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## Increasing awareness on prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence

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Following the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1820 in 2008, an increasing number of Peacekeeping Missions have been mandated to address conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

To further this mandate and to ensure that military, police and civilian peacekeepers know how to address this heinous crime, DPKO/DFS's Integrated Training Service and Policy and Best Practice Service in the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training organised the first Training of Trainers (ToT) course on the Prevention and Response to CRSV for Integrated Mission Training Centres (IMTCs), in Entebbe, Uganda from 26 to 29 May 2015.

Twenty-five military, police and civilian trainers from 10 Peacekeeping Missions and three Headquarters offices participated in the course. The trainers will further train and spread awareness on prevention and response to CRSV in their respective missions.

"This is an important moment. Never before has UN peacekeeping training addressed in such depth, the complexities of the conflict-related sexual violence mandate with mission trainers" said Omowunmi Omo, Head of the Field Training Support Team, who led the DPKO/DFS training. She added that such training

strengthens the UN commitment towards protecting vulnerable populations and urged trainers to share the message within their respective missions.

The training showcased best practices ranging from interventions with Heads of State and non-State actors to naming and shaming perpetrators of CRSV. The training was reinforced with in-depth deliberations and analysis on mission-specific scenarios that reflect the operational environment and challenges prevalent in current peacekeeping missions.

Hotspot mapping early-warning indicators, monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements, provision of survivor assistance, and the 'dos and don'ts' for first responders to an incident were also addressed by the participants.

Rana Rahal, Gender Affairs Officer for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) stated that pre-existing inequalities and discrimination contributes to conflict-related sexual violence in which women and girls are disproportionately affected. "This course provided me with comprehensive understanding of addressing CRSV within the Women Peace and Security, Protection of Civilians and Rule of Law frameworks," she said.

Muhamudal Hassan, an IMTC Training Officer from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) said that while conflict-related sexual violence is invisible and endemic in conflict zones, it is preventable and punishable.

"This training will help UN peacekeepers to adapt a proactive posture, prevent sexual violence, deter perpetrators and help to protect vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls," said Hassan.

The final day of the training coincided with International Day of UN Peacekeepers. To mark this event, the participants observed a moment of silence to honour UN peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause for peace. Omo reminded everyone that "while the dangers peacekeepers face are significant, we should not forget the unimaginable suffering and dangers faced by those who look towards us for protection."

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