“Essential knowledge required by peacekeepers with protection mandate and desirable Pre-Deployment Training format”

By Tomoko Matsuzawa

Today, more than 95% of UN peacekeepers are mandated to protect civilian. With increased attention as well as expectation from international community and emphasis to the protection issue from the United Nations, most peacekeepers on the ground are well aware of the importance of the mandate. Meanwhile, they often have different understanding and interpretation of “protection”, partly because it lacks common definition among key actors - including human rights and humanitarian actors in the field. In particular, many military peacekeepers still tend to consider “protection” as simple physical protection with unique nature of their role with given authorization to use of force.

Given that Protection of Civilian (POC) has become a core mandate for modern peacekeeping operations and it is a shared responsibility for all mission components, it is prerequisite for all personnel of UN peacekeeping missions to receive a proper comprehensive Pre-Deployment Training (PDT).

This short article introduces essential knowledge required by peacekeepers with protection mandate and desirable PDT format.

1. Essential knowledge

(1) Fundamental elements concerning PKO
- All uniformed personnel to be deployed to peacekeeping missions need to develop their knowledge on the fundamental elements concerning PKO, regardless of where they are deployed in which capacity - either as an infantry or as an engineer. This also applies for civilian personnel.
- Fundamental elements include followings (particularly but not exclusively):
  - Main organs of the United Nations, especially Security Council which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security
  - Evolution of modern PKO with the change of nature of armed conflicts
  - Basic legal framework relating PKO e.g. International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law
  - Relevant thematic subjects
such as gender, Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), and Child Protection, as these are all interlinked to each other -Concept of POC mandate within PKO context

- It should not only give series of theoretical lectures, but also include practical advice/training on “dos and don’ts” on the possible cases such as CRSV.
- Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) should be emphasized as there is still lack of understanding among many peacekeepers (not only uniformed personnel but also civilian personnel) especially on prostitution. Clear explanation on consequence of SEA should be also given.
- After presenting conceptual parts, the reality and implementation challenges in the field should be also explained. For example, peacebuilding activities such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration is ideal as a concept while actual implementation takes time due to its complexity and needs for tailoring to the country.
- Military and police peacekeepers need to know about civilian protection actors, e.g. UN Country Team and NGOs which usually start their protection activities prior to the arrival of peacekeepers. By knowing key humanitarian principles such as neutrality and impartiality, which are different from the one of military and police, they will have a better idea of how to work together in the field.

(2) Mission specific environment
- The risks faced by peacekeepers are varied from missions to missions. For example, while majority of mission fatalities have resulted from small arms such as guns and rocket-propelled grenades, PKO mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is more exposed to the threat of vehicle borne improvised explosive device and IED. In order to mitigate the risk, peacekeepers should receive the mission specific training to learn comprehensive mission environment, which includes potential risks on the ground, specific local context and dynamics, and key stakeholders including the main non-state armed groups prior to the deployment.
- Mission specific training should enable uniformed peacekeepers to prepare appropriate equipment, operational readiness, and very importantly, proper mindset. Given the specific operational tasks and required skills, this training is preferred to be tailor made for military and police components respectively.

2. Desirable PDT format
   (1) Classroom training
   - PDT should be started with presentation of main concept (especially for fundamental knowledge building), which is desirable to combine with media/technology, such as audio footage of testimony of civilians from the field, small-middle sized group discussions, and role play exercises, in order to activate audience’s participation. Giving presentation task would also help them to develop planning and presentation skills.
   - If the participants are mixed with military, police and civilians, it is particularly worthwhile to conduct integrated mission staff exercises by tasking them military, police and civilian roles and giving injects to deal in changing operational environment. This type of exercises is quite useful since participants can physically practice what they learned in the classroom. After conducting this exercise, participants will have much better understanding of complexity of mission activities as well as importance of communication and cooperation with other components.
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   (2) Field Training Exercise (FTX)
   - It has often been observed during role play exercises in classroom training that some participants lacked confidence in their response to victims of CRSV and child soldiers. Also, some military participants hesitated to make a decision of use force even after receiving trainings on ROE.
PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING - LESSONS LEARNED

- In this regard, it is extremely useful and ideal to conduct FTX after completion of classroom training by preparing the field as close as possible to the actual AOR of the PKO Mission.
- During FTX, participants would receive daily tasks such as foot patrol, escorting high rank civilians and conducting dialogue with local community. And during such activities, they would face “incidents”, such as ambush, protest from local community, encountering victims of CRSV seeking their help. Incidents should be realistic and relevant to respective missions where participants are deployed.
- The participants’ performance should be closely monitored by facilitators/trainers who should give them advice after the exercise. When the incidents are related with POC/CRSV/Child protection, it is desirable to place a civilian trainer with military/police trainers on the site.
- In the beginning of FTX, it is not unusual to see some participants making wrong decisions, getting panicked, or doing nothing. However, after dealing with several incidents, they would start to have a better acquaintance with the field ambience and more confident in their decision. Ideally, FTX requires vast areas however it can still be conducted in smaller space.

3. Other elements to enrich PDT

(1) Parallel or other trainings
- Civil, police and military relations training
Given the needs for integrated approach to fulfill protection mandate, mixed audience training on related subjects i.e. POC, child protection and CRSV will boost understanding to each component’s roles and responsibilities and enhance cooperation among them.
- Female Engagement Team (FET) Training
Role and responsibility of FET in the PKO missions has significance especially in response to POC mandate. While many T/PCCs still do not manage to deploy fair balanced number of male/female peacekeepers, specific training for FET should be considered.
- Follow-up trainings
Once peacekeepers are deployed to the field, they would have more questions and therefore In-mission training is crucial for their successful activities. Also, Post-mission review upon their return is important for storing institutional memory and preparation for the future PDT.

(2) Support to under-resourced T/PCCs, training centers and trainers
- Material support to uniformed peacekeepers
Some T/PCCs have limited resour-
ce to fully equip their personnel, which may lead to potential risk in the field. It is desirable to support T/PCCs by equipping their peacekeepers orR completion of PDT:

- Support to T/PCCs’ Training centers/trainers

While T/PCCs’ training centers/trainers play a crucial role for ensuring good quality of PDT, some training centers lack basic equipment such as office supply, radio, vehicles, and computers and also lack institutional capacity to design and implement trainings. Trainers often do not have enough opportunity to receive TOT. Consideration for support to these areas would contribute to the improved quality of PDT.8

- Establishment of regional mobile training team

Establishment and deployment of regional mobile training team may be considered as a solution to support under-resourced training centers. The team should be composed of experts/trainers with field experience and knowledge on main PKO subjects. Fair balance of profile (military, police, and civilian) and gender should be also taken into consideration.

Conclusion

Effective and efficient PDT is crucial for modern peacekeepers with protection mandate given its complex mission environment and diverse protection actors in the field. While a number of training materials with rich contents have been developed by the UN, it has still not been fully used by all T/PCCs partly due to lack of proper facility, equipment, and human resource. Technical and financial support to these countries from the UN and developed member states have significantly improved many peacekeepers’ capacity and readiness to field activities. Yet, commitment and partnerships between the UN and all member states especially T/PCCs should be further strengthened to ensure that all peacekeepers receive comprehensive PDT in order to achieve shared POC goals of international community.

2. United Nations Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Training Materials (CPOC) published by UN Department of Peace Operations in 2017 introduces three tiers of operational concept, namely protection through dialogue and engagement, provision of physical protection, and establishment of a protective environment. CPOC further states that all components of the mission, including the military, have a role to play in each of the three tiers.
4. It is strictly prohibited to have sex with anyone, in exchange for money, employment, preferential treatment, goods or services, whether or not prostitution is legal in the country of peacekeepers, or the host country. United Nations Conduct in UN Field Missions, https://conduct.unmissions.org/
5. UN is actively supporting DDR process in many countries. As the process entails mediation and securing positive perception from local community on integration of former combatants, it is a long-term activity. https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration.
8. “Troops should not be deployed without the necessary and appropriate equipment in the threat environment. Inadequate or missing equipment facilitates and increases the number of casualties”, Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, op.cit.
9. There are countries actively providing support in this area. For example, the US Government’s Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) has supported many TCCs by building capacity of military personnel and contributed to the UN POC goal. https://www.state.gov/t/pm/gpi/gpoi/index.htm. Italian Government’s Center for Excellence for Stability Police Units enjoys high reputation with its extensive capacity building training courses mainly for police personnel. https://www.coesp.un/aboutus. Japan is also enhancing its support by deployment of its Self Defense Force personnel to African and Asian countries to provide technical advice and training to the Peacekeeping Training Centers. http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2018/DJ2018_3-2-3_web.pdf.

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