grade recovery option (please refer to the assessment guide for more information on the grade recovery option).

- **Working groups**

Working groups are the core learning activities. In each module, you are requested to work in groups on a specific assignment that refers to a real-life situation/scenario. The situations are immersive and you are requested to act according to a specific role assigned to you by the facilitator.

Through working groups, you have the opportunity to perform a certain number of tasks related to the protection of civilians in peace operations. To do so, you are assisted with supporting materials, such as videos, working documents and samples.

Working groups are hosted on GoogleDocs. Specific information on how to access GoogleDocs will be provided by the course facilitator.

- **Discussion forums**

The discussion forums are an integral part of the activities in all of the modules. By participating in these forums, you gain a unique opportunity to enhance your knowledge of the specific subjects discussed and to share views and ideas with other course participants.

As a rule, every module also has also a discussion forum called **Ask & Talk**, which acts as a support center where you can direct queries about course content, voice doubts on how to go about something or simply share ideas/experiences.

For general information on using the discussion forums, refer to the User's Guide.

Note on conditions for utilization of discussion boards

(1) While accessing mailing lists, discussion boards, or other messages or communication facilities (collectively, "Forums"), participants agree to use the Forums only to send and receive messages and materials that are proper and related to the particular Forum. By way of example and not as a limitation, participants agree that when using the Forums, he or she shall not do any of the following:

a. Defame, discriminate, abuse, harass, stalk, threaten or otherwise violate the legal rights (such as rights of privacy and publicity) of others;

b. Publish, post, distribute or disseminate any defamatory, infringing, obscene, indecent or unlawful material or information;

c. Upload or attach files that contain software or other material protected by intellectual property laws (or by rights of privacy and publicity) unless the User owns or controls the rights thereto or has received all consents thereto as may be required by law;

d. Upload or attach files that contain viruses, corrupted files or any other similar software or programs that may damage the operation of another's computer;

e. Delete any author attributions, legal notices or proprietary designations or labels in any file that is uploaded;

f. Falsify the origin or source of software or other material contained in a file that is uploaded;

g. Advertise or offer to sell any goods or services, or conduct or forward surveys, contests or chain letters, or download any file posted by another user of a Forum that the User knows, or should reasonably know, cannot be legally distributed in such manner.

(2) Participants acknowledge that all Forums and discussion groups are public and not private communications. Furthermore, Users acknowledge that chats, postings, conferences, e-mails and other communications made by other Users are not endorsed by UNITAR or the United Nations, and that such communications shall not be considered to have been reviewed, screened or approved by UNITAR or the United Nations.

- **Journal entry**

In module two and five, you are requested to create an online journal entry where you are asked to reflect on a specific topic. Journal entries are unique for each participant; they can only be seen by the author and the facilitator. Details and instruction for preparing them, including guidance on the main issues to consider, are provided in the Module Guides.

Journal entries are reviewed by the facilitator who will provide you with detailed feedbacks. You should refer to the User Guide for general information on how to create the journal entry and how to operate and update it.

Supporting material

Besides the learning material described above, you have at your disposal a **cybrary** and **two glossaries**.

Cybrary

The cybrary (cyber library) contains resources that help you deepen your knowledge on one or more of the topics covered in the course. Documents from the cybrary can be read online or saved onto a hard disk.

Glossaries

You can access two glossaries: the glossary of terms and the glossary of acronyms. The glossary of terms provides definitions of relevant course-related terms. The glossary of acronyms details the meaning of the acronyms mentioned throughout the course.

Disclaimer Note

The Learning Materials available on this course may contain links and references to third-party web sites. The linked web sites are not under the control of UNITAR or the United Nations. Neither UNITAR nor the United Nations are responsible for the content of any linked web site or any link contained in a linked web site. UNITAR provides these links only as a convenience, and the inclusion of a link or reference does not imply the endorsement of the linked web site by UNITAR or the United Nations.

Study plan

The course has been designed in a way to give you flexibility to plan your learning progress. The lessons, activities and additional resources of all modules can be accessed throughout the course. Nevertheless, as this is a facilitated course, there are sessions where the progress needs to be linear to allow support by the facilitator and adequate coordination among participants.

Activities that require the facilitator's support or coordination among participants, such as working groups and discussion forums will be available two days prior to the starting date of the module.

For reference purposes, the discussions will remain available after the closing date. Assessment scores can be consulted throughout the course. You are invited to check the course calendar below for an overview of the course's organization.

Pre-course				
				week one: 09 Jan. – 15 Jan.
		Open	**Close**	**Estimated time**
Activities	Review of course documentation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*1 hour*
	Familiarization with the platform	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*30 minutes*
	Welcome! Introduce yourself – discussion forum	07 Jan.	09 Jan.	*30 minutes*
	Technology questionnaire	07 Jan.	09 Jan.	*30 minutes*
	Pre-course learning assessment	07 Jan.	09 Jan.	*30 minutes*
Total duration				*3 hours*

Module one	Overview of the protection of civilians			
				week one: 09 Jan. – 15 Jan.
		Open	**Close**	**Estimated time**
	What are we talking about?	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Lesson	Overview of the protection of civilians	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*2 hours*
Activities	Review of course documentation and/or additional documentation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*1 hour*
	Understanding protection	07 Jan.	15 Jan.	*4 hours*
	Protection actors	07 Jan.	15 Jan.	*1 hour*
	The importance of protection of civilians	07 Jan.	15 Jan.	*1 hour*
	Ask & Talk	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*30 minutes*
Evaluation	Module evaluation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Total duration of the module				*10 hours*

Module two	International legal dimension of the protection of civilians			
				week two: 16 Jan. – 22 Jan.
		Open	**Close**	**Estimated time**
	What are we talking about?	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Lesson	International legal dimension of the protection of civilians	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*2 hours*
Activities	Review of course documentation and/or additional documentation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*1 hour*

	Legal dimension of the protection of civilians	14 Jan.	22 Jan.	*2 hours*
	Other relevant legal instruments	14 Jan.	22 Jan.	*2 hour*
	Ask & Talk	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*30 minutes*
Evaluation	Module evaluation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Total duration of the module				*8 hours*

Module three | Protection of civilians concept in the context of UN peace operations				
				week three: 23 Jan. – 29 Jan.
		Open	**Close**	**Estimated time**
	What are we talking about?	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Lesson	Protection of civilians concept in the framework of UN peacekeeping operations	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*2 hours*
Activities	Review of course documentation and/or additional documentation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*1 hour*
	The *UN Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians* – part one	21 Jan.	29 Jan.	*4 hours*
	The *UN Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians* – part two	21 Jan.	29 Jan.	*2 hour*
	The challenges in the implementation of protection activities	21 Jan.	29 Jan.	*2 hour*
	Ask & Talk	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*30 minutes*
Evaluation	Module evaluation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Total duration of the module				*12 hours*

Module four | Ensuring the protection of civilians				
				week four: 30 Jan. – 05 Feb.
		Open	**Close**	**Estimated time**
	What are we talking about?	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Lesson	Ensuring the protection of civilians	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*2 hours*
Activities	Review of course documentation and/or additional documentation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*1 hour*
	Operational level planning	28 Jan.	05 Feb.	*4 hours*
	Expectations management and information sharing	28 Jan.	05 Feb.	*2 hour*
	Ask & Talk	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*30 minutes*
Evaluation	Module evaluation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Total duration of the module				*10 hours*

Module five | Prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence				
				week five: 06 Feb. – 12Feb.
		Open	**Close**	**Estimated time**
	What are we talking about?	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Lesson	Prevention and response of conflict-related sexual violence	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*2 hours*
Activities	Review of course documentation and/or additional documentation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*1 hour*
	Sexual violence, exploitation and abuse	04 Feb.	12 Feb.	*1 hour*

	Sexual violence and gender relations	04 Feb.	12 Feb.	*2 hours*
	Sexual violence in armed conflicts	04 Feb.	12 Feb.	*2 hours*
	"Zero tolerance policy" on sexual exploitation, violence and abuse	04 Feb.	12 Feb.	*1 hour*
	Ask & Talk	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*30 minutes*
Evaluation	Module evaluation	07 Jan.	15 Feb.	*15 minutes*
Total duration of the module				*10 hours*

Post-course				
				week five: 06 Feb. – 1 2Feb.
		Open	**Close**	**Estimated time**
Activities	Post-course learning assessment	04 Feb.	15 Feb.	*30 minutes*
Evaluation	Final evaluation	04 Feb.	15 Feb.	*30 minutes*
Total duration of the module				*1 hour*

Course facilitator

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Ms. Claudia Croci is Programme Officer at the Peacekeeping Training Programme, UNITAR. She is responsible – among other things – for the design and organization of training courses in the field of peace and security, both in face-to-face and e-learning formats.

Ms. Croci has a solid experience in the field of training. She has worked with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – Protection of Civilians Section, in the design and implementation of training courses and in the development of research projects on integrated mission planning and civil-military coordination. Before joining the UN, Ms. Croci has worked with the International Training Center for Conflict Management, designing, organizing, and facilitating training courses in the field of peace and security, mainly for civilian and military personnel.

Besides the United Nations, Ms. Croci has collaborated with several intergovernmental and regional organizations, most notably the African Union, OSCE and NATO.

Ms. Croci holds a Ph.D. in Human Rights, Politics and Sustainability and an MA in Human Rights and Conflict Management.

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Course assistant

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Technical support

You can direct all your queries related to technical issues to: ptp@unitar.org
Messages will be taken into consideration and addressed as soon as possible.

The working hours of the technical support team are:
Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm (GMT +1).

Technical requirements

Minimum hardware and software requirements:

- **Platform**: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or superior; MacOS 9 or MacOS X.
- **Hardware**: 64 MB of RAM, 1 GB of free disk space.
- **Software**:
    - Adobe Acrobat Reader
      (download for free at http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html).
    - Adobe Flash Player (download for free at http:/get.adobe.com/flashplayer)
    - Microsoft Office (Windows or Apple version) or Open Office
      (download for free at http://www.openoffice.org)
- **Browser**: Internet Explorer 8
  (download for free at http://www.microsoft.com/windows/internetexplorer/worldwide-sites.aspx); works better with Firefox 3.6 or higher (download for free at http://www.mozilla-europe.org/en/firefox). Note JavaScript & Cookies must be enabled.
- **Modem**: 56 K