Starting Lesson 3.3

For an interactive start to lesson 3.3, ask learners:

What are some of the moral dilemmas to think through when deployed in a mission area where rebel groups are using child soldiers?

OVERVIEW
Lesson 3.3 builds on Military Component Child Protection Roles and Tasks and will prepare learners for discussions of the scenarios presented. Based on learners’ experience and previous peacekeeping training, this lesson provides an opportunity for learners to discuss – in plenary and/or small groups – a number of “snapshot” scenarios, which should help them develop a basic understanding of the challenges, dilemmas and principles of child protection, as it relates to the military at the tactical level.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• Demonstrate how the rules of engagement of the mission provide military peacekeepers with the authority and tools to effectively protect children;
• Define child soldiers and discuss the challenges they pose;
• Apply the guidelines for dealing with child soldiers;
• Demonstrate the range of appropriate military actions in response to grave violations against children.

ACTIVITIES
• Scenario discussions (slides 17-25);
  (Note: If time permits, use the Situational Awareness case study in lesson 3.2, slides 14-15 in this lesson);
SLIDE 1: MODULE 3, LESSON 3: MILITARY COMPONENT CHILD PROTECTION
ACTION AND RESPONSE

HANDOUTS (FOR LEARNERS)
1. Guidelines for Dealing with Child Soldiers (MONUSCO) (slide 14)
2. Military Operations – Dos and Don’ts (slide 29)

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

This lesson (3.3) builds on lesson 3.2 on Military Component Child Protection Roles and Tasks and will prepare learners for discussions of the scenarios presented. Based on learners’ experience and previous peacekeeping training, this lesson will also provide an opportunity for learners to discuss – in plenary and/or small groups – a number of “snapshot” scenarios, which should help them to develop a basic understanding of the challenges, dilemmas and principles of child protection, as it relates to the military at the tactical level.
The legal authority to use force to protect civilians is the focus of this presentation. The dilemmas confronting peacekeepers when faced with child soldiers will also be discussed.
Key Message: The military component is deployed to a mission with a distinct authority to use force, if necessary, to implement its mandate. The military component's role in providing physical protection is the main reason for armed military personnel in a peacekeeping mission. However, it should also conduct preventive and pre-emptive activities.

As mentioned in the previous lesson, the military peacekeeper's role is to support the implementation of the mission’s mandates, including the child protection mandate. When you encounter any of the six grave violations, you must immediately think of how to prevent the violation from recurring.

Actions may be in the form of prevention, pre-emption, response or consolidation:

1. Preventing violations requires a thorough understanding of the operational environment in order to identify the specific risks and vulnerabilities to children in your area of responsibility. Peacekeepers should work with the mission’s child protection partners to reduce risks, including local communities and authorities, civil affairs and child protection personnel in the mission, to implement an early warning mechanism. Preventive responses aimed at reducing vulnerabilities and mitigating risks to children must involve local communities, child protection actors,
and other substantive Sections and Components in the mission, such as Civil Affairs, Human Rights, and United Nations Police.

2. **Pre-empting violations** requires a thorough understanding of the operational environment in order to identify threats and develop tactical plans to deter or mitigate threats. That involves increased patrols at specific times and in places where violations have historically taken place.

3. **Responding to violations:** When the threat of physical violence to civilians is apparent, more active measures aimed at deterring potential aggressors from conducting hostile acts may be necessary. At this stage, the violent behaviour is already under way and steps must be taken to compel the aggressor to stop. Direct military action should be considered as an option.

4. **Consolidation** refers to action taken after prevention, pre-emption or response in order to sign off on the action, such as reporting and investigating. A thorough understanding of the violations by every peacekeeper and officer is critical to ensure accurate and timely reporting and information-sharing with the Child Protection Adviser in the mission and other child protection actors.

If a mission has a child protection mandate, every incident involving children must be reported to the Security Council. Peacekeepers are required to inform the Child Protection Adviser of any violations they encounter. This will enable the Child Protection Adviser to decide on adequate long-term responses for engaging with armed forces/groups, bringing the issue to the attention of the authorities, or referring individual cases to child protection agencies. Peacekeepers must be familiar with the six grave violations against children in armed conflict that must be reported.

*Review the six (categories of) grave violations against children in module 1.*
UNMISS Protection Mandate

Security Council resolution 2514 (2020)

South Sudan
8. Decides that the mandate of UNMISS shall be as follows, and authorizes UNMISS to use all necessary means to perform the following tasks:

(a) Protection of civilians:
(i) To protect civilians under threat of physical violence, irrespective of the source of such violence, within its capacity and areas of deployment, with specific protection for women and children...

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: "All necessary means" includes the use of force, including deadly force.

Slide 4 shows an example of the language commonly used in Security Council resolutions for the child protection mandate. This text is taken from Security Council resolution 2514 (2020) defining the protection of civilians mandate of UNMISS in South Sudan.

The text of the resolution clearly states that protection of civilians must be a mission priority and authorizes the mission to use “all necessary means” to protect civilians under “threat of physical violence”. This implies the use of force, including deadly force. It should be emphasized that protection mandates must be carried out without prejudice to the responsibilities of the host country and may include actions against bodies or authorities of the host State if they are the perpetrators of violations. The Security Council understands that the military cannot be present everywhere and at all times, but where deployed, military peacekeepers have an obligation to protect civilians.
Rules of Engagement (1)

- Mission rules of engagement are developed by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO);
- They provide parameters within which peacekeepers may use different levels of force;
- They ensure that the use of force is undertaken in accordance with the purpose of the mandate, and the principles of international humanitarian law;
- Missions with a protection mandate have robust ROEs which authorizes military peacekeepers to use force – including deadly force – to protect civilians, including children, from physical violence.

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: A peacekeeping mission with a protection mandate will have robust rules of engagement. Military peacekeepers are authorized and expected to use force, if necessary, to protect civilians.

The rules of engagement of a United Nations peacekeeping mission are developed and approved by the Department of Peace Operations in consultation with troop-contributing countries and revised by the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA).

Once the rules of engagement have been drafted, DPO ensures consistency with the mandate of the United Nations mission, the military situation and the political considerations of the host country and troop-contributing countries.

Since rules of engagement constitute a legal document, their application must be consistent with international humanitarian and human rights law. Rules of engagement lend legitimacy to United Nations military peacekeepers on the ground. It is critical that the rules and procedures for implementation are consistently applied by all military peacekeepers at all levels of military operations.
Rules of engagement authorize military peacekeepers to use force to defend the mission’s mandate, fellow peacekeepers and the freedom of movement of United Nations personnel. It is critical that military personnel understand the peacekeeping principle of impartiality in the context of using force to defend the mission’s mandate and the obligation to act, no matter who the perpetrators are. Application of the use of force will be discussed, utilizing sample rules of engagement in relation to the scenarios, in this lesson.

SLIDE 6: RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (2)

Rules of Engagement (2)

Duty to use minimum and proportionate force

- This does not prevent the immediate use of deadly force if the threat to life is imminent, and there is no alternative to remove that threat;
- The use of force should be commensurate with the level of the threat;
- However, the level of response may have to be higher in order to minimize UN and civilian casualties.

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The principles of “necessity” and proportionality” derived from international humanitarian law apply to the use of force by military peacekeepers. However, the level of military response may be higher, and even lethal, in order to minimize United Nations or civilian casualties.

- Under international law, the use of force in self-defence is governed by two principles: *necessity* and *proportionality*. The use of force must be necessary for self-protection, and the amount of force used must be proportionate to the threat. United Nations peacekeeping operations also subscribe to the principle of “minimum force necessary” to deter or remove a threat. Proportionality does not mean “in kind”, for example, if someone shoots at you with a bow and arrow, you don’t have to shoot back with the same weapon, but rather you use the quickest and most effective means at hand to protect yourself from further harm. Likewise, you don’t blow up an
entire building to take out one sniper. Reason is the key to matching the force to the threat. Necessity relates to the imminency of danger/harm, which may require the use of force.

*These principles do not prevent the immediate use of deadly force if the threat to life is imminent and there is no alternative to remove the threat.* The peacekeeper on the ground may not have the time or the opportunity to fire a warning shot, and direct fire is authorized if necessary to protect civilian lives.

*The use of force should be commensurate with the level of the threat.* For example, using attack helicopters to take out a sniper may not be reasonable. However, sometimes more force than that being applied by an attacker may be necessary to remove a threat. E.g., if you encounter a group of rebels attacking civilians with machetes, you may use firearms to neutralize the threat to civilian lives.

EXAMPLE: A man approaches a sentry post with a round object in his hand. He continues approaching despite warnings to halt and makes a motion as if he is pulling a pin from a grenade. Can the object be clearly identified? Has there been a history of attacks in the area? At what point should the action be considered a hostile intent? These are difficult judgment calls – every peacekeeper should undergo practical scenario-based training in these kinds of situations before arriving in the mission area.

Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations authorizes peacekeeping forces to use force for purposes other than self-defence. Mission rules of engagement (which will be reviewed subsequently) authorize the use of force for purposes other than self-defence in a number of settings, including but not limited to:

1. Ensuring the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel;
2. Ensuring the protection of United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment;
3. Ensuring the protection of civilians, including children, under imminent threat.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: A threat of violence against civilians, including children, is imminent from the moment that it is identified until the mission can determine that said threat no longer exists.

“Imminent” does not imply that violence is 100 per cent guaranteed to occur in the immediate future. A threat to civilians may exist if a potential aggressor is believed to have the intent to inflict physical violence.

If the threat exists, then it is imminent, and the mission must take action. Such action is not only required by the military, but also by police and civilian peacekeepers. Sometimes, the Security Council omits the word “imminent” to avoid a narrow interpretation of threat. This is intended to promote a proactive mindset and ensure that peacekeepers take preventive and pre-emptive action against threats to civilians.
Rules of Engagement (3)

Hostile intent and imminent threat...

Determining whether there is hostile intent or imminent threat should be based on one or a combination of three factors to be considered by the Commander on the scene:

1. Capability and preparedness of the threat;
2. Evidence of the intention to attack;
3. Historical precedent within the area of operations.

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: The Commander at the scene makes the decision as to whether or not there is an imminent threat or hostile intent.

Even if the on-scene Commander decides that only one of the factors listed in slide 8 constitutes an imminent threat, peacekeepers are authorized to use force, including deadly force, to protect civilians, including children.
Key Message: Always report to/share information with the Child Protection Adviser/Officer without delay.

Once the immediate threat against children is mitigated or addressed, the military unit must inform the mission’s Child Protection Adviser through its chain of command. This is the only way to ensure that violations are monitored and reported to the appropriate bodies and that support is provided to children and their families. Accurate and timely information-sharing, coordination among mission actors, country team entities and external actors is critical to ensure viable, effective measures to protect children.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** These grave violations occur in our mission areas. The military component has an obligation to take action against these violations and to report them to the Child Protection Adviser.

*Refer to the handout, Six Grave Violations, in lesson 1.1.*

The six grave violations were introduced in Module 1, lesson 1. As a military peacekeeper, you are most likely to encounter the four violations showing on slide 10. In this lesson (3.3), we will discuss the obligation for military peacekeepers to respond to these violations when observed, and the possible actions that can be taken. These violations are real; they occur on a global scale and in many of the conflict areas to which peacekeepers are deployed.

**Examples of grave violations:**

1. Tens of thousands of boys and girls are recruited and used by armed forces or armed groups in conflict areas in over 20 countries worldwide;

2. About 10,000 people are killed or injured by unexploded ordnances annually, of which, more than 40 per cent are children;
3. Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children are committed on a large scale in conflicts, such as the ones in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan;

4. Attacks on schools or hospitals are prevalent in all conflict areas from Mali to Afghanistan, in Yemen and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In this lesson, you will have the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the required military response to the most common grave violations that military commanders/peacekeepers may encounter at the tactical level. You will also demonstrate your understanding of critical coordination, communication and information-sharing with other child protection actors, through scenario-based discussions following the plenary presentation.

SLIDE 11: RECRUITMENT AND USE (1)

**Recruitment and Use (1)**

**Review:** *Child soldiers* may be used in various functions.
Ask learners to give examples of the functions that child soldiers may serve. Recap child soldier functions as necessary (see lesson 1.1).

Tens of thousands of boys and girls are recruited and used by armed forces or armed groups in conflict in over 20 countries around the world. As a military peacekeeper, you are likely to encounter “young soldiers” carrying guns and wearing uniforms. However, it is important for you to know that children – boys and girls – are assigned wide-ranging functions in armed forces or armed groups.

The definition of “child soldier” is broad, given the wide-ranging functions that children serve in an armed force or armed group.

Children may be used by armed groups in a number of different ways, including in direct combat roles, in intelligence operations as spies or scouts, for reconnaissance (especially as children are seldom viewed with suspicion), as decoys or saboteurs, to man checkpoints, or as couriers or messengers. Children may also be used as porters, cooks, cleaners and, in many cases, girls are used as sex slaves or “bush wives.” These children are referred to as “children associated with armed forces or armed groups.”

Sexual violence by armed groups and armed forces against boys is also a documented concern.
"A child associated with armed forces and armed groups" refers to any person below 18 years of age who is or has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes.

SLIDE 13: RECRUITMENT AND USE (3)

Recruitment and Use (3)

Why are children recruited and used by armed groups?
They bring a strategic advantage!

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: Children are recruited for different reasons. One key reason is that they provide a strategic advantage.

- There are many reasons why children are recruited by armed groups. Children are often viewed as being obedient and easily manipulated and considered as posing a lesser threat to commanders. Children are effective at pillaging and looting villages for money, food and supplies. Their size makes them agile and suitable for certain tasks that may be challenging for adults (e.g. working in tight crevasses of mines, etc.).

Children are often brave and willing to take risks without contemplating the consequences. They may be considered cheap and expendable, and they are present in large numbers.

Local commanders may want to increase the size of their fighting force in order to enhance their rank and status, or to increase control over a given territory. The forced
recruitment of children into such groups is a quick and easy way to increase a force’s numbers.

**NOTES (FOR TRAINER)**

**Key Message:** If child soldiers pose a threat to you or others, the rules of engagement of the mission must be applied.

- Military peacekeepers must be prepared to deal with various situations, such as the use of child soldiers by armed groups. The mission’s rules of engagement must be thoroughly understood by everyone.
Discussion

Ask learners about their views on these issues based on the fundamental principles relating to hostile acts, hostile intent or demonstration thereof. Emphasize the critical role and responsibility of commanders at all levels to train their subordinates on these important issues.

All peacekeepers must know, understood and apply the following principles in all situations:

1. Use force as a measure of last resort;
2. Use the minimum amount of force to achieve the objective;
3. Do not use force except for self-defence and in defence of the mandate.

Responses from learners may vary depending on their national military cultures. However, they must evoke the principles of peacekeeping – namely, determining hostile act/intent, the principle of self-defence, the use of minimum force and only as a measure of last resort, etc. for their responses to be considered acceptable.

Remind learners of their obligations under international humanitarian law. See:

- Secretary-General’s Bulletin on observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law (ST/SGB/1999/13); and

- Applicability of international humanitarian law to United Nations peacekeeping forces (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 1993).

It must emphasized that aggressive or hostile posturing by children or child soldiers may not necessarily constitute a threat; the seemingly aggressive attitude of a child soldier approaching a United Nations vehicle with a weapon may not necessarily be a hostile act or intent. It could be that the child is simply scared and wants the peacekeepers to withdraw. The United Nations operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has specific guidelines on this.

Handout: Guidelines for Dealing with Child Soldiers (MONUSCO)
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: Peacekeepers must receive scenario training on how to deal with child soldiers. Such training must reflect the mission environment, the reality on the ground and the rules of engagement of the specific mission.

When you encounter a child soldier, you must remember that he/she is “a child” – someone below the age of 18 years –, who is vulnerable, impressionable, frequently irrational and worthy of protection.

On the other hand, he/she is “a soldier” and therefore the enemy – denying this fact could be detrimental to your safety and ignore/negate/disregard/underestimate the child’s own experience. This may cause a moral dilemma as to how to treat the person.

Peacekeeper must understand that they have to balance the vulnerabilities of the child with operational necessities. Sometimes, there is no time for prolonged considerations. Under extreme circumstances, as that described above, if you fear for your life or if grievous bodily harm is feared, the rules of engagement for peacekeepers will likely authorize the use of lethal force.

Not all situations in which peacekeepers encounter child soldiers are equally unexpected or dangerous. For example, if peacekeepers are able to plan for the
likelihood of encountering a child soldier, they will be far better equipped to juggle the moral dilemma of protecting a child and/or defeating an enemy. In such cases, when afforded a comparably longer response time, peacekeepers have the responsibility to fight with restraint (and ideally, to pursue the objective of capturing the child soldier alive).

Various strategies can be employed to limit the number of child soldier casualties in the field and to prevent the hazardous second guessing associated with moral dilemmas, including:

1. Supporting mission components and other child protection actors in awareness-raising, dialogue and engagement, upon request and where appropriate, so as to facilitate the safe release of child soldiers;

2. Focusing on the centre of gravity by targeting adult commanders instead of child soldiers during a firefight;

3. Attempting to create a buffer between the child soldier and his/her adult commander (children who do not have an ideological attachment to their armed group’s cause are more likely to surrender if they have been separated from their commanders);

4. Revisiting the rules of engagement concerning child soldiers and role-playing these situations can help ensure better preparation for interactions with child soldiers.
Dealing with Child Soldiers (3)

If they do not pose a threat, remember:

- Children are victims;
- Do no harm;
- Report through the chain of command and to the mission Child Protection Adviser;
- Provide for a safe transfer to specialized agencies that take care of child soldiers.

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: Always remember that child soldiers are victims of conflict. Do no harm. Report them to the Child Protection Adviser.

All children associated with armed forces and armed groups are victims. They may have experienced torture and other cruel treatment while recruited and the mere fact of recruitment is a crime. Therefore, although child soldiers may be combatants or ex-combatants and perpetrators of horrible acts, you must bear in mind that they are victims of recruitment in the first place.

Always keep in mind the best interest of the child and ensure that your actions do more good than harm. If you see a child among the host country’s armed forces or in an armed group, you should raise it with your Commander. Hopefully, the Commander will be able to act so that the child/children do not disappear before they could be formally released.

You may also discretely take note of the situation and immediately report it to the Child Protection Adviser in the mission, who will decide what action to take. The Child Protection Adviser may ask you to assist in the transfer of the child.

The following slides contain scenarios to be discussed in plenary or in small groups. Build on learners’ experience and training to generate discussion and appropriate responses to the scenarios.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Consider options other than the use of force to dismantle the checkpoint and ensure freedom of movement.

**SCENARIO 1: Dealing with child soldiers**

> The following is an example of actions and considerations to take into account if you encounter a child soldier with a weapon at a checkpoint:

1. Remain calm;
2. Treat the child soldier with respect as he or she is acting under military orders;
3. Try to reason with the child soldier;
4. Turn around and abandon the crossing, and try to locate the child soldier’s local commander to request that the checkpoint be dismantled, and to try to obtain the child’s release;
5. Report the situation to the mission’s Child Protection Adviser;
6. Bear in mind the “best interest of the child”; using force to disarm the child soldier may not be the best option.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Does the child pose an imminent threat to you or others? Is there hostile intent?

**SCENARIO 2: Dealing with child soldiers**

Ask learners:
How would you, the peacekeeper, react in this situation? What should you consider?

Allow learners 5-10 minutes to discuss the scenario. In case of international participation, try to elicit responses from learners from different cultures so as to compare and generate discussion.
Highlight and define “hostile intent”, “hostile act” and “imminent threat” and inform learners that the Commander on the ground would make this determination. The child may be afraid and running towards the United Nations for help or protection, or he/she may have hostile intent. This is why realistic scenario training in handling such situations is critical.

The military Peacekeeper’s dilemma is whether or not to use force. If this is determined to be an imminent threat or a hostile act, force may be used in self-defence or to protect civilians. The context of the situation will guide the Commander on the ground in making the determination (e.g., have child soldiers committed hostile acts against the United Nations recently? Have child soldiers voluntarily disarmed recently in this area? etc.). If the decision to use force is taken, only the minimum level of force should be used to mitigate the hostile act or imminent threat.

SLIDE 19: SCENARIO 3 – DEALING WITH CHILD SOLDIERS

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message**: Always accommodate a child soldier seeking your assistance and wanting to surrender and disarm.

The following is an example of appropriate responses, which will most likely be included in the mission guidance:
1. Disarm and secure the child;
2. Immediately alert the closest Child Protection Adviser or Child Protection Focal Point;
3. Refer to the SOP or mission guidelines on the handover of children.

**SCENARIO 3: Dealing with child soldiers**

Ask learners if their response would be different if they were on an un-escorted United Nations military observer (UNMO) patrol.

Answer: The responses should be the same!

It is important for military peacekeepers to be aware of the ways in which a child might attempt to escape from an armed group, and of the strategies that armed groups might employ to prevent such attrition. Peacekeepers should be particularly observant with respect to girl soldiers who are attempting to demobilize, as it is especially difficult for them to escape from armed groups. This is partly because of the power that the commanders exert over them, and partly because of the perceived invisibility of girls’ roles.

Children who leave armed groups must be helped and protected. The following are the main reasons why children leave armed groups:

1. Formal demobilization processes following a peace agreement;
2. Release during conflict owing to advocacy campaigns or direct negotiations;
3. Escape from the armed group;
4. Capture by an opposing armed force or rival armed group;
5. Abandonment by the armed group (e.g., owing to injury, disability, sickness, pregnancy, infant caregiving, etc.);
6. Cessation of hostilities.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: Remember the “Do no harm” principle. Do not engage or adopt a posture that would place the child soldiers at risk.

SCENARIO 4: Dealing with child soldiers

Your action will depend on several factors, including your relationship with the local commander. The discussion should generate the following responses:

1. Discretely take note of the details of the situation;
2. Do nothing that could expose the child to danger;
3. Raise the issue with the Commander of the national forces;
4. Remind the Commander that there are policies that prohibit the use of soldiers under 18 years of age. Some armed forces (e.g., South Sudan) have signed Action Plans with the United Nations to release all child soldiers; Commanders can be reminded of their obligations under the Action Plan;
5. Do not try to extract the child, particularly if you are concerned about your working relationship with the Commander of the national forces.
6. Immediately inform the Child Protection Adviser in the mission of the situation, including the location, estimated number of children, name of the unit encountered. It might be difficult for you to assess ages; when in doubt, take note of the potential child soldier and report to the Child Protection Adviser. The Child Protection Adviser is best suited to negotiate the release of a child/children.

SLIDE 21: NEGOTIATING THE RELEASE OF CHILD SOLDIERS

**Negotiating the Release of Child Soldiers**

- If possible, ensure that the negotiation is being conducted by a Child Protection Adviser;
- If a child soldier seeks spontaneous demobilization in the field, he/she must always be accommodated, regardless of whether child protection personnel are present;
- Child Protection Advisers must be informed immediately;
- Children should be handed over to Child Protection Advisers as soon as possible.

**NOTES (FOR TRAINER)**

**Key Message:** The Child Protection Adviser is the lead expert in child protection and is best suited to negotiate the release of child soldiers.

- Unless a child soldier surrenders and seeks demobilization during a patrol or in the heat of battle, civilian child protection personnel should always assume responsibility for conducting negotiated extractions. It is the role of military peacekeepers to secure the conduct of the negotiation.

If a child soldier seeks spontaneous demobilization in the field, they must always be accommodated, regardless of whether Child Protection Advisers are present. However, Child Protection Advisers must always be informed immediately about the demobilization.

Mission or force SOPs will determine what to do with children released to the United Nations military. If girl soldiers are handed over to the military, make sure that they are
provided with separate accommodation and, if possible, assign a female officer as their interim care provider until they can be handed over to a Child Protection actor.

SLIDE 22: SCENARIO 5 – KILLING AND MAIMING

Killing and Maiming

SCENARIO 5
You are a UNMO Team Leader deployed in a remote area of the mission. Yesterday, one of your patrols discovered a minefield close to a local village in your area of responsibility. You are worried that the local population, in particular children, might enter the minefield by accident and get seriously injured or killed.

What actions would you take to ensure the protection of children in the area concerned?

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: Work with child protection experts/actors and sensitize the local population.

In some missions (e.g., UNIFIL, Lebanon), mines and cluster ammunition are a serious threat to children.

SCENARIO 5: Killing and maiming

The following are examples of appropriate responses, based on common sense and military knowledge:

1. Mark and secure the minefield; if necessary, request United Nations troops to place guards to ensure that civilians do not expose themselves to this threat;
2. Sensitize the local population; work through local child protection actors to sensitize children to the danger of entering the minefield;
3. Inform the chain of command about the minefield and, if there is a United Nations mine action centre (MAC) in the mission area, report the minefield and enquire about options available to clear the minefield.

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**SLIDE 23: SCENARIO 6 – MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS OR HOSPITALS**

**Military Use of Schools or Hospitals**

**SCENARIO 6**

You have been informed that an armed faction, which is opposed to the peace process and hostile to the United Nations, has carried out attacks in a remote part of your area of responsibility near the border. You decide to deploy a mobile operating base (MOB) in the area. When the Company arrives in the village, the Chief points out a prime location in a primary school and offers the premises as the MOB/TOB. 

*(contd. on next slide)*

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**NOTES (FOR TRAINER)**

**Key Message**: The military should never occupy a school or hospital, even for a short period of time.

**SCENARIO 6: Military use of schools or hospitals**

*This scenario should generate the following discussion points:*

1. Schools and hospitals should be treated as zones of peace, where children are granted protection even in times of conflict. However, there is an increasing trend in armed conflicts whereby schools and hospitals are being attacked with detrimental effects and impact on children;

2. Apart from the direct and physical damage to schools and hospitals, conflict can result in the forced closure or the disrupted functioning of these institutions. Children, teachers, doctors, nurses and patients may be subject to threats by parties to conflict, if they are suspected, for example, of supporting the other party
to conflict. Also of great concern is the use of schools for military purposes, such as recruitment grounds and polling stations.

3. The company (unit) commander should politely decline the offer to use the school and explain to the local chief why.

SLIDE 24: MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS OR HOSPITALS (contd.)

Military Use of Schools or Hospitals (contd.)

- What instructions would you give the Company Commander and why?
- What difference would it make if the Chief had offered a hospital as the base for the MOB?
- What if the host State’s forces that are fighting with the faction are based in the school, and invite the Company to join them in a joint operation?

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: Under no circumstances should United Nations troops use schools or hospitals for military purposes.


Note that this scenario does not describe an attack on a school, but rather the use of a school.

The use of schools by United Nations peacekeepers is strictly prohibited. There is a caveat that national armed forces may use schools if there are no other options, but this should be considered a last resort in a dire situation. United Nations
peacekeepers should thus advocate for all armed forces to vacate schools and find another base.

The discussion around the three questions in slide 24 should generate the following responses:

1. What instructions do you give the Company commander and why?
   United Nations peacekeepers are prohibited from using schools for military purposes, as schools are protected places and zones of peace and comfort.

2. What difference would it make if they offered a hospital as the base for the MOB?
   Hospitals are protected installations under international humanitarian law and must not be used for military purposes;

3. What if the host country’s forces that are fighting with the faction are based in the school and invite the Company to join them in a joint operation?
   The United Nations company Commander should explain that schools should not be used for military purposes, as the presence of national forces in the school increases the risk of the school being a target and destroyed in the fighting. The Commander should advocate for the forces to immediately vacate the school premises.

4. The Commander should also inform the Child Protection Adviser in the mission, providing all relevant information:
   - Name and location of the school;
   - Name of the village;
   - Unit of the host country’s forces that is occupying the school;
   - Estimated number of soldiers;
   - Estimated number and types of weapons they have;
   - Name and rank of the local commander, etc.
SCENARIO 7

While on patrol, a Company Commander meets with host-State forces in a village. They inform him that they have captured and detained 12 soldiers from a rebel armed group that has been terrorizing the village. The detainees have been locked up in one crowded cell for one week awaiting transfer to the capital for interrogation. The Company Commander notices that three of the detainees are very young, and possibly one is female. Two of the young detainees have gunshot wounds.

How would you handle this situation?

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: The mission context will determine the company Commander’s action. However, the Commander should gather facts and inform the Child Protection Adviser of the mission and United Nations Police to obtain the children’s release and provide them with medical care.

SCENARIO 7: Monitoring and reporting other incidents

This scenario is similar in nature to abduction, however, in this case, detention is being carried out by local law enforcement agencies. As previously mentioned, abducting or seizing children against their will and/or that of their adult guardians, either temporarily or permanently and without due cause, is illegal under international law.

The question should generate the following responses:

1. From the perspective of a United Nations mission, this situation would be better handled by the United Nations Police, which will have more information and knowledge about local laws and international law. The United Nations Police will also have a better network and relationship with local law enforcement agencies and are better positioned to influence the behaviour of local police;
2. The United Nations military should monitor, gather facts on, and report the situation through the chain of command and to the mission’s Child Protection Adviser or other child protection actors in the area;

3. This is a real situation drawn from Mali. The children were not released immediately. In fact, it took a very long time for the children to be released. The mission intervened at the highest level and the initial information was critical to triggering the chain of action.

SLIDE 26: CHILD SOLDIERS – OTHER ISSUES

**Child Soldiers – Other Issues**

**Arrest and detention of child soldiers**
- Only in the most extreme circumstances;
- Hand them over to a child protection actor as soon as possible.

**DDR of children**
- Many missions have a DDR mandate;
- The DDR Section will define your specific tasks.

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Detention of child soldiers by United Nations military units should only be done in extreme circumstances to ensure the safety and well-being of the child/children.

- In some situations, and in order to protect the child and other civilians, you may have to detain a child soldier. Detention of child soldiers by United Nations military units should only be done in extreme circumstances to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

Child soldiers who are being detained should be handed over to a child protection actor immediately.
Most missions have a mandate to support DDR processes. The military role and tasks of formed units and military observers varies from mission to mission.

Units have the primary role of providing a safe and secure environment, while military observers may play a role in information collection and registration of child soldiers.

If you are involved in a mission’s DDR operations, always make sure that child soldiers are separated from adult combatants and handed over to specialized agencies tasked with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers.

### SLIDE 27: TAKING ACTION, REPORTING – OTHER VIOLATIONS

**Taking Action, Reporting – Other Violations**

- Be aware of other violations relevant to the particular context (e.g., illegal detention, forced displacement, trafficking);
- Ask the Child Protection Adviser for a briefing on the situation of children affected by armed forces in your particular context;
- Make sure that you fully understand the violations that you are expected to report.

### NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** It is critical that military peacekeepers know the specific threats to children in the respective areas of responsibility. Ask the Child Protection Adviser/Officer for a briefing.

In today’s peacekeeping environment, peacekeepers are expected to be alert to other relevant violations in the mission area. For example, the illegal arrest and detention of children, often as a result of the alleged association of children with armed forces or armed groups, has emerged as a serious concern in conflict settings. The children may be considered “enemies” or “deserters.” Forced displacement may also be an issue of concern if related to fear of child recruitment, sexual violence or any other grave violation. In some cases, armed groups or criminal elements have
taken advantage of the desperate situation of children and insecure borders to traffic children for sexual exploitation or domestic labour. If you encounter such violations, you should not only report them to the appropriate child protection actor, but also take action, as necessary.

Upon deployment, ask the Child Protection Adviser or military Child Protection Focal Point for a briefing on the situation of children affected by armed conflict in the particular mission area, as situations may differ considerably by country or region.

Make sure you fully understand the violations that you are expected to be alert to.

SLIDE 28: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR UNITED NATIONS MILITARY

Additional Considerations for UN Military

- Ensure that schools and other educational institutions are not used or impacted when planning/conducting military operations;
- Ensure that the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for dealing with children in custody are known by all personnel;
- All possible efforts should be made to avoid civilian casualties, in particular child casualties.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The use of schools for military purposes is prohibited. Ensure SOPs are in place for the handling of children in custody.

In addition to the Dos and Don’ts discussed in the previous lesson (3.2), there are three key elements that the military component must bear in mind to support child protection in mission areas.

The United Nations Military must always ensure that educational institutions, such as schools, are not used for the conduct of military operations.

Headquarters at all levels should ensure that the standards of procedure (SOPs) on issues related to children (e.g., handling children in custody, reducing civilian casualties, collateral damage) are developed and disseminated to all military peacekeepers.

Peacekeepers must make every effort to avoid civilian casualties, in particular children.

*Pre-deployment and in-mission training of military units and individual soldiers on these topics should be a key requirement.*
Conducting Military Operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assist child soldiers when they surrender or are captured</td>
<td>Send a child/children away or tell them to come back the next day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform the mission CPA and hand them over to the nearest child protection actor as soon as possible</td>
<td>Hand a child/children over to the host-State army without consulting the Child Protection Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share your knowledge of child protection issues with national military counterparts</td>
<td>Underestimate your role as a positive role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the host-State army not to use schools as bases for their operations</td>
<td>Use schools or hospitals as bases for military operations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Handout: Dos and don’ts for military operations
Key Message: The takeaways from this lesson are as follows:

- Peacekeepers have a mandate to protect children. The protection of the most vulnerable populations must be a focus when developing plans and orders to implement protection tasks.

Rules of engagement provide peacekeepers with the authority to use force, if necessary, to protect children. Peacekeepers must know what constitutes an imminent threat and a hostile act/intent.

Protection of children is an integral part of the overall mission mandate. This is a whole-of-mission effort and the military component plays a critical part in providing physical protection, minimizing threats and reducing children’s vulnerabilities in hostile environments. In addition to taking action, remember to inform the Child Protection Adviser of threats to/violations against children.

Coordination and information-sharing on child protection issues are a key aspect of your role as a peacekeeper.

The handling of child soldiers is complex and requires training. Remember that a child with a gun is also a victim of conflict.
Always keep in mind the best interest of the child. A sound understanding of your operational environment is essential to ensure that children are not exposed to further violations owing to military responses. If in doubt, always discuss these issues with a Child Protection Adviser or a specialist in your mission area.

### Summary

**Takeaways from Lesson 3.3:**
- Protection of children is an integral part of the overall mission mandate.
- Rules of engagement provide the authority to use force, if deemed necessary, to protect children.
- The handling of child soldiers is complex and requires training.
- Bear in mind two key considerations:
  - Take action to address child protection threats;
  - Inform child protection actors of violations.
- Hand over child soldiers to child protection actors as soon as possible.

### SLIDE 31: REFERENCES

**References**

- OSRSG-CAAC website (http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org)
Review the Rules of Engagement

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Trainers should highlight key paragraphs in the rules of engagement, including principles, rules for use of force beyond self-defence, and key definitions.
Allow sufficient time for questions to be asked/answered. Actively encourage questions from learners.