



# Module 3, Lesson 2

## MILITARY COMPONENT CHILD PROTECTION ROLES AND TASKS



# Learning Objectives

- **Describe** the guidance framework on child protection at the operational and tactical levels;
- **Explain** the child protection roles and tasks of military peacekeepers;
- **Explain** why peacekeepers need to develop situational awareness;
- **Apply** the guidelines for monitoring and reporting by military peacekeepers.



# Child Protection Mandate (1)

## **Security Council resolution 2502 (2019) Democratic Republic of the Congo**

### **Child protection**

*Requests* MONUSCO to take fully into account **child protection as a crosscutting issue throughout its mandate** and to assist the Government of the DRC in ensuring that the protection of children's rights is taken into account, inter alia, in DDR processes and in SSR as well as during interventions leading to the separation of children from armed groups in order to end and prevent violations and abuses against children, and *acknowledges* the crucial role of United Nations **Child Protection Advisers** deployed as a standalone capacity in MONUSCO in that regard, *requests* MONUSCO to continue to ensure the effectiveness of **the monitoring and reporting mechanisms on children and armed conflict** (para. 31).



# Child Protection Mandate (2)

## Security Council resolution 2531 (2020)

### Mali

*Strongly condemning* all violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law, ... as well as killing, maiming, recruitment and use of children, attacks against schools, humanitarian actors and services, and medical personnel and infrastructure...; (preambular paragraph)

To provide specific protection and assistance for women and children affected by armed conflict, including through Protection Advisors, **Child Protection Advisors**, Women Protection Advisors and **civilian and uniformed Gender Advisors and focal points**, as well as consultations with women's organizations, and address the needs of victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict; (para. 28(c)(iii))



# Supporting Mandate Implementation through Action

**Action:** Provide physical protection for children

Protect civilians

Support DDR

**Action:** Support separation of children from armed forces/groups with the CPA

**Action:** Gather and share information

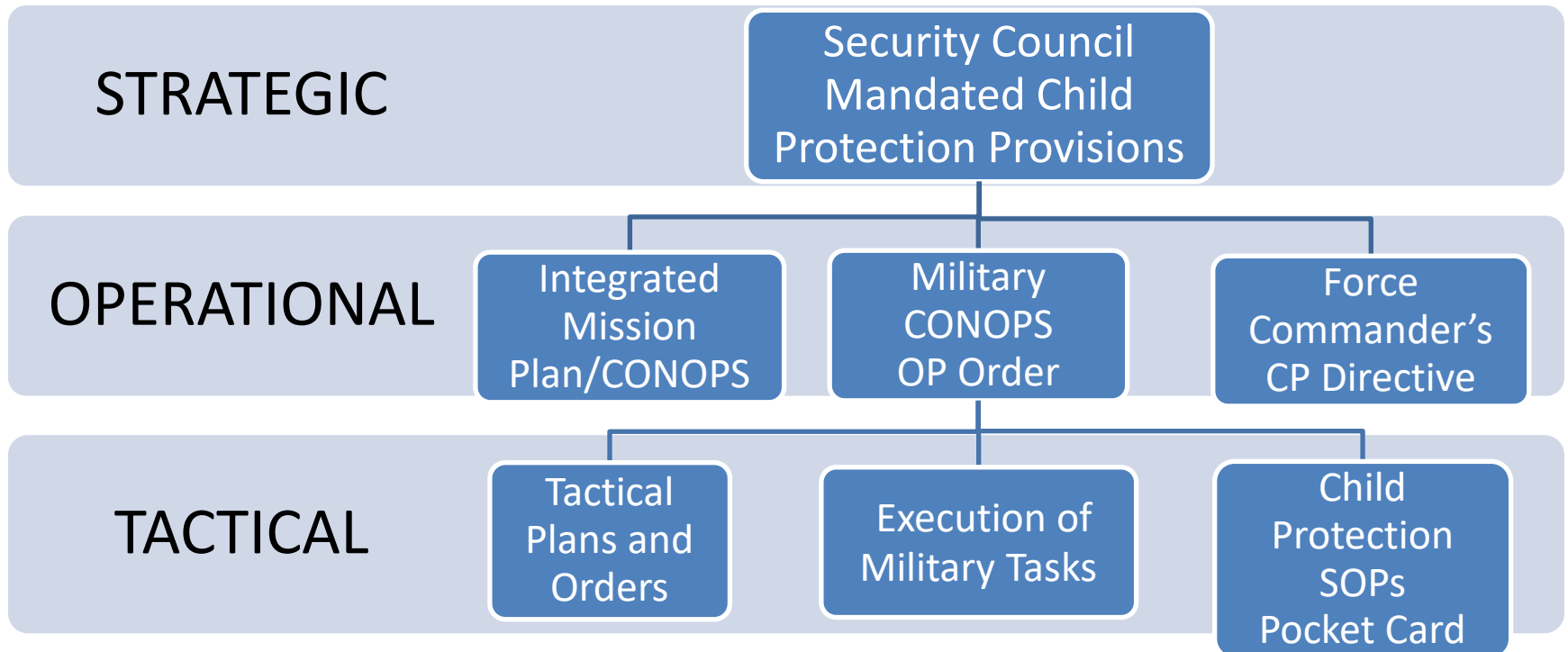
Monitor and report the six grave violations

Support action plans to release child soldiers

**Action:** Support CPA in accessing various places (e.g., military barracks)



# Child Protection Guidance Flow Chart

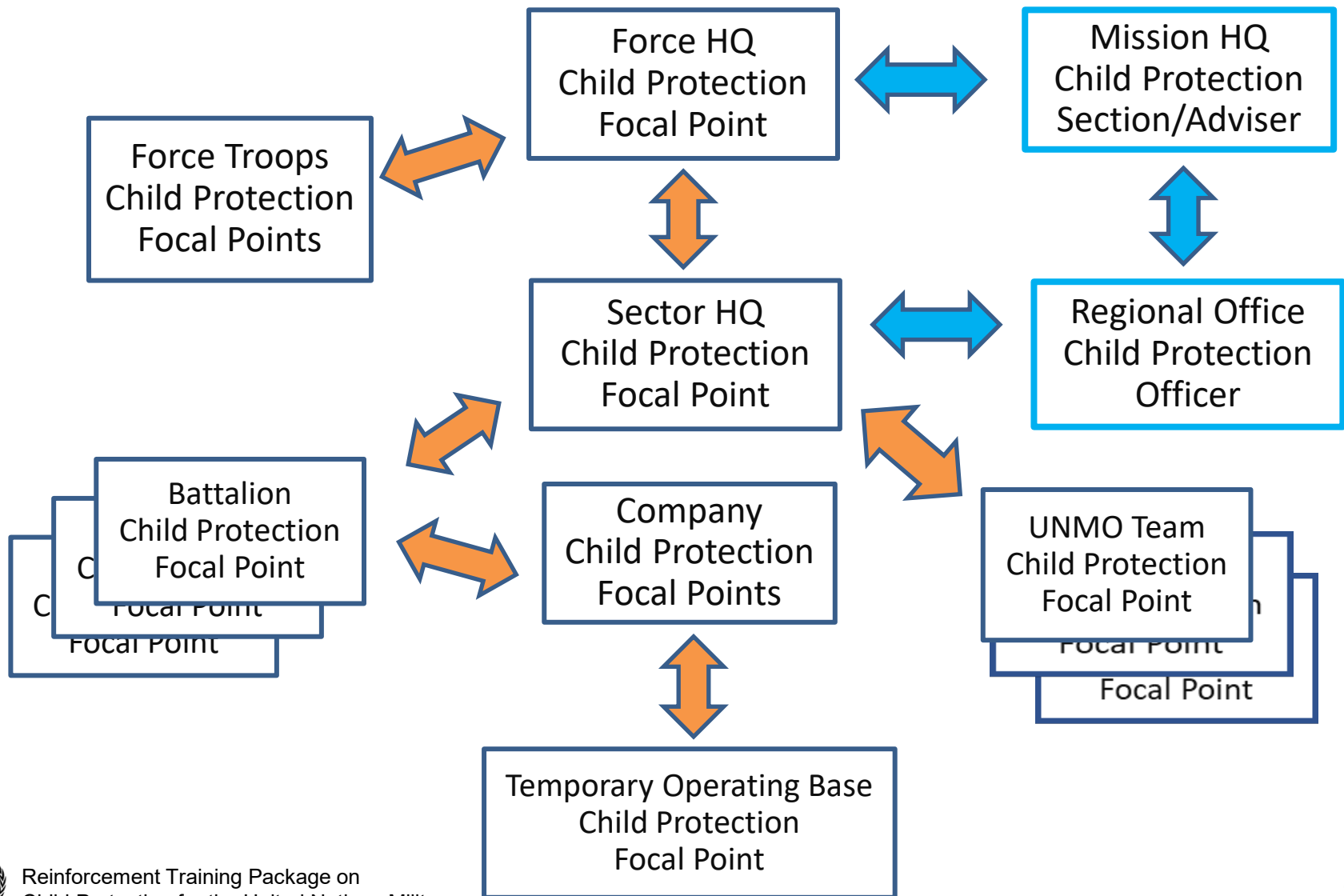


# Military Component and Child Protection

- Ensure child protection is mainstreamed into planning and conduct of protection activities
- Ensure that threats to children and children's vulnerabilities are identified and plans are developed with these in mind
- Identify and establish a military child protection network within the military component
- Issue specific child protection directive(s) and guidance for military personnel



# Military Component Child Protection Focal Point System





# Force HQ Child Protection Focal Point – Key Tasks

- Coordinate with mission Child Protection Section
- Child protection advice and mainstreaming
  - Commander
  - All staff functions
- Operational guidance to sector and units
- Establish/strengthen Alert System
- Train sector and unit focal points on Child Protection Directives/SOPs
  - Handover of children associated with armed groups
  - Interactions with children
  - Sexual exploitation/abuse, child labour



# Activities that may involve Child Protection action



# Military Child Protection “Lens”

<p><b>VILLAGE PATROL</b></p>		<p>Are children in school? Are schools open?</p>	<p>Are children playing? Working in fields?</p>	<p>Is a CA network established in village?</p>
<p><b>PATROL BASE</b></p>		<p>Where are the children in your AOR?</p>	<p>Are they close to your TOB. Why?</p>	<p>What are the threats to children?</p>
<p><b>INTERACTING WITH ARMED GROUPS</b></p>		<p>Do you see any children?</p>	<p>Report to the CPA; Note/give details</p>	<p>Security of the CPA? How to engage?</p>
<p><b>PROTECTION OF IDP CAMP</b></p>		<p>Do children leave the camp? Work?</p>	<p>Security of camp? Does armed group have access?</p>	<p>Vulnerabilities within/outside of camp?</p>
<p><b>ROBUST PATROLLING /OPERATIONS</b></p>		<p>Does armed group use children? In what role (s)?</p>	<p>How to minimize risk to children?</p>	<p>How to treat injured or captured child soldiers?</p>



# Protection Tools/Resources



- Joint Protection Teams
- Must/Should/Could Matrix
- Community Liaison Assistants
- Community Alert Networks



# Situational Awareness – Understanding the Operational Environment

1. What are the threats to children in my area of responsibility? (who, what, why, when, where)
2. What are the Government and the community doing about it?
3. What are other parts of the mission, UN agencies, other international organizations and NGOs doing about it and how can we work together?



# Case Study: Situational Awareness

On a patrol in your Company Operations Base area of responsibility, you pass through a village that hasn't been visited by the United Nations in a while. Everything seems calm and the villagers are going about their daily business. You stop in the marketplace to chat with some villagers and get a grasp of the situation. A village elder complains about recent visits by an armed group that has been active in the area for a couple of months. You know that such visits are common, villagers are usually harassed, and goods are taken from them. According to the villager, the armed group asked to see the local teacher. On their second meeting with the teacher, which ended in an argument, they shot him for unknown reasons. As you carry on with your patrol, you mention the incident to your driver, who half-jokingly remarks:

“I wonder who the teacher was teaching, because there are not any children to be seen in the entire village”.

**To whom will you report your observations, and  
what is your analysis of the situation?**



# Security Council resolution 1998 (2011)

## **Security Council resolution 1998 (2011)**

*The Security Council,*

...requests the Secretary-General to also include in the annexes to his reports on children and armed conflict those parties to armed conflict that engage ...in recurrent attacks on schools and/or hospitals; in recurrent attacks or threats of attacks against **protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals** in situations of armed conflict... (para. 3).



# SG's Report – Children and Armed Conflict

## **Central African Republic**

A total of 14 attacks against schools (4) and hospitals (10) were attributed to ex-Séléka factions (6), including FPRC (4), MPC (1) and unidentified ex-Séléka (1); anti-balaka (5); unidentified armed elements, FDPC and internal security forces (1 each). Six incidents of the military use of schools were attributed to UPC (4), 3R and anti-balaka (1 each). Two schools continued to be used by UPC in Haut-Mbomou and Basse-Kotto Prefectures. (A/74/845-S/2020/525, para. 36)





# Information Collection Plan

⇒ Include specific questions relating to child protection

This will help to:

- Identify early-warning indicators (e.g., are there boys/girls in the streets? Are boys/girls going to school?)
- Determine whether the situation is changing
- Report violations through the monitoring and reporting mechanism



# Monitoring and Reporting Mandate

If any of the six grave violations against children has taken place, report the following:

- **Who** (alleged perpetrator/s)
- **Where**
- **What**
- **When**
- **Information about the child(ren)**
  - Age
  - Sex (how many boys/girls)
  - Nationality/other relevant information

**NOTE: Even if you do not know all the relevant information, DO NOT interrogate children**



# Conducting Child Protection Activities

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Consider the child's best interests	Put the child(ren) in danger
Know and coordinate with the child protection actors in your area of responsibility	Neglect to share information with the child protection actors
Analyse protection threats and risks for children	Forget about child-specific threats/risks
Discretely take note of details, and keep information confidential (location, armed group/unit, number of children, sex, violation)	Interview, interrogate or take photographs of the child(ren)
Be aware of your impact (as a uniformed person) on the child(ren)	Casually spend time with children



# Takeaways (1/2)

- Know your roles and how you can contribute to child protection:
  - Direct role: prevent violations and mitigate threats;
  - Support role: gather information, support the Child Protection Section, provide security to Child Protection Advisers.
- Military components have directives/SOPs on child protection – **apply them.**
- Create orders and SOPs to address information requirements, handover of children, etc.



# Takeaways (2/2)

- Child protection is an integral part of practically every patrol activity.
- Protection involves a combination of actions to reduce vulnerability and risk.
- Assess the child-specific indicators in your operational environment.
- In all your actions and orders, **consider the best interest of the child.**



# References (1/2)

- United Nations, DPKO/DFS/DPA, Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations, 2017
- United Nations, Infantry Battalion Manual (UNIBAM) Second Edition, January 2020
- United Nations, DPO, Handbook – The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping, 2020
- United Nations, DPKO/DFS, Protection of Civilians: Implementing Guidelines for Military Components of United Nations Peacekeeping Missions, February 2015
- Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/74/845–S/2020/525), June 2020



# References (2/2)

- United Nations, DPO, Integrated Training Service, Child Protection in Peacekeeping Training Modules, Core Pre-deployment Training Materials, September 2017
- Child Soldier Initiative, Child Soldiers: A Handbook for Security Sector Actors, 2017 (Third Edition)
- United Nations, UNDDR, Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), 2014 (see chaps. 5.20, “Youth and DDR”, and 5.30, “Children and DDR”)
- OSRSG-Children and Armed Conflict website (<http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/>)



# Questions

