



Thematic Series on Building More Effective UN Peace Operations

*“Protection of Civilians and Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence: Scenario-Based Training in Peacekeeping Operations”*

Summary of the 18 December, 2012 Thematic Series Panel Discussion

The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations and the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) at New York University held a panel discussion as part of the thematic series, “Building More Effective UN Peace Operations” on 18 December 2012 that examined methods to improve protection of civilians (PoC) and the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence in peacekeeping operations. The event was opened with introductory remarks by Canada’s Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador Gilles Rivard. CIC’s Associate Director Richard Gowan moderated panelists Michael Heller Chu, Protection of Civilians Team Leader in the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, and retired Major-General Patrick Cammaert, who served in multiple UN missions including in as the commanding officer of the eastern division in the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The discussion focused on the available training modules and scenario-based exercises for military and civilian peacekeepers on protection of civilians and conflict-related sexual violence.

In 2009, Security Council Resolution 1894 called for adequate protection of civilians training and in 2010, the UN’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping requested the development of modules for this task. In response, the UN Secretariat, in consultations with troop contributing countries (TCCs), police-contributing countries (PCCs), humanitarian actors, and mission personnel, developed protection of civilian modules for pre-deployment and in-mission training. Six modules were rolled out in late 2011 aiming to establish a common understanding of what protection of civilians meant and the expectations for UN peacekeepers in planning and implementing PoC strategies. It also sought to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities for protection actors in the field.

The six PoC training modules covered issues including international legal dimensions; protection of civilians in a peacekeeping context; the operational framework; prevention of sexual and gender-based violence; and scenario-based exercises. These modules also established strategic frameworks for planning and managing risks. The scenario-based training exercises developed to assist with pre-deployment training of both military and civilian personnel contain twelve situations ranging from less to more complex. Trainees are challenged to make decisions based on changing information, designed to mimic the fast moving situations that peacekeepers face in the field.

Conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence is seen as a part of the larger protection of civilians issue, and in 2010 the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UN WOMEN developed measures aimed at generating awareness and supporting pre-deployment training. This work built on an inventory of best practices created in 2008. The sexual and gender-based violence

training exercises address the need for strong understanding of the mandate and rules of engagement. Creative thinking and a sense of the mandate's spirit and expectations should also help guide peacekeepers dealing with sexual violence. Strong mission leadership and the skills and will from member states are also important factors for more effective protection.

During the frank discussion session, the desire to see better protection of civilians was shared, and the panelists reiterated the need for member states to have the will to protect civilians in peacekeeping operations. The deployment of sexual and gender based violence experts, and particularly female experts, was encouraged, though it was suggested that lack of resources was not sufficient reason for the failure to protect civilians, and that more could be done by the already-deployed peacekeepers. The development of further training modules for protection of civilians remains on-going, and the Secretariat is in the process of also developing mission-specific scenario exercises for pre-deployment training, with all modules targeted at UN actors.