Report Writing
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Preparatory Notes to Instructor

Background

In order to carry out its mandate, UN Police need to report on every activity of importance. UN Police must ensure that the information provided be accurate and objective. Reporting is a challenging skill in order to record information that helps in decision making.

In the police context, report writing is the main way for communicating, retrieving information and ensuring accountability for observations and/or actions. A report is a written account of incidents and actions, as they relate to a specific event.

It is important to have UN standards which guide police officers when writing reports in UN peacekeeping operations.

Aim

To provide participants with:

- the knowledge of basic report writing standards for United Nations peacekeeping operations
- guidelines on effective report writing which UN Police should follow

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the Report Writing Module, participants will be able to:

1. Use the basic report writing standards for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

2. Understand the importance of accurate and timely reports and be able to apply their knowledge.

3. Identify and apply essential elements of report writing

4. Explain the importance and meaning of the "5Ws and How"

5. State the basic writing guidelines (grammar, abbreviations, dates, names of places and numbers)

6. Demonstrate the ability to complete and submit accurate and timely reports

Training Sequence

It is recommended that this module is given in the early stage of the specialized section of a pre-deployment training for police and participants be tasked with writing reports on different topics throughout the training.

Duration

Minimum Session Time	Lecture/Presentation	Questions/Assessment	Session Activities
70 minutes	20 min	15 min.	35 min. activity
Additional Options	**Mission Specific**	**Optional Film**	**Optional Activity**
75 minutes	as needed		75 min. activity

Methodology

This module contains a variety of suggested learning activities to keep adult learners engaged. The facilitation team should use as many of the learning activities as time allows and keep them tailored to the target audience. Participants should be fully involved in the learning process through practical exercises, brainstorming sessions, discussion of case studies, working in small groups on specific tasks, etc.

The instructor should inform participants of the content, format and timing. Knowing what to expect, participants can improve their ability to focus on the subject and benefit from the session.

- Introduction
- Basic Guidelines
- Principles and Characteristics
- Examples of Reports
- Scenarios and exercise
- Summary
- Assessment

*   Please Note: It is up to the learning institution to decide whether the learning assessment questions are used informally in a group question and answer session, or if they are provided to the participants as a written quiz. In either case, it is recommended that the correct answers are provided at the end of the assessment in order to ensure participants are clear on the key messages.

Instructors are encouraged to add examples and mission-specific information related to the specific deployment of participants, if known.

Instructor Profile

This module is best presented by an instructor who has experience in peacekeeping operations and report writing, who could share his/her experience with the group.

Instructor Preparations

Required Readings

- United Nations Police Handbook, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations

- United Nations Civilian Police: Restoring Civil Order Following Hostilities, UNITAR POCI

- UN Correspondence Manual: A guide to drafting, processing and dispatch of official United Nations Communications, United Nations, New York, 2000

General Preparations

Equipment:

1. Computer and PowerPoint slides
2. Projector and Screen
3. Flip Charts

Materials:

1. Copies of handouts

Symbols Legend

☞   Note to the Instructor (Some background information for consideration)

🗨   Speaking Points (The main points to cover on the topic. Ideally the speaking points are presented in the instructor's own words versus being read to participants)

🏳   Mission Specific (A point where the session will benefit from mission specific information)

e.g   Example (Stories that illustrate a point or key message)

?   Sample questions (A list of potential questions to pose to participants)

🗒   Handout (Indicates a handout is provided to participants at this point)

🎥   Film (A film that is recommended as a core part of the training or an option)

🏋   Core Learning Activity (An activity that is strongly recommended for inclusion)

+🏋   Optional Learning Activity (An activity that can be used if there is time and it is appropriate for the participant group. Guidelines for these activities are provided at the end of the unit, section or part – as indicated in the text)

🔑   Key summary points (Key messages that are worth repeating at the end of the session. Alternatively, the instructor can ask participants what are the main messages they are taking from the session. Instructors can then fill in any points that have been missed.)

Session Notes

Report Writing	**Slide 1**
In the police context, report writing is the main way for: • communicating • retrieving information • ensuring accountability for observations and/or actions.	

☞ ***Note to Instructor:*** *Give the participants a brief explanation why they should pay special attention to this module. Refer to: Background in the Preparatory Notes to the Instructor.*

Aim	**Slide 2**
To provide participants with: • the knowledge of basic report writing standards for United Nations peacekeeping operations • guidelines on effective report writing which UN Police should follow	

Learning Outcome	**Slide 3**
On completion of this module, participants will be able to: • Use the basic report writing standards for United Nations peacekeeping operations. • Understand the importance of accurate and timely reports and be able to apply their knowledge. • Identify and apply essential elements of report writing • Explain the importance and meaning of the "5Ws and How" • State the basic writing guidelines (grammar, abbreviations, dates, names of places and numbers) • Demonstrate the ability to complete and submit accurate and timely reports	

Structure of the Presentation	Slide 4
• Introduction • Basic Guidelines • Principles • Examples of Reports • Scenarios and exercise • Assessment	

Introduction	Slide 5
Report writing is a means of communication through which events or incidents are made known and/or recorded. It is crucial for information sharing, decision-making and monitoring progress of activities.	

Reporting is the key to sharing information and to decision-making by the officials concerned. Issues related to police in peacekeeping are at times of such a sensitive nature that they have a direct impact on decision-making. Therefore, immediate and effective communication of information is essential for informed decision-making

Examples of UN Police reports	Slide 6
• Patrol Report • Situation Report • Incident Report • Flash Report • …. And many more	

☞ *Note to Instructor: The instructor must provide currently relevant mission reports as examples to this slide.*

- Patrol Report
- Situation Report
- Incident Report
- Flash Report

- …. And many more (i.e. Internal-Memo, Continuation Sheet, Statement, Arrest Certificate)

💬 Although there are many different kinds of reports for UN Police the principles of report writing are similar. The following basic guidelines should be followed in order to achieve the desired outcome of a report.

Basic Guidelines	**Slide 7**
Contents and style of report: • Personal Data • Report Data (5 Ws and H) • Writing Principles (accurate, brief, complete, clear, objective and well formatted) • Writing Style (abbreviations, dates, time, names of places and numbers)	

Learning Activity: Drafting a Report

The purpose of this group discussion activity is to raise participants' awareness of what kind of information should be included in a report.

Learning Activity Time Required:

5 minutes	for activity introduction and instructions
15 minutes	for small groups discussions
15 minutes	for small group reports in plenary*
Total time: **35 minutes**	*total time dependent number of groups

☞ **Activity Guidelines:**

1. Divide the participants into small groups.

2. Ask the groups to brainstorm what kind of information a report must include: personal data (personal information on all persons involved) and report data.

3. Ask participants to present their results in the plenary (the large group).

4. Complete the activity by complementing their findings with the information provided in the expected outcomes to ensure that participants have a clear understanding of everything that should be included.

☞ ***Note to Instructor:*** *You may want to include the following points as a handout or write them up on flipcharts.*

☞ **Expected Outcome:**

The contents of a report must include Personal Data and Report Data.

1. Personal data

Personal Data are the identification of all persons involved. This includes the following information:

- Name of police officer and CP number
- Surname / Last Name / Family Name (also Maiden Name)
- First Name / Christian Name / Forename / Given Name
- Date and Place of Birth (DOB)
- Status: single–married–divorced–widowed–separated
- Nationality / Ethnicity / Country / Citizenship
- ID Card (Type and Number)
- Residence / Address / Mailing Address
- Grid reference
- Telephone / Mobile Phone
- Occupation / Profession / Job / Rank
- Father's name (Surname and First name)
- Mother's name
- Address (Street, Village, Town, Country)

2. Report Data

The Report Data are the summary of all important facts and details. There are some guiding questions which should be answered in a report. The following list is not all-inclusive.

- WHEN:

   When did you receive the information (date and time)?

   When did the incident happen?

   When did you contact the involved parties?

   When did you arrive on the scene?

- WHERE:

   Where did the incident occur (location – grid reference)?

- WHO:

  Who called the police?

  Whom did you speak to?

  Who said what?

  Who did what?

  Who committed the crime/witnesses?

- WHAT:

  What happened (incident, accident, crime) ?

  What role did each person play?

  What action did the police take?

  What crime (if any) was committed?

- WHY:

  Why did the police take the action they did?

  Why did people take particular actions they did?

  Why did the incident / crime occur?

- HOW:

  How did the incident/crime occur?

Writing Principles	**Slide 8**
- Accurate - Brief - Complete - Clear - Objective - Well formatted	

💬 Police officers are faced with a variety of events and incidents. The contents of a report must reflect the specific event or incident. There should be no confusion or doubt on the part of the reader about the contents of the report. If the information in the report is not clear, it is of little use. There are six principles associated with a good report. A good report must be accurate, brief, complete, clear, objective and well formatted.

💬 Principles of a police report:

1. Accurate

   Use clear, specific and precise language. Make sure the facts are clear to you before you describe them in a report. Do not confuse facts with hearsay or opinions.

2. Brief

   A report must be short and concise, but long enough to cover all the essentials. Avoid irrelevant information. Add details only when it is necessary. A brief and well-written report is more effective than a long extended report.

3. Complete

   Partial facts can create a wrong picture. A good report should include all the relevant facts in order to lead to a logical conclusion.

4. Clear

   Make it simple and avoid ambiguity in the report in order to convey the intended message. All reports should be worded carefully so that the information is clear to the reader. Facts should be presented in a chronological order.

5. Objective

   Keep the report objective and unbiased by stating the facts as they are without adding personal opinions. Report all facts, even if they are advantageous to the defendant.

6. Well formatted

   The format of a report is relatively simple. Begin with the personal data, then the report data and finally the conclusion. The information in the report has to be in a chronological order so that they reflect the sequence of the events/incidents.

Basic Writing Rules	**Slide 9**
Basic rules in regard to: • Abbreviations • Format • Dates and Times • Names and Places • Numbers • Spelling	

💬 Basic writing rules in regards to the bullet points listed on the slide are:

1. Abbreviations:

   Abbreviations or acronyms must be spelled out the first time they are used in a document. E.g. Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

2. Format:

   Reports may carry a header and footer with a UN Classification.

   Maps or diagrams used to illustrate a particular point are to be included in the report, if technical means for the layout and the communication of the report are available.

3. Dates and Times:

   Dates should always be complete beginning with the day followed by the month and end with year, e.g. 26 April 2008, (month should be written in words to avoid misunderstanding). For time, use the 24 hrs clock system e.g. 07:45 hrs / 23:40 hrs.

4. Names and Places:

   When using a person's title, such as Mr. or Ms. Inspector Kasumo, the title and names must be capitalised. The same applies for the names of organizations, for example, the Elassasonian Liberation Front (ELF).

   The names of places and regions should be typed in capital letters, e.g. BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA, TUSLA, LIBERIA, MONROVIA, etc.

5. Numbers:

   The numbers from one to nine are usually spelled out in full, e.g. seven. Those above 10 are usually expressed as figures, e.g. 42. Avoid having a number which is expressed as a figure as the first word in a sentence. Example: Twelve soldiers were observed.

6. Spelling:

   Be aware of the fact that UN uses International English "The Concise Oxford English Dictionary", eleventh edition accessible at: *http://157.150.189.51/translation/editorial/ed-guidelines/style/spelling.htm.*

Summary of Key Messages	Slide 10
Main elements of a report: Personal data and Report Data (5 Ws and How) **UN reports (examples):** Patrol Report, Situation Report, Incident Report, Flash Report **Writing principles:** Accurate, brief, complete, clear, objective, well formatted	

☞ ***Note to Instructor:*** *If time allows divide class in groups and hand out the exercises in the Optional Learning Activity. See the last pages of the module.*

Learning Outcome Assessment

It is up to the learning institution to decide whether the learning assessment questions are used informally in a group question and answer session, or if they are provided to the participants as a written quiz. In either case, it is recommended that the correct answers are provided at the end of the assessment in order to ensure participants are clear on the key messages.

At the end of the entire unit and/or the conclusion of the STMs instructors may want to choose some of the following questions for review.

Questions

1. What are the main elements of a report?
2. What are the four examples of UN reports?
3. What are the writing principles?

☞ Expected Outcome

1. The main elements of a report are:

    Personal data (personal information on all persons involved)

    - Name of police officer and CP number
    - Surname / Last Name / Family Name (also Maiden Name)
    - First Name / Christian Name / Forename / Given Name
    - Date and Place of Birth (DOB)
    - Status: single–married–divorced–widowed–separated
    - Nationality / Ethnicity / Country / Citizenship
    - ID Card (Type and Number)
    - Residence / Address / Mailing Address
    - Grid reference
    - Telephone / Mobile Phone
    - Occupation / Profession / Job / Rank
    - Father's name (Surname and first name)
    - Mother's name
    - Address (Street, Village, Town, Country)

Report data

The report data is the summary of all important facts and details. The 5Ws (where, why, when, what, who) and the how should be used as guiding questions which should be answered in a report.

2. The four examples of UN reports are:

- Patrol Report

- Situation Report

- Incident Report

- Flash Report

3. The writing principles are:

- Accurate

- Brief

- Complete

- Clear

- Objective

- Well formatted

Optional Learning Activity: Correcting Reports

The purpose of this group discussion activity is for the participants to identify errors in three reports and correct them. The three exercises are: Armed robbery of UN Police, Situation Report and Refugee Camp.

Optional Learning Activity Time Required:

10 minutes	for activity introduction and instructions
15 minutes	for work small groups discussions: exercise 1
15 minutes	for work small groups discussions: exercise 2
15 minutes	for work small groups discussions: exercise 3*
20 minutes	debrief in the large group*
Total time: **75 minutes**	*total time dependent number of groups

☞ **Activity Guidelines:**

1. For Exercise 1, participants are asked to compare the two reports and list the differences.

2. For Exercise 2, participants are asked to write a proper report including all missing pieces of information on this incident.

3. For Exercise 3, participants are asked to list the missing pieces of information from this report.

Exercise 1: Armed robbery of UN Police officers

Report 1:

On the 26/04/08 in Koloni, Carana, two UN Police were coming from their workstation to their residence. As they approached their house, two armed men in green attires stopped them and ordered them to give them all the money they had in their pocket. The UN Police did as they were ordered but seemingly the money was not good enough for the armed men who punched and kicked the UN Police, stripped them naked and took away all their uniform and identification documents.

Report 2: Armed robbery of UN Police officers

At 23:30 hrs Saturday 26 April 2008, in KOLONI district CARANA, UN Police SCHMIDT (CP 8888) and BROWN (CP 9999) were traveling to their home address from KOLONI East police station.

When they were approximately 200 meters south of the residence they were approached by two males. The first was described as being between 20 and 25 years of age, 175 centimeters tall, of medium build with dark short curly hair and a moustache. He was wearing dark clothing. The second male was of a similar age and height, but was of stocky build and had a shaven head. The second male was wearing green camouflaged trousers and a black t-shirt. Both males were carrying large bush knives.

When the two males approached the UN Police, they demanded money and menaced the UN Police with the knives. Both UN Police handed over the money they had in their possession (SCHMIDT $145.00 and BROWN $35.00).

The two offenders then demanded the UN Police to kneel on the ground, which they did. Both UN Police were then assaulted by the offenders, who repeatedly punched and kicked them. Both victims were lying on the ground after suffering injuries from the attack. UN Police SCHMIDT received facial lacerations and a broken left forearm. UN Police BROWN also received facial lacerations and a broken nose.

Both offenders have then forced the victims to remove all their clothing and left the scene with the victims' money and clothing.

The two UN Police victims have made it to their residence and contacted UN Police headquarters and an ambulance was dispatched. Both victims were taken to CARANA Hospital and treated for their injuries. Both UN Police were later discharged from Hospital and are recovering at their residence.

The victims have been visited by the UN Police Commissioner who is satisfied with their recovery.

UN Police National Investigations have conducted an exhaustive enquiry, but as yet the offenders remain at large. Investigations are ongoing.

🗒️ Exercise 2: Incidents Disturbance

1500HRS UN Police attend a location at Ere where CDF and civilians were gathering at a house where a suspected Militia man was staying. The situation was calmed / resolved with removal of the man one Paul OGUVA".

☞ Expected Outcome:

- Correct title for report
- Correct date
- Location/Grid Reference

- Attending UN Police names/numbers
- Incident description (use the guiding questions 5 Ws and How)
- First use of abbreviation in a report (spell out in full)
- Capital letters for names and places
- Details of persons gathering at house
- Details of militia person (s)
- Names of occupants of house
- Action taken to calm situation
- Details of the offence OGUVA has committed
- Follow up action

Exercise 3: Disturbance at Refugee Camp

7:15 hrs 05/02/00, UN Police attend at IDP camp where a returnee was accused of Militia affiliation and others were about to harm him. He was removed from the refugee camp and the situation was resolved."

☞ Expected Outcome:

- Attending UN Police names/numbers
- Location/Grid Reference
- Incident description (use the guiding questions 5 Ws and How)
- First use of abbreviation in a report (spell out in full)
- Identify whether this is a refugee or IDP camp
- Name of camp
- Name of returnee
- Details of others relating to harm
- Where was returnee taken and was there follow up action
- Further action taken to resolve situation
- Follow up action