

Annex 5. Sample directives relating to child protection

Annex 5a. Sample Force Commander's child protection directive [UN CONFIDENTIAL - RESTRICTED]

(Date)

Force Commander's [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] child protection Force directive

1. General

a. **Aim.** The aim of this directive is to set out how Force headquarters, brigades/sectors and military observers will implement plans and procedures on how to protect children during military activities within the legal framework.

b. **Situation.** [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force headquarters has been mandated by the Security Council to ensure that child protection concerns are integrated into all operations from the strategic to the tactical. Grave violations against children are being committed by actors in the [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] area of responsibility. Deliberate targeting of children, including the recruitment of boys and girls into armed groups, is frequent and directly contributes to destabilizing the population. Refinement of the Force's directive is required to further optimize its effectiveness in combating these violations setting the conditions for stability.

2. Critical information

a. **Definition of a child.** A child is anyone under the age of 18.

b. **Six grave violations of children's rights.** All Force members must be aware of the grave violations of child rights committed by parties to the conflict in the context of the conflict. Each member of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]'s military component must understand the problems faced by children and look for warning signs related to any of these grave violations. The following are considered to be grave violations of child rights and must be reported:

- (i) Killing and maiming of a child;
- (ii) Recruitment and use of a child by an armed group or an armed force;
- (iii) Sexual violence against a child;
- (iv) Abduction of a child;
- (v) Attack on schools and hospitals; and
- (vi) Denial of humanitarian access affecting children.

3. Formation/unit focal points for child protection

a. **The Force gender and child protection officer (Force headquarters focal point).** Responsible for ensuring information is communicated to the child protection section rapidly. The Force headquarters focal point is responsible for ensuring compliance with this directive by all members of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]'s military component. The Force headquarters focal point is also specifically responsible for reporting information related to the six grave violations of child rights to the child protection section.

The Force headquarters will lead in implementing this directive in G5 planning, through mainstreaming and focused operations on child protection.

b. **Local child protection focal points (local focal points).** Local focal points must be designated in each military observer team site, United Nations base/temporary operating base/company operations base/static combat deployments and each brigade headquarters. The local focal points are responsible for ensuring that this directive is complied with by all members of the [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]'s military component in their area of responsibility and contacting the Force headquarters focal point and the child protection section. Local focal points will also ensure training for their units¹ and provide remedial action where required. The local focal point is ideally also the gender focal point.

c. **Child protection section (CPS).** Is the civilian component, composed of Child Protection Advisers, who are tasked with ensuring that the mission's activities prioritize the best interests of children.

4. Everybody's responsibility: PLAN-ACT-ALERT-PROTECT

All Force members are responsible for delivery - before, during and after an operation.

a. **Plan.** The Force must take a proactive role in preventing the six grave violations against children. Not only must the Force take into account the different effects that conflict has on children, but effective contingency plans to mitigate risk. The Force must also actively plan operations to provide protection to children and simultaneously target those seeking to abuse children during conflict.

b. **Act.** Whether in the field or based in headquarters, should a risk of death, serious harm or disappearance of a child be imminent or in progress, the first duty of a member of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]'s military component is to take immediate action to protect the child, subject to usual operational considerations and rules of engagement.

c. **Alert.** After the member of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]'s military component has provided an immediate response to a grave violation by a party to the conflict, or where such a risk cannot be prevented or is not imminent, he or she must alert the local focal point, which shall then alert the Force headquarters focal point and the child protection section). In the absence of a local focal point, the brigade, sector or Force focal point must be contacted. The Force headquarters focal point must be informed and will then make a decision as to further actions in liaison with the CPS.

d. **Protect.** Aside from acting upon immediate threats and alerting, the protection of children entails recording learning accounts and employing effective plans, tactics and techniques to ensure that sustainable protection is provided by the Force to the population. Where necessary the Force headquarters will direct operations to support tactical headquarters.

¹ Training to include as a minimum: the six grave violations, Plan-Act-Alert-Protect and the reporting system.

5. Specific roles and responsibilities of the Force during military operations

a. **General.** This is a guideline of proactive child protection measures that can be taken by departments and should not be considered as an exhaustive list. All of these activities are the standard to achieve, but they must be carried out in accordance with legal and command guidance.

b. **G2—Intelligence.** Providing of information on actors in daily reports who are deliberately targeting children. Highlighting grave violation risks to the Force headquarters gender and child protection officer. Where required, providing target packs to assist tactical units in targeting those deliberately violating child rights. When required, supporting [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]’s efforts countering or gathering information on violations against children with unmanned assets.

c. **G5/G35/G3—Operations and plans.** All military operations must consider the effects of kinetic operations on children under Security Council resolution 1888 (2009). That must be mainstreamed on all operation planning and execution and, where necessary, changes made to ensure the protection of children and avoidance of committing or facilitating the six grave violations. In addition, the Force will conduct and direct lower headquarters to conduct deliberate planning to address the causes of abuse of children in the conflict. The consideration of the activity described will bring [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] within policy guidelines.

(i) **Contingency plans of military operations.** Operational planning must include contingency plans to protect children who may be affected or involved in the conflict, whether as combatants or as dependents of other combatants. Where there is difficulty or it is felt that the contingency plans cannot mitigate the risk then specialist expertise must be sought and cancellation of the operation considered.

(ii) **Targeting boards.** Where required, all commands are directed to conduct intelligence-led activities to isolate and neutralize forces or groups committing any of the grave violations. During targeting boards, provisional planning must consider the safety of children identified at the targeted location.

(iii) **G3—Execution of military operations.** During the execution of military operations the relevant commands are required to assess the likelihood of any grave violations and enact contingency plans accordingly.

(iv) **Patrolling.** Conducting deliberate patrols to dominate the ground around key areas for children such as schools or hospitals. Also having Force presence during time periods when children are most at risk (mornings, afternoons and at dusk).

d. **Info Operations.** The Info Operations cell is an enabler of non-kinetic operations from Force headquarters and should conduct influence activities that will positively influence the identified target audiences to respect the six grave violations against children and convincing actors to protect children’s rights under international humanitarian law by means of:

(i) **Key leadership engagement.** Through command-led engagement at all levels (Force headquarters, sector and tactical) understand the situation among key leaders (enemy civilian and friendly forces) to establish what their view is, allowing shaping of their behaviour to comply with this directive.

- (ii) **Leaflets.** During planning and execution of all operations, Info Operations to liaise with gender and child protection officer in order to plan for the distribution of child protection leaflets that will sensitize the population, the armed groups and national security forces.
 - iii) **Radio/other media.** Coordination and information sharing between the Info Operations cell and the gender and child protection officer/child protection section is required to spread the key messages on the six grave violations against children, through [UNITED NATIONS MISSION] Radio, local radio stations as well as other media platforms.
- e. **G7—Training of the Force** is critical to maintaining the standards that [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] has previously set.
- (i) **Mandatory training.** Each member of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]’s military component will receive training as part of induction, as directed by the Force Commander. The gender and child protection officer is responsible for the review of this training and its delivery in liaison with the child protection section.
 - (ii) **Continuation training.** The G7 is to enable focal points to train their own units. All local focal points are to maintain situational awareness of the collective knowledge of their forces with regard to child protection. They are to conduct regular seminars every two months with command personnel and also to provide remedial training where needed.
- f. **G9—All United Nations civil–military coordination** activity must consider how it may cause detrimental effect on protection of children and should enact a contingency plan accordingly. Quick impact projects, where possible, must look at specific child protection development initiatives.
- g. **G4—Support tactical units** with supplies that will allow for the treatment of children who have been subjected to grave violations.
- h. **Medical Section.** Provide contingency plans on the priority treatment of injured children and MEDEVAC. Operation contingency plans should include the medical assistance to be provided for children who were either part of the armed group or collateral damage.
- i. **Liaison Office [ARMED FORCE] conduct of military operations with the [ARMED FORCE]—Effective partnering.** Through the liaison cell in the [ARMED FORCE] develop the understanding that protecting children increases operational effectiveness and promote subsequent good practices. The key message to the [ARMED FORCE] is that protecting children optimizes their force through correct selection of recruits and enhances operational effectiveness through lawful conduct of operations. Through effective partnering and mentoring the Force must influence the [ARMED FORCE] to conduct their operations, where relevant, within the guidelines highlighted in this document.
- j. **DDR/DDRRR Liaison Offices.** Within the surrender process, specific planning needs to be in place when dealing with child soldiers. Specific staff instruction must detail how the Force deals with such surrenders and provides the correct DDR/DDRRR measures in conjunction with the child protection section. Any child surrender must be reported to the Gender and Child Protection Officer in Force headquarters.

k. **Gender and Child Protection Operations Group.** When a grave violation occurs and may have the potential to have a severe impact on the mission, the headquarters focal point will call a Gender and Child Protection Operations Group. That includes subject matter experts from other United Nations departments and members of the Force as required and its purpose is to consequence manage an issue with G3 operations, to ensure protection of civilians, including children.

l. **Military observers.** Provide information on the ground and reporting on any of the six grave violations that they witness.

m. **Military police/Conduct and Discipline Unit.** Provide investigation assistance where required or called upon by the child protection/gender and child protection officer/focal points or chain of command. Provide liaison throughout investigations and make recommendations accordingly.

6. Implementation

a. **Timings.** All branches of the [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force are to begin implementing these measures upon receipt.

b. **Seminar.** A protection of children seminar will be held within a month of publication in Force headquarters. Attendance will be required from all staff branches and child protection focal points from sectors.

7. Conclusion

a. **Amendments and review.** Any amendments are to be suggested to the points of contact. That directive will be reviewed annually.

b. **Closing remarks.** [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force has set high standards with regard to protection of children within the mission. This directive seeks to build on these standards and implement measures to successfully tackle the problem more effectively by deliberate planning to prevent violations against children. In order for this to succeed all members of the Force must be actively involved and consider protection of children carefully in carrying out their duty.

8. Points of contact

- a. Force gender and child protection officer (contact details)
- b. Child Protection Adviser/Section (contact details)
- c. G5 Info Operations planner. (contact details)

(Name, title, signature)

Force Commander

[UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATION]

Annex 5b. Sample directive on the protection of schools and universities against military use

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

(Date)

To: Name, Force Commander
Name, Police Commissioner

From: Name, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (signature)

Subject: UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] directive on the protection of schools and universities against military use

Purpose

1. These guidelines aim at preventing the use of schools and universities by [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force and Police and minimizing the impact of armed conflict on the security and education of children.

General principles

2. Schools have to be havens of peace, where children are protected even in times of armed conflict. They are, however, often attacked or used for military purposes by parties to the conflict in [COUNTRY], to the detriment of children.
3. [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force and Police are requested not to use schools for any purpose. All [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military and police personnel should avoid encroaching on the security and education of children by using the following guidelines as good practice.
4. Schools and universities that are operational should never be used in any way. This applies to schools and universities that are closed after school hours, during weekends and holidays and during vacation periods.
5. Abandoned schools and university buildings which are occupied or used by [UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force and Police should be liberated without delay in order to allow educational authorities to reopen them as soon as possible. All signs of militarization or fortification of such buildings or structures should be completely removed after the withdrawal and any damage caused to the institution should be repaired quickly before handover to the authorities, to allow the return to educational use.
6. All ammunitions, unexploded ordnance or war debris should be cleared from the site.
7. The use of a school or university by a party to a conflict is not permitted and cannot provide grounds for continuation of such use.
8. Military and police personnel tasked to secure schools or universities should avoid wherever possible entering into the school premises or buildings in order not to compromise their civilian status.
9. The Force Commander and the Police Commissioner are requested to ensure the implementation and wide dissemination of this directive.

Definition of terms

Schools and universities

These are places used principally for the purpose of education. They comprise kindergartens or nursery schools, primary and secondary schools, vocational training centres and higher education institutions including universities, colleges and technical training schools. They also include all property and grounds that belongs to these institutions.

They do not however, include institutions that are dedicated to military training and education.

Use

This signifies any activity conducted within the physical space or premises of a school or a university in support of military efforts, be it temporarily or for a longer term. It includes, but is not limited to, the following: as a military barracks or base; for offensive or defensive positioning; for the stocking of arms and ammunitions; for interrogation and detention; for military training; as an observation post; as a firing or fire control position. It does not include situations where the Force and the police are present in proximity to schools and universities to provide protection to the school or ensure security.

References

- Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual* (2012), (Section 2.13, page 26);
- Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, *Draft Lucens Guidelines on the Protection of Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* (2013);
- Security Council resolutions 1998 (2011) and 2143 (2014).



Annex 5c. Sample Force Commander's directive prohibiting child labour

[UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] FORCE COMMANDER CIRCULAR ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2017 DPKO-DFS-DPA POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS REGARDING THE PROHIBITION OF CHILD LABOUR IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS]

To: All sector commanders
All staff officers
All military observers

From: Name, Force Commander

Subject: Force Commander's directive prohibiting child labour

Reference: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support and Department of Political Affairs Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations (2017) regarding the prohibition of child labour in United Nations peacekeeping operations

Aim: The aim of this directive is to ensure that no child works for a battalion or for any soldier of [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] Force and to contribute to the total protection of children from all forms of exploitation.

Definition: A child is any person under the age of 18 years.

1. Child labour is a violation of fundamental human rights. In response to several reported cases of use of child labour in different peacekeeping operations, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support, and the Department of Political Affairs adopted a policy on child protection in United Nations Peace Operations, which includes provisions on the prohibition of child labour in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations aimed at ensuring that personnel of peacekeeping missions abide by international norms on child labour.

2. Child labour means work that is judged dangerous for the physical and mental development of a child (persons below 18 years). It includes all work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; interferes with their education by depriving them of the possibility to go to school, making them abandon school prematurely and working for long hours.

3. Consistent with the *2017 Child Protection Policy* mentioned above, I demand that all [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] military personnel adhere to the following instructions:

- (a) Refrain from using child labour: any work or provision of services including but not limited to washing of vehicles, polishing of shoes, messengers for selling of products, domestic servants, security guards by a person under the age of 18 years irrespective of duration, frequency, compensation or the nature of the underlying agreement.
- (b) Not allow or authorize children on United Nations premises, camps or facilities for the purpose of the provision of labour or the rendering of services.

- (c) Take all non-coercive measures including the use of access cards and control of identities to ensure that unaccompanied children do not enter [UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION] premises, camps and facilities to work or procure services.
- (d) Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.

4. Compliance with this circular is mandatory: all staff officers, sector commanders, and military observers must take all necessary measures to ensure that persons working under their command are informed and abide by it.

Enforcement

Besides the responsibility of commanders to ensure compliance with this circular, the military police (United Nations and contingents), shall regularly conduct patrols and adopt other measures to ensure compliance with the provision of this directive.

[UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATION], Force Commander
 (Signature, date)



SAMPLE
DPKO/DFS TERMS OF REFERENCE
United Nations
Military Child Protection Focal Point*

A. Background

1. Pursuant to DPKO/DFS/DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations (2017), and relevant Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict, the [UN PEACE OPERATION] Child Protection Section (CPS) is mandated to carry out the following activities:
 - Ensure the integration, coordination and follow-up on issues related to children and armed conflict throughout the United Nations system and, in coordination with UNICEF and other stakeholders, engage in dialogue with the parties to conflict;
 - Monitor and report on grave violations against children committed by the parties to conflict and contribute to the fight against impunity;
 - Mainstream child protection throughout the work of mission components, and train uniformed components to prevent and respond appropriately to child rights violations;
 - Liaise with protection of civilians (POC) unit and uniformed components to support prevention activities, in order to strengthen the protection of children in armed conflict;
 - Advocate with national and local authorities, and raise awareness among governmental institutions, communities and civil society on child rights and child protection.
2. In order to ensure that all components of the mission, particularly the military component, integrate child protection concerns in their activities, it is critical that a network of [UN PEACE OPERATION] military Child Protection Focal Points be established to ensure that child protection concerns are considered at all stages of planning and processes, and in operational activities at Force Headquarters (FHQ) level, as well as at sector and contingent levels.
3. The role of the focal point is to:
 - Serve as an interface between the Child Protection Section and [UN PEACE OPERATION] military component;
 - Facilitate collaboration between the Child Protection Section and the [ARMED FORCES];
 - Represent child protection in areas where a Child protection Section is not deployed;
 - Mainstream child protection concerns through the work of the military component to better protect children.

B. Summary of the role

4. Assuming the function of Child Focal Point/Officer will be an additional role for the military Gender Officer at Force Headquarters. The Officer will be guided and supported by the mission's Senior Child Protection Adviser (CPA), who is mandated to provide substantive leadership and support to ensure that child protection concerns are integrated into military planning processes and activities.
5. The Senior Child Protection Adviser and Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point/Officer will coordinate and work together, as necessary, to develop relevant standard operating procedures (SOPs) and terms of reference (TORs) for the Force.

C. Key responsibilities of the Force Headquarters military Child Protection Focal Point

6. The Force Headquarters military Child Protection Focal Point will:
 - Work with the Senior Child Protection Adviser to strengthen advice provided to the [UN PEACE OPERATION] Force Commander, senior military leadership, Force Headquarters staff and commanders on all issues related to the protection of children.
 - Liaise with and train military Child Protection Focal Points at the sector and unit levels to ensure implementation of child protection measures at the tactical level (battalion and company levels).
 - Establish/strengthen an alert system to transmit information on any of the six grave violations and other child protection concerns through the chain of command and to the Child Protection Section of the mission, as well as information on threats that could cause displacement, human rights violations, among others.
 - Oversee the implementation of specific directives, including standard operating procedures on the handover of children associated with armed groups of national forces captured in operations or those who have surrendered to the peacekeeping force.
 - Develop guidelines on children's issues, including appropriate conduct when interacting with children and prevention of all forms of child exploitation and child labour.

D. Key responsibilities of the sector headquarters military Child Protection Focal Point

7. The sector headquarters military Child Protection Focal Point will:
 - In collaboration with the sector-level Child Protection Officer or team leader, advise the sector Commander on all issues related to the protection of children within the sector's area of responsibility.
 - Act as a liaison between the sector child protection team and sector headquarters, and facilitate two-way communication between the Force and the civilian child protection teams.
 - Follow up on the training of contingent Child Protection Focal Points/Officers to ensure implementation of child protection measures at the tactical level (battalion and company level);
 - Handle all issues related to child protection concerns within the Force at the sector level, in collaboration with the civilian child protection team.
 - Obtain referral mechanisms from the child protection team at the sector level for all military Child Protection Focal Points within the area of responsibility, to address sexual violence, children separated from armed groups, children accused of witchcraft, unaccompanied children, and others, and continuously consult the child protection team about response and protection activities. Ensure that all military Child Protection Focal Points are adequately informed about referrals.
 - Inform the civilian child protection team of all child protection concerns/activities at the sector level, including grave violations against children.

E. Key responsibilities of the battalion command group military Child Protection Focal Point

8. The battalion command group military Child Protection Focal Point will:
 - Advise the battalion Commander on all issues related to the protection of children.
 - Act as a liaison between child protection actors and the battalion.
 - Handle all issues related to child protection violations, including the establishment of an alert system to transmit through the chain of command and to the Child Protection Unit/Section, information received on any of the six grave violations, especially the recruitment and use of children by armed forces or armed groups, the killing or maiming of children, sexual violence against children, attacks on schools and hospitals, abduction of children, and the denial of humanitarian access.
 - Coordinate with the military Child Protection Focal Point at Force or mission headquarters.
 - Develop and oversee the implementation of specific standards of procedure on the handover of child soldiers captured during operations or those who have surrendered to the peacekeeping force.
 - Develop guidelines for the battalion on children's issues, including detention, conduct during interaction with children and prevention of all forms of exploitation, including child labour and sexual exploitation.
9. Note that, at the United Nations infantry battalion level, the responsibility for "gender and child protection" will be performed by a single officer, under the supervision of the Executive Officer (XO) or Second-in-command (2IC).

F. Monitoring and Reporting

10. The Child Protection Focal Point will work closely with the Child Protection Section within the area of responsibility and transmit information about violations to the section using established Information-sharing protocols and taking into account confidentiality and sensitivity in dealing with children's issues. All reports shall be monitored by the Force Headquarters Focal Point.

* See United Nations, DPO-DPPA, *Manual for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations* (2019), Annex 4a.