

## WHITE PAPER

### Improving the performance and impact of UN peacekeeping operations

*Alison Giffen, Center for Civilians in Conflict<sup>1</sup>*

*This White Paper was written to contribute to the planning of the upcoming United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial-level Meeting in December 2021 in Seoul, Republic of Korea and the preparatory meetings that touch on peacekeeping performance. In the context of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, the objective of the 2021 Ministerial is to strengthen UN peacekeeping, including by improving the performance and impact of UN operations; closing capability gaps through concrete pledges; facilitating new partnerships and strengthening existing ones; and promoting systemic changes that will improve operations.*

*This paper does not represent the views of any Member State, the UN Secretariat, or the International Peace Institute. The content of this White Paper is largely based on findings from in-depth field research and publications produced by the Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC). Additional information was gathered from interviews with 17 representatives of Member States (selected from all regional blocs) and 10 Secretariat personnel, UN documents, and academic and expert research.*

#### I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Six years ago, heads of state, other high-level representatives of UN Member States and regional organizations, and Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon gathered in New York to participate in the Leaders' Summit on UN Peacekeeping.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, four peacekeeping ministerial-level events were held along with regional preparatory conferences. The Summit, ministerial-level meetings, and regional conferences generated an unprecedented number of concrete Member State pledges of uniformed personnel, enablers, and capacity building to strengthen UN peacekeeping operations.

During each high-level meeting, the UN Secretariat worked with Member States to generate personnel, assets, enablers, and training (hereafter referred to as pledges) that are critical in modern peacekeeping operations, including those related to the safety and security, mobility, and situational awareness of UN personnel. In addition, participants used statements, declarations, and communiqués to convey high-level political commitments to tackle issues that could not be addressed through pledges alone. Co-hosts also used the high-level meetings and preparatory conferences to launch the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers through Peacekeeping, and the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations – all voluntary initiatives that Member States could endorse and ideally implement as individual governments and in partnership with each other.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The author is the Director of the Center for Civilians in Conflict's Peacekeeping Program. She would like to thank the many individuals who participated in interviews and provided background information in support of the paper. The paper was commissioned by the International Peace Institute, with the support of the Government of the Republic of Korea.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that prior to the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, a number of similar events were held, including a Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping hosted in New York by Vice President Joe Biden co-hosted a summit meeting on peacekeeping with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan.

<sup>3</sup> Member States launched the following initiatives at past peacekeeping ministerial-level events and preparatory conferences: the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians (<http://civilianprotection.rw/wp->

In 2019, in parallel to the Ministerial-level meeting, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in partnership with Member States, launched the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping (the Declaration). One of the eight pillars of A4P is dedicated to peacekeeping performance. Although the title of the performance pillar is “to support effective performance and accountability by **all** peacekeeping components,” the bulk of the Declaration language in the section focuses on uniformed personnel.<sup>4</sup> A number of Member State representatives interviewed for this paper emphasized the importance of focusing equal attention on civilian and uniformed personnel performance, whole of mission performance, and Secretariat performance.

It would be difficult to address all major aspects of performance through a Peacekeeping Ministerial and preparatory conferences. This paper proposes that Member States should use the 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial and at least two of the preparatory conferences<sup>5</sup> to:

- 1) Prioritize pledges of personnel, assets, and enablers that enable **mobility** in peacekeeping and
- 2) Strengthen a set of core capabilities that are vital to the successful implementation of a peacekeeping mandate, specifically, those that enable **threat assessment and analysis, planning and decision-making, and evaluation.**

---

[content/uploads/2015/09/REPORT\\_PoC\\_conference\\_Long-version.pdf](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes-pledge-engageons.aspx?lang=eng)), the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers through Peacekeeping ([https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/human\\_rights-droits\\_homme/principles-vancouver-principes-pledge-engageons.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes-pledge-engageons.aspx?lang=eng)), and the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations ([https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/gender\\_equality-egalite\\_des\\_genres/elsie\\_initiative-initiative\\_elsie.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/elsie_initiative-initiative_elsie.aspx?lang=eng)).

<sup>4</sup> Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations, emphasis added.

<sup>5</sup> The preparatory conferences on peacekeeping performance and the protection of civilians and safety and security would be relevant forums for this discussion.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Member States can take the following steps to support mobility and these core capabilities. Several of these steps require commensurate steps by the UN Secretariat, as indicated.

### **Prioritizing Mobility**

- Member states should focus pledges of uniformed personnel, assets and enablers that enable mobility, including rapidly deployable units, special forces, recce companies. Battalion level deployments should be organized to operate in a more agile, flexible manner, including quick reaction capability. Additional pledges of formed police units (FPU), including SWAT capabilities, with rapid reaction capability are also needed.
- Member states should provide explicit authorization for uniformed units to be deployed across the country of operation. T/PCCs and the UN Secretariat should work together to ensure that this flexibility is reflected in MoUs.
- In tandem, the Secretariat should review policies and procedures at UN and mission headquarters to ensure that civilian personnel can deploy safely and quickly to remote areas, and develop requirements or incentives for civilian personnel to deploy to austere field locations in mission contexts.
- The Secretariat and missions should revisit the support concept for temporary operating bases, as the number and duration of such deployments often exceed what T/PCCs are able to sustain, with detrimental impact on morale and performance.

### **Support to Assessment and Analysis, Planning and Decision-making, and Evaluation**

- Member States, through the preparatory conferences, could work with the Secretariat to further identify what additional capacities, skills and training may be needed to strengthen assessment and analysis, planning and decision-making, and evaluation.
- Member States could improve and support the performance of U2, U3, U5 branches of military components, as well as relevant sections of police components, and core integrated capabilities such as JMACs, JOCs, and field-level analysis, coordination, and planning cells by:
  - deploying MSOs for 12 months and/or support turning critical FCOS, U2, U3, and U5 positions into professional contracted posts, which would allow missions to identify personnel through a more rigorous selection process and retain staff for multi-year contracts;
  - nominating military staff officers and individual police officers with strong language, assessment, analysis, and planning skills;
  - seconding additional personnel to Department of Peace Operations' Force Generation Service to strengthen the selection process of Military Staff Officers (MSOs) by broadening the types of staff officer posts that undergo validation interviews and require evaluations of nominees' skills prior to selection and deployment. The Secretariat should request inclusion of these additional posts in FSG's staffing;
  - supporting missions to revise staff officer evaluations upon arrival to include skills that are required for the position they have been selected for and support mission decisions to repatriate staff officers who do not have the skills needed to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.
  - increasing seconded qualified police personnel to the Police Division to support commensurate changes throughout the entire deployment cycle of senior police officials, in line with the Strategic Guidance Framework for International Policing (SGF).

- At the Peacekeeping Ministerial and preparatory conferences, Member States could publicly pledge to support these core capabilities by:
  - pledging specialized training for staff officers and police on assessment, planning and evaluation.
  - pledging sustained, multi-year (versus one-off) capacity building initiatives, and expert personnel focused on these capabilities.
  - pledging voluntary funding for mission- and Secretariat-level extra-budgetary posts and programs related to these core capabilities.
  - publicly pledging to support the full implementation of CPAS, including through related UNSC and Fifth Committee legislation, C-34 reports, and extra-budgetary funding. The Secretariat should ensure that relevant Member States representatives are regularly briefed to understand the purpose of CPAS, its state of implementation in peacekeeping missions, challenges to effective implementation, how it can be improved to meet mission planning and evaluation needs, its limitations, and the resources required to support its implementation.
  
- At the Peacekeeping Ministerial and preparatory conferences, Member States and the Secretariat could publicly commit to systematically report on how they are implementing their commitment to support these core capabilities. This information could be included in public tracking mechanisms.

This paper has three subsequent sections. Section two provides a brief overview of some of the most significant steps that have been taken by the Secretariat in partnership with Member States to improve peacekeeping performance over the last six years. Section three focuses on the rationale for prioritizing mobility-related personnel, assets, and enablers. Section four examines the need for Member States and the Secretariat to address assessment and analysis, planning and decision-making, and evaluation and describes in greater detail the core capabilities that support this system.

## II. BACKGROUND: SIX YEARS OF PROGRESS ON PEACEKEEPING PERFORMANCE

Over the last several years, Member States have called on the Secretary-General and each other to improve the performance of UN peacekeeping operations. In turn, Secretaries-General Ban and Guterres launched a range of reform initiatives, including of the UN peace and security architecture and management reforms to Action for Peacekeeping and less visible updates of peacekeeping policies, guidance, training and standards. There has been notable progress in three areas of performance: **uniformed units**, **whole of mission performance**, and **whole of system performance**. A brief overview of each is provided here.

### Uniformed Units

In 2015, the then-UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations launched two initiatives that have served as a foundation for improved performance: the **Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS)** and the **Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell (SFGCPC)**. The SFGCPC – “the Cell” – was established to identify key capability gaps and work with Member States to generate them, and has done so in advance of each high-level meeting. The PCRS improved the way that Member States register pledges and the process that the Secretariat undertakes to assess, verify, and track whether a Member State’s pledge is ready to deploy. In 2017, the Secretariat and Member States made additional progress in

enabling and preparing pledges through the establishment of the light coordination mechanism (LCM), which aims to enable capacity building and training partnerships.

The Secretariat in consultation with Member States has also taken a number of steps to clarify standards and practices by developing and updating numerous **policies, guidance, training, and standards for uniformed units**. On the military side, the Secretariat developed the Operational Readiness Assurance and Performance Improvement policy, updated many military unit manuals, and partnered with Member States to organize regional conferences where the new policy and standards could be disseminated to TCCs. As part of this process, the Secretariat developed military-specific evaluations, including military skill validations during pre-deployment visits undertaken by DPO's Force Generation Service (FGS), and Force Commander evaluations of military units during every rotation, which are overseen by DPO's Military Performance Evaluation Taskforce (MPET).<sup>6</sup> (In response to COVID-19, military skill validations were conducted remotely.) MPET is developing a military performance evaluation system for military units, HQs and individuals in line with strategic policy and initiatives based on clearly identified standards and indicators – the standards now cover more than 93 percent of all military personnel.<sup>7</sup> In practice, all missions complete the six-month operational readiness inspection, but not all missions consistently perform quarterly or monthly inspections. The Cell has also established a Knowledge Management database and performance review process to inform capacity development needs of T/PCCs and deployment decisions.

On the police side, the Police Division has enhanced pre-deployment assessment operational readiness efforts, including by developing and facilitating adherence to the SOP on assessing and evaluating the performance of FPU. Evaluations specific to Formed Police Units prior to deployment include operational capability, command elements, shooting, driving skills and COE assessments. During deployment, FPUs are subject to monthly inspections of weapons, ammunition, and equipment by FPU coordinators; quarterly performance evaluations; and quarterly reviews of COE. The Secretariat, together with curriculum development groups consisting of Member States nominated experts have advanced the development of the UN Police Training Architecture Programme modules to help facilitate Strategic Guidance Framework-compliant policing.

Appropriately addressing and avoiding **caveats** by T/PCCs remains a critical issue for performance. Signatories of the Declaration of Shared Commitments committed to “redouble all efforts to identify and clearly communicate any caveats or change in status of caveats, and to work with the Secretariat to develop a clear, comprehensive and transparent procedure on caveats.”<sup>8</sup> While some member states have argued for deployments without any such restriction, there is recognition that not all caveats are detrimental to performance, particularly when officially declared so that they can be factored into strategic and operational decision-making. By contrast, improvised, unofficial caveats remain an obstacle to “timely and effective responses to threats.”<sup>9</sup> The Secretariat introduced a mechanism to collect

---

<sup>6</sup> IPPAF, paragraph 29. Force Commander's Evaluation of Subordinate Military Entities in Peacekeeping Operations, January 2016.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, “Report of the Secretary General: Overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: budget performance for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 and budget for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022,” (A/75/786), para 86, <https://undocs.org/A/75/786>

<sup>8</sup> Action for Peacekeeping, Declaration of Shared Commitments, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p-declaration-en.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Namie Di Razza, “The Accountability System for the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping,” International Peace Institute, December 2020, <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/POC-Accountability-System-Final.pdf>

undeclared caveats from force headquarters, and is currently developing a comprehensive, transparent procedure on caveats for military components.<sup>10</sup>

### **Whole of Mission Performance**

Secretary-General Guterres took a significant step to improve mission planning and the assessment of the impact of peacekeeping missions by introducing the **Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS)**. The CPAS is designed to enable missions “to more systematically assess their operating environment, identify what influence they aim to have, and assess progress towards these goals using data and analysis[, which] are used to track impact over time, assess performance, inform future plans, and formulate recommendations to decision-makers and mission leadership to enhance mandate implementation and the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations.”<sup>11</sup>

CPAS is being used in eight peacekeeping missions and has begun to show results, most notably by helping to support existing planning process like results-based budgeting (RBB) and improving reporting to Member States.<sup>12</sup> Heads of mission have cited the utility of CPAS in better defining mission results frameworks and informing strategic and operational decision-making, helping to reprioritize, improving reporting, facilitating strategic planning.<sup>13</sup> In August 2020, the Secretariat shared additional evidence that CPAS is supporting mission planning and reporting to Member States, relaying that UNFYCIP used CPAS data to inform the Secretary-General’s January 2020 report on the situation in Lebanon, MINUSMA is using CPAS as the basis of their next RBB, UNIFIL is using CPAS to strengthen integrated planning between civilian and military personnel, and MINUSCA has used CPAS to enable more flexible planning.<sup>14</sup>

### **Whole of System Performance**

Past efforts to improve the operational readiness and performance of uniformed units and the implementation of CPAS are notable and should be welcomed and sustained. However, they only address a piece of the performance puzzle. Through UN Security Council resolutions, reports of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, and the Declaration of Shared Commitments, Member States have called for an even more comprehensive peacekeeping performance and accountability framework that addresses all actors, from the highest-levels of the Secretariat to individual civilian and uniformed personnel. To meet this demand, the Secretariat developed and launched the **Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework (IPPAF)** in 2020.<sup>15</sup>

The IPPAF provides a comprehensive overview of existing performance-related “mandates and other intergovernmental guidance; policies, guidance and standards... methodologies and tools for performance assessment; and accountability and **remedial measures and incentives.**”<sup>16</sup> The IPPAF section on organizational-level performance, for example, includes a list of mechanisms that the Secretariat employs

---

<sup>10</sup> A/75/786, para 129.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations website, “The Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System,” <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/cpas>, last accessed on August 28, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> CPAS has been launched in the following missions: MINUSCA, UNMISS, UNIFIL, UNFYCYP, MONUSCO, MINUSMA, UNMIK and MINURSO. The Secretariat plans to roll out CPAS in five additional peacekeeping missions.

<sup>13</sup> A/74/5(Vol. II), United Nations Financial report and audited financial statements for the 12-month period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 and Report of the Board of Auditors, Volume II, United Nations peacekeeping operations, General Assembly Official Records, Seventy-fourth Session Supplement No. 5, paragraph 185.

<sup>14</sup> Written communication with Secretariat official #7, August 2020.

<sup>15</sup> It should also be noted, that although not addressed in the IPPAF, there are also high-level panels and UN-commissioned reviews that may be public as well as many internal UN reviews, evaluations, and boards of inquiries that Member State or public stakeholders may not be aware of.

<sup>16</sup> IPPAF, paragraph 8.

to evaluate and investigate the performance of peacekeeping missions. These include but are not limited to evaluations, audits, reviews, and investigations by the Office for Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership (OPSP), the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and the Board of Auditors (BOA), as well as conduct and discipline accountability measures, including those related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

The IPPAF also outlines 15 areas of performance that need to be clarified and strengthened, including existing processes that do not result in sufficient accountability.<sup>17</sup> Notably, the Secretariat intends for the IPPAF to be iterative and has committed to briefing Member States on a regular basis about progress on the framework's implementation. Further, the IPPAF lays out a process by which the Secretariat and peacekeeping missions can address serious and systematic performance issues.<sup>18</sup> This process includes a list of issues that could trigger additional performance evaluations and remedial action.

As important, the IPPAF also includes a process for recognizing outstanding performance. Positive incentives (including monetary and non-monetary awards, medals, and letters) to achieve standards should go hand-in-hand with sanctions for blatant underperformance. Such a system should apply to all stakeholders, who share responsibility for mission performance and should be accountable for its shortcomings.

Motivating peacekeepers and instilling a sense of duty, responsibility, and pride to effectively carry out mandated tasks necessitates a **change mindset** at all levels of the mission. To do so, peacekeepers need to be "aware of the risks and empowered to take the initiative," adopting a proactive posture to prevent and respond to emerging threats to UN personnel and civilians, while adopting appropriate precautions.<sup>19</sup>

### III. Critical Assets - Mission Mobility as a Priority

UN peacekeeping missions have long contended with the challenge of having a relatively small presence compared to the size of the country where they are deployed. Long rainy seasons, difficult terrain, threats to UN personnel and assets, and minimal infrastructure, including roads and communication networks, can render areas of host countries inaccessible for many months of a year. This challenge has been exacerbated as mission mandates have grown more complex, requiring uniformed and civilian peacekeeping personnel to deploy quickly to remote areas, sometimes for extended periods. **Mobility** is particularly essential for two of the most important responsibilities of a UN peacekeeping mission, to protect civilians and to protect UN personnel and premises.

Infantry battalions still need to provide static protection in some peacekeeping contexts. However, in many mission environments, including the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mali, the peacekeeping operations are moving to more flexible military deployments by organizing larger units into smaller companies that can deploy rapidly to often austere locations.<sup>20</sup> UNMISS, will likely

---

<sup>17</sup> IPPAF, paragraph 10.

<sup>18</sup> IPPAF, Annex 3.

<sup>19</sup> Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, "Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers: We need to change the way we are doing business," December 2017, [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/improving\\_security\\_of\\_united\\_nations\\_peacekeepers\\_report.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/improving_security_of_united_nations_peacekeepers_report.pdf),

<sup>20</sup> UN Department of Peace Operations, "Current and Emerging Uniformed Capability Requirements for United Nations Peacekeeping," March 2021, page 6, available at

need to do the same.<sup>21</sup> **Rapidly deployable units, quick reaction forces, special forces, recce companies and formed police units** are necessary for missions to control larger areas, particularly where force ceilings decrease, in order to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian access, and protect themselves and other UN personnel and premises.<sup>22</sup>

However, the supply of these personnel, assets, and enablers necessary for mobility have not kept pace with demand, putting the credibility and legitimacy of peacekeeping operations and the lives of civilians and peacekeepers at risk. As one MINUSMA military official relayed to CIVIC, “When there are flare-ups between signatory armed groups, it can sometimes take us two to three days to get to there.”<sup>23</sup>

Most mission tasks, such as assisting with the implementation of free and fair elections, supporting the extension of state authority, facilitating the implementation of peace agreements, monitoring human rights violations, and supporting transitional justice and social cohesion must be carried out at the local and national level and all require mission personnel to move efficiently and safely around a mission’s area of operation.

In addition to these diverse mandate objectives, peacekeeping missions are also expected to **protect civilians** regardless of whether they are explicitly mandated to do so.<sup>24</sup> When a mission is mandated to protect civilians it needs appropriate resources. A POC mandate includes a wide-range of responsibilities including preventing and mitigating imminent protection threats through advocacy, dialogue, community-oriented policing, the use of force, as well as contributing to a protective environment over the long-term. Mobility is needed to achieve the longer-term protection benchmarks and is particularly critical to a mission’s ability to rapidly respond to early warnings and escalating violence. High-level independent reviews – from the 2000 “Brahimi Report” to the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations – have found a consistent disconnect between protection threats on the ground and mission capabilities.<sup>25</sup>

---

[https://pcrs.un.org/Lists/Announcements/Attachments/24/Uniformed%20Capability%20Requirements%20for%20UN%20Peacekeeping\\_March%2021\\_final.pdf?Mobile=1](https://pcrs.un.org/Lists/Announcements/Attachments/24/Uniformed%20Capability%20Requirements%20for%20UN%20Peacekeeping_March%2021_final.pdf?Mobile=1)

<sup>21</sup> S/2020/1224, “Letter dated 15 December 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council,” conveying the report on the independent strategic review of UNMISS conducted by El-Ghassim Wane, 15 December 2020, recommendation 2(a) page 10.

<sup>22</sup> UN Department of Peace Operations, “Current and Emerging Uniformed Capability Requirements for United Nations Peacekeeping,” March 2021, page 6 available at

[https://pcrs.un.org/Lists/Announcements/Attachments/24/Uniformed%20Capability%20Requirements%20for%20UN%20Peacekeeping\\_March%2021\\_final.pdf?Mobile=1](https://pcrs.un.org/Lists/Announcements/Attachments/24/Uniformed%20Capability%20Requirements%20for%20UN%20Peacekeeping_March%2021_final.pdf?Mobile=1)

<sup>23</sup> CIVIC interview with MINUSMA military official, #24, Bamako, August 2019 as quoted in “Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA,” CIVIC, May, 2020, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> As the 2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations noted, “Indeed, peacekeepers — troops or police — who witness violence against civilians should be presumed to be authorized to stop it, within their means, in support of basic United Nations principles and, as stated in the report of the Independent Inquiry on Rwanda, consistent with “the perception and the expectation of protection created by [an operation’s] very presence” (see S/1999/1257, p. 51).” See A/55/305–S/2000/809, “Identical letters dated 21 August 2000 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council,” on the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, 21 August 2000, paragraph 62.

<sup>25</sup> A/55/305–S/2000/809, “Identical letters dated 21 August 2000 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council,” on the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (often referred to as the Brahimi Report), 21 August 2000, para 63; UN A/70/95–S/2015/446, “Identical letters dated 17 June 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council,” on the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, para 95.



This gap in resources has yet to be addressed.<sup>26</sup>

Mobility is also essential for the **safety and security** of UN personnel and premises. The 2017 report, “Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers: We need to change the way we are doing business,” included a number of recommendations related to strengthening CASEVAC in peacekeeping, which in turn requires improved mobility. For example, the report recommends, “DPKO and TCCs should generate air assets to allow high-risk missions to expand the coverage of CASEVAC/MEDEVAC, as well as helicopters with the emergency medical team and basic equipment for intensive medical treatment. Helicopters and crews should have night flight capability.”<sup>27</sup> The criticality of these assets was underscored following a 2019 attack on MINUSMA’s outpost in Aguelhok, Mali. Eleven Chadian peacekeepers were killed in the incident – at the time the deadliest single attack on the mission. However, the death toll would undoubtedly have been even higher had the Mission not been able to quickly rescue 22 injured peacekeepers and transfer them to medical facilities in Kidal, Gao, and Dakar.<sup>28</sup>

MINUSMA has faced consistent gaps in its authorized air assets, limiting its ability to effectively protect civilians in the center of the country. In 2019, the Security Council significantly augmented the mission’s mandate by adding a second strategic priority to help “protect civilians, reduce intercommunal violence, and re-establish State authority, State presence and basic social services in Central Mali”.<sup>29</sup> The Security Council did not authorize additional personnel, requiring the mission to take on additional responsibilities within existing resources. In an effort to implement the new mandated priority, the MINUSMA developed a “Mission Adaptation” plan that hinges on mobility.<sup>30</sup> As of March, 2021, MINUSMA was still in need of three medium utility helicopter units, two armed helicopter units, two unmanned aerial systems, an attack helicopter unit, two forward surgical teams, and a special forces unit.<sup>31</sup>

UNMISS, MINUSCA and MONUSCO likewise highlight the importance of mobility capabilities. In South Sudan, some stakeholders have asserted that UNMISS was unable to protect the many civilians in need across the country and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance because it was tied down guarding the Protection of Civilians Sites. While static protection continues to be necessary, increased mobility would allow the missions other forces to project their presence in a hub-and-spoke model to address hotspots.<sup>32</sup> In the DRC, steps to downsize MONUSCO have underscored the increased need for mobility capabilities during transitions, as missions continue to prevent and respond to protection threats and security risks even as their footprint decreases. The mission’s rapidly deployable battalions enable

---

<sup>26</sup> As a MINUSMA civilian official relayed to CIVIC, “It’s very discouraging for everyone involved if a mayor phones to say that his village is about to be attacked and we cannot respond.” CIVIC interview with MINUSMA civilian official, #34, Sévaré, February 2020 as quoted in “Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA,” CIVIC, May, 2020, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, “Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers: We need to change the way we are doing business,” December 2017, [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/improving\\_security\\_of\\_united\\_nations\\_peacekeepers\\_report.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/improving_security_of_united_nations_peacekeepers_report.pdf), page 30. See also, CIVIC “Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA,” CIVIC, May, 2020, page 10.

<sup>28</sup> CIVIC “Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA,” May, 2020, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2480 (2019), June 28, 2019, UN SC Doc. S/RES/2480, para. 20, e.

<sup>30</sup> CIVIC “Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA,” May, 2020, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> For more detail on requirements, see UN Department of Peace Operations, “Current and Emerging Uniformed Capability Requirements for United Nations Peacekeeping,” March 2021, page 5.

<sup>32</sup> At their peak in 2015, there were six POC sites in and around UNMISS bases hosting 200,000 people seeking refuge from violence. However, prior to the recent redesignations of the POC sites, only “six infantry companies, comprising approximately 14 per cent of UNMISS infantry troops, provided static protection at five protection of civilians sites throughout the country.” S/2020/1224, “Letter dated 15 December 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council,” conveying the report on the independent strategic review of UNMISS conducted by El-Ghassim Wane, 15 December 2020, para. 48.

force projection to prevent a security vacuum. Elsewhere, in CAR, DPO has requested a number of mobility capabilities to reinforce MINUSCA in response to the rapid escalation of electoral-related instability, including four light quick reaction force companies, one engineering company with bridging capability, one attack helicopter, five unmanned aerial surveillance units, and formed police units.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, the move toward mobility requires a shift in mindset. To maximize the effectiveness of such units, troop contributing countries must be willing to sign **memorandums of understanding (MoUs) that allow their units to be moved around the country** versus being deployed to just one sector. Further, units must be willing to deploy to remote locations and have the ability to sustain themselves in these locations for periods of time. At the same time, “missions often exceed the timeframe and number of TOBs that a unit is able to deploy and sustain.”<sup>34</sup> The UN Secretariat and peacekeeping missions need to **review the use of Temporary Operating Bases** to “better balance the need for troops in as many places as possible in order to protect civilians with the need to maintain the core integrity of a unit.”<sup>35</sup>

Mobility also needs to **extend beyond uniformed components of peacekeeping missions to include civilian staff**. Often, the military or police are deployed to enable civilian peacekeepers to undertake essential mandated tasks. Following reductions to the troop ceiling in 2017, for example, MONUSCO had to quickly close bases and rely on a strategy of “protection through projection” that “requires both military and civilian staff to be highly mobile and able to deploy temporarily, without establishing bases, to areas where security appears to be deteriorating or where the Mission needs to implement activities to fulfill its mandate.”<sup>36</sup> MINUSCA, MONUSCO, MINUSMA, and UNMISS have all explored how to enable or better equip civilian personnel to deploy to temporary operating bases, for example, preparing packs of tents and rations that civilian personnel can use when temporary operating bases can’t easily support them. More difficult to address are the policies and procedures that inhibit missions’ ability to temporarily deploy civilian personnel to these locations and the lack of willingness by some civilian personnel to live and work even temporarily, under these conditions.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Member States can take the following steps to support mobility:**

- Focus pledges of uniformed personnel, assets and enablers that enable mobility, including rapidly deployable units, special forces, recce companies. Battalion level deployments should be organized to operate in a more agile, flexible manner, including quick reaction capability. Additional pledges of formed police units (FPUs), including SWAT capabilities, with rapid reaction capability are also needed.
- Member states should provide explicit authorization for uniformed units to be deployed across the country of operation. T/PCCs and the UN Secretariat should work together to ensure that this flexibility is reflected in MoUs.

#### **In tandem, the UN Secretariat should commit to the following steps:**

---

<sup>33</sup> UN Department of Peace Operations, “Current and Emerging Uniformed Capability Requirements for United Nations Peacekeeping,” March 2021, page 12.

<sup>34</sup> UN Office of Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership, “Note to Mr. Lacroix and Mr. Khare: Systemic Issues in Peacekeeping in 2020,” April 2020, on file.

<sup>35</sup> OPSP (2020).

<sup>36</sup> CIVIC, “‘Protection With Less Presence’: How the Peacekeeping Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo is Attempting to Deliver Protection with Fewer Resources,” January 2018, page 3.

- The Secretariat should review of policies and procedures at UN and mission headquarters to ensure that civilian personnel can deploy safely and quickly to remote areas, and develop requirements or incentives for civilian personnel to deploy to austere field locations in mission contexts.
- The Secretariat and missions should revisit the support concept for temporary operating bases, as the number and duration of such deployments often exceed what T/PCCs are able to sustain, with detrimental impact on morale and performance.

#### IV. Core Capabilities - Assessment and Analysis, Planning and Decision-making, and Evaluation

While mobility assets are critical to the effectiveness of modern peacekeeping missions, they have limited utility if peacekeeping missions’ assessment and analysis, planning and decision-making, and evaluation capabilities are weak. These capabilities make up the nervous system of a peacekeeping operation. They serve as the foundation for the success of any mission objective, but are particularly important in terms of the safety and security of a mission and civilian populations. If the nervous system is weak, information on a threat to the mission or the civilian population is either not received or not translated into timely and effective action. They remain, and arguably become more important as missions seek to increase mobility, to drawdown, and to transition in contexts of ongoing instability and high-levels of violence. Discussions of these core capabilities have thus far been limited at past peacekeeping ministerial meetings and preparatory conferences. Member States should commit to support these core capabilities during the 2021 ministerial and preparatory conferences given that these have immediate consequences for both the individuals that risk their lives to serve in UN field missions and that the international community expects the UN to protect.

These core capabilities are comprised of integrated mission mechanisms, including Strategic Planning Units/Cells, Joint Mission Analysis Centers, Joint Operation Centers, and field-based information, analysis, and coordination cells. They are guided by UN policies and processes, including the UN policy on intelligence in peacekeeping and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System, and are supported by technology platforms, including databases like the UN Situational Awareness and Geospatial (SAGE) program. In order to function well, these integrated mechanisms require skilled staff, including civilian personnel, military staff officers and individual police officers. A mission’s leadership is the linchpin of effective assessment, planning and evaluation (APE) system. These posts and personnel should be prioritized in terms of recruitments and selection, performance management, and accountability.

<b>Core Capabilities</b>	
Strategic-Level Planning and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Planning Units/Cells</li> <li>• Comprehensive Performance and Assessment System</li> <li>• FC and PC unit evaluation teams</li> <li>• HQ-based evaluation offices/tools</li> </ul>
Mission-Wide Assessment and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Mission Analysis Centers</li> <li>• Joint Operation Centers</li> <li>• Uniformed intelligence and analysis branches</li> <li>• United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy</li> <li>• ISR capabilities</li> </ul>
Decentralized Assessment, Analysis and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field-based Information, Analysis, Operations, and Coordination Centers such as Regional Joint Operation Centers</li> </ul>

	(RJOs), Field Integrated Operations Centers (FIOCs), and Joint Analysis, Collection, and Early Warning Cells (JACEs)
Integrated technology platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Databases and apps that allow for storing and analysis of tracking of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, early warnings, and recording of mission response rates. One such platform is SAGE.</li> </ul>
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Military Staff Officers deployed to SPUs, JMACs, JOCs, U2, U3, U5 branches of the military component and similar positions within the police component</li> </ul>

**Strategic Planning**

UN-commissioned and external reviews have identified the **lack of adequate civilian and integrated planning capacity at UN headquarters and in missions for at least a decade.**<sup>37</sup> Strategic Planning Units (SPUs), sometimes referred to as Strategic Planning Cells, are the only standing capability within a UN peacekeeping mission that is dedicated to support strategic-level planning across mission components. SPUs, which are often based in the office of the chief of staff, undertake a range of activities that include, “ensuring a comprehensive policy framework is in place, managing strategic planning processes, advising mission leadership teams—including the office of the Chief of Staff— to help them make informed decisions, tracking implementation of reform agendas, coordinating budgeting and resource allocation processes, and leading on outcome and impact measurement.”<sup>38</sup> When effective, SPUs can help ensure an integrated, whole of mission response that leverages the various strengths of integrated multidimensional peacekeeping missions and ensure that assessment and analysis of the context and evaluation of past initiatives are linked to planning and decision making.<sup>39</sup>

Yet, SPUs are typically staffed by only two or three professional civilian positions (typically from the P3 to P5 level), and sometimes have the additional support of a United Nations Volunteer (UNV).<sup>40</sup> The small number of personnel mean that **vacancies can seriously impact a SPU’s ability to deliver on its various responsibilities.** In 2018, MINUSMA recognized the potential benefits of strengthening its SPU and augmented the capability by hiring additional staff, including a civilian budget and finance officer, and embedding one military and one police planning officer in the SPU.<sup>41</sup>

The 2018-2019 Board of Auditors report recognized the important role that SPUs play in mission planning. The report acknowledged that, “...missions’ Strategic Planning Cells need to be properly staffed and represent key mandate implementation staff and possibly the resident coordinator” and recommended that “the Administration develop a **generic mission strategic planning cell structure**, representing key

<sup>37</sup> See for example, Victoria Holt and Glyn Taylor with Max Kelly, *Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations, Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges*, and independent study jointly commissioned by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, 2009, Pages 120 and 145.

<sup>38</sup> Lauren Spink, “Strengthened Planning in UN Peacekeeping Operations: How MINUSMA is Reinforcing its Strategic Planning Unit,” Center for Civilians in Conflict, August 2019, pg. 5.

<sup>39</sup> Lauren Spink (2019), pg. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Lauren Spink (2019), pg. 5; A/74/5(Vol. II), United Nations Financial report and audited financial statements for the 12-month period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 and Report of the Board of Auditors, Volume II, United Nations peacekeeping operations, General Assembly Official Records, Seventy-fourth Session Supplement No. 5, paragraphs 186-189.

<sup>41</sup> Lauren Spink (2019), pg. 6.

mandate implementation staff and possibly the resident coordinator.”<sup>42</sup> The Secretariat should complete this guidance and missions should examine how they can strengthen their SPUs.

CPAS, as previously noted, is another core planning capability that also seeks to enable a mission’s evaluation of its impact. Like any planning and evaluation tool, missions will require time to implement and tailor CPAS to their specific context.<sup>43</sup> As currently designed, the CPAS is meant to focus on a mission’s top priority objectives only, determined by the mandate and mission leadership.<sup>44</sup> Focusing on a limited number of priority outcomes can help a mission focus resources, but numerous other mission objectives will still require alternative planning processes and need to be included in results-based budgets (RBBs) to ensure funding. As the CPAS is integrated into the culture and workflow of missions and further adapted to mission needs, other mission planning processes should be reviewed to see how they could be better supported or simplified by CPAS, and in some cases eliminated if they are deemed redundant.

Several missions have included requests to add a position at mission headquarters to strengthen planning and performance assessment, including to support CPAS implementation, as part of their annual budget.<sup>45</sup> To date, Member States have not approved such requests, which have not been supported by the Advisory Committee On Administrative And Budgetary Questions. Missions will need professional posts dedicated to sustaining the implementation of the system, including working with the Secretariat to revise and adapt it over time, and should continue to make such requests.

**Member States and the Secretariat should support mission strategic planning capacities, including the implementation of the CPAS, in the following ways:**

- The Secretariat should ensure that relevant Member States representatives (UNSC peacekeeping experts, C34 delegates, and Fifth Committee delegates, and their counterparts in capital) are regularly briefed to understand the purpose of CPAS, its state of implementation in peacekeeping missions, challenges to effective implementation, how it can be improved to meet mission planning and evaluation needs, its limitations, and the resources required to support its implementation. The Secretariat could also provide briefings on the CPAS at the preparatory conferences to raise the awareness of policy-makers from Member State capitals.
- At the preparatory conferences and the Ministerial, Member States could publicly pledge to support the strategic planning capacities and the full implementation of CPAS, including through related UNSC and Fifth Committee legislation, C-34 reports, and extra-budgetary funding.

---

<sup>42</sup> A/74/5(Vol. II), United Nations Financial report and audited financial statements for the 12-month period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 and Report of the Board of Auditors, Volume II, United Nations peacekeeping operations, General Assembly Official Records, Seventy-fourth Session Supplement No. 5, paragraphs 186-189.

<sup>43</sup> A/74/5(Vol. II), paragraph 188.

<sup>44</sup> UN Department of Peace Operations, Division of Policy, Evaluation, and Training, “DRAFT: Implementing CPAS, Guidance for Missions,” Draft version July, 2020, page 5.

<sup>45</sup> In 2019 and 2020, MINUSMA requested additional SPU post, as well as a P-3 strategic planning officer to support the Police Commissioner’s office. The 2020/2021 mission budget proposed establishing a reporting, coordination and watch duty officer to support the establishment of a Regional Joint Operations Center (R-JOC) in Menaka. Similarly, the UNMISS ‘20/21 budget included a proposal to establish three field coordination officers and another through reassignment to provide assessment and planning capacity in their respective locations, including supporting the implementation of CPAS. None of these positions were supported by the ACABQ, and were not approved by member states. In the ‘21/22 budgets, the ACABQ recommended against positions for mission planning in UNFICYP and UNIFIL despite neither of these mission having a centralized strategic planning capacity; UNIFIL relies on a temporary planning team from within existing resources, while UNFICYP’s chief JMAC is double hatted.

### **Assessment and Analysis**

Mission planning and decision-making should be based on ongoing assessment and analysis of the operating environment. There are two integrated mechanisms at a mission's headquarters that have the primary responsibility to provide situational awareness and forecasting in support of planning and decision-making: **Joint Mission Analysis Centers (JMACs)** and **Joint Operation Centers (JOCs)**.<sup>46</sup> In addition, the military and police components also have **assessment and analysis units** (e.g., U2, U3, U5 and their police equivalents). Numerous reviews have identified the significant role that JMACs, JOCs, and military intelligence play in the process of information gathering and analysis.<sup>47</sup>

JMACs are responsible for "collecting and analysing multi-source information to produce integrated analysis and forward-looking assessments in support of mission planning and decision-making."<sup>48</sup> JOCs play a complementary role to JMACs. JOCs "support the decision-making of the Mission Leadership Team (MLT) and UNHQ through the provision of integrated situational awareness in routine and special incident reporting... [and] are also responsible for facilitating integrated operational coordination and undertaking integrated operational planning."<sup>49</sup> JOCs differ from JMACs in that they focus primarily on synthesizing the daily reporting submitted by mission sections, versus looking at trends, forecasting, and integrating information from external mission sources. JOCs also serve as crisis management cells when necessary.

Both JMACs and JOCs should be staffed by civilian and uniformed personnel that reflect the composition of the mission. CIVIC's research suggests that "the UN recruitment system does not allow JMAC sections the flexibility to hire analysts with the right combination of expertise, and...that the lengthy recruitment process often leaves analyst posts empty for too long."<sup>50</sup> (An issue not only for JMACs, but all civilian components.)

The "**U2**" – the military component's intelligence branch – "collects and reports on developments in the operating environment, including on protection threats or other key issues identified by mission Priority Information Requirements or Commander's Critical Information Requirements; manages intelligence resources, such as unmanned aerial vehicles; and liaises, coordinates, and shares information with JMAC personnel."<sup>51</sup> The **U3** is the operations branch and the **U5** is the planning branch of a mission's military component. Together, these three branches play a critical role in supporting the planning and decision-making undertaken at a mission's Force Headquarters. The military components of peacekeeping missions largely support the presence and activities of the substantive civilian components of missions. They need to participate fully in integrated coordination mechanisms, and work closely with civilian counterparts to

---

<sup>46</sup> United Nations Department of Peace Operations, "Policy, Joint Mission Analysis Centres (JMAC)," Ref. 2020.06, May 1, 2020, paragraph 4.

<sup>47</sup> For examples of external reviews highlighting the role of JMACs and JOCs, see Lauren Spink, "Data-Driven Protection: Linking Threat Analysis to Planning in UN Peacekeeping Operations," Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), November 2018, page 33; Lauren Spink, "Strengthened Planning in UN Peacekeeping Operations: How MINUSMA is Reinforcing its Strategic Planning Unit," Center for Civilians in Conflict, August 2019, page 8; Adam Day, et al., "Assessing the of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan/UNMISS," Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019, p.68-69; and Allard Duursma (2017), "Counting Deaths While Keeping Peace: An Assessment of the JMAC's Field Information and Analysis Capacity in Darfur," *International Peacekeeping*, 24:5, 823-847, DOI: 10.1080/13533312.2017.1383567.

<sup>48</sup> United Nations Department of Peace Operations, "Policy, Joint Mission Analysis Centres (JMAC)," Ref. 2020.06, May 1, 2020, paragraph 1.

<sup>49</sup>United Nations Department of Peace Operations, "Guidelines Joint Operations Centres (JOC)," 1 November 2019.

<sup>50</sup> Lauren Spink (2018), pg. 26.

<sup>51</sup> Lauren Spink (2018), pg. 57.

share information and coordinate planning. Officers providing similar functions in the police components, including through community-oriented, as well as crime intelligence-led policing, should do the same.

The UN has issued a policy on **UN peacekeeping-intelligence**, a related handbook for military components, and guidelines on the acquisition of information from human sources to assist missions in developing intelligence processes and architecture. The policy and guidance help to clarify that the term intelligence in the context of UN peacekeeping refers to the process of identifying what information needs to be collected to support mission planning and decision-making, directing mission personnel to gather that information, acquiring the information, analyzing it, and then disseminating it in a safe and effective way to mission stakeholders that require the information to operate. These activities do not include covert activities and do not violate peacekeeping principles. The policy and guidance requires missions to focus information requirements to support planning and decision-making related to a mission's priority objectives and tasks.<sup>52</sup> Most missions have effective peacekeeping-intelligence structures at HQ level (JMAC, U2, etc.), but lack integrated operational and tactical intelligence – issues that could be addressed through more enhanced regional JMACs (see below) and strengthening the consistency and quality of staff at the battalion /sector HQ level.<sup>53</sup>

#### **Member States should support assessment and analysis by:**

- Ensuring that personnel they contribute to assessment, planning and evaluation posts in missions have received training on the policy and guidance and/or support the Secretariat and other Member States to provide such training.
- Pledging specialized training for staff officers on assessment, planning and evaluation.
- Voicing support for the implementation of the policy and guidance through legislative vehicles, including the annual report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping.

#### ***Field mechanisms – The need to decentralize APE capabilities***

SPUs, JOCs, and JMACs are designed to support Heads of Mission and Senior Mission Leadership teams. As such, the information and analysis that JMACs and JOCs are collecting is not necessarily shared with other mission stakeholders that are essential for decentralized operational- and tactical-level planning and decision-making, such as Heads of Field Offices. The centralization of integrated information analysis, planning, and decision-making can inhibit a mission's ability to respond to rapidly evolving threats and readjust risk management plans as needed.

To address these gaps at the field level, some peacekeeping missions have experimented with creating field-based capacities that perform JMACs and JOCs functions. For example, UNMISS established **Field Integrated Operations Centers** (FIOC), which support information-sharing, crisis management, and coordination of activities, such as patrols. MONUSCO has requested posts for **JOC officers in field locations** in the past and also established a **Joint Analysis, Collection, and Early Warning Cell** (JACE) in Beni to support integrated information analysis and coordination. Some missions have also deployed JMAC officers to field locations, but these officers may be focused on gathering information to send to counterparts in mission headquarters for analysis, rather than supporting the field office. MINUSMA has

---

<sup>52</sup> United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations "Peacekeeping-Intelligence (Policy)" August 2019. United Nations Department of Peace Operations, "Military Peacekeeping-Intelligence Handbook (MPKI HB)," May, 2019. United Nations Department of Peace Operations, "Guidelines: Acquisition of Information from Human Sources for Peacekeeping-Intelligence (HPKI)," September 1, 2020.

<sup>53</sup> UN Office of Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership, "Note to USGs DPO and DOS – Systemic Issues in peacekeeping 2020," April 2020.

established **Regional Joint Operation Centers (RJOC)**. According to a recent CIVIC report, the Mopti and Timbuktu RJOCs “are supposed to have three civilian staff members, two individuals from [the Department of Safety and Security], two MSOs, and two officers from UNPOL,” but can be difficult to staff because uniformed components may not see the value in seconding two staff to the RJOC.<sup>54</sup> CIVIC’s research has also highlighted that MSOs staffing RJOCs lack sufficient language skills for reading reports, participating in briefings, and producing reports in English, which is the language used in MINUSMA’s military component. MINUSMA’s UNPOL uses French as its primary language, but UNPOL staff in RJOC work alongside MSOs and have to be able to operate in English and French.<sup>55</sup>

MSOs are not just hindered by language skills. Despite MSOs playing critical roles in SPU, JMACs, JOCs, RJOCs, and important branches of military intelligence and planning, Force Commanders regularly complain that MSOs arrive in mission without the **skillset required to fulfill their duties** and there are insufficient venues to address **underperformance once deployed**.<sup>56</sup>

Only a few high-level positions (sector and brigade commanders, chiefs and deputy chiefs of staff, and chief of the U2 branch) include a validation interview with an appropriate panel of Secretariat and mission officials.<sup>57</sup> This practice of validation interviews and possibly an in-depth evaluation or test of skillset for other key SOs should also be considered prior to deployment, including the chiefs of the other branches and other key staff in the U2, U3, U5, and U9 branches.<sup>58</sup>

Current guidance indicates that SOs are evaluated once upon arrival and at the end of their deployment. There is no requirement that if a SO fails the initial evaluation, they be repatriated; however, repatriation is an option available to Force Commanders. This initial evaluation tests basic skills (e.g., English proficiency, driving 4x4s, using GPS and maps, using a personal computer, and code of conduct and some military functions).<sup>59</sup> Although guidance says that other skills are desirable or even essential for SOs, for example, French proficiency in Francophone missions, they are not required to be tested upon arrival. Moreover, SOs are not tested on the specific skills they need to deliver in their specific role (e.g., strategic and operational planning for U3 and U5s).

Even if the selection and evaluations of MSOs are improved, their contributions to peacekeeping missions will continue to be hindered by short deployments. MSOs that are deployed for less than 12 months often contribute to deficits in effectiveness and institutional memory. If a SO lacks previous experience in a UN peacekeeping mission, they have to learn the country context as well as the culture and structure of a UN mission, which can take months. Moreover, the constant turnover does not lend itself to knowledge management and transfer, especially if there is little or no handover between staff.

**Member States could improve and support the performance of U2, U3, U5 branches of military components and core integrated capabilities such as JMACs, JOCs, and field-level analysis, coordination, and planning cells by:**

---

<sup>54</sup> Sean Smith, “Early Warning and Rapid Response: Reinforcing MINUSMA’s Ability to Protect Civilians,” Center for Civilians in Conflict, April 2021, page 19.

<sup>55</sup> Sean Smith (2021), page 20.

<sup>56</sup> Written correspondence with Secretariat Official #10, September 2020.

<sup>57</sup> Author interview with Secretariat Official #13, September 2020.

<sup>58</sup> United Nations Department of Peace Operations, “Guidelines: Allocation of Posts of Military Experts, Mission and Military Staff Officers in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations,” February 2019, paragraphs 28-39.

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Department of Field Support, “Guidelines: Roles and Training Standards for UN Military Staff Officers,” UN March 1, 2009, pages 4-5.



- Deploying MSOs for 12 months and/or support turning critical FCOS, U2, U3, U5, and U9 positions into professional contracted posts, which would allow missions to identify personnel through a more rigorous selection process and retain staff for multi-year contracts.
- Nominating military staff officers and individual police officers with strong language, assessment, analysis, and planning skills;
- Seconding additional personnel to the UN's Force Generation Service to strengthen the selection process of Military Staff Officers (MSOs) by broadening the types of staff officer posts that undergo validation interviews and require evaluations of nominees' skills prior to selection and deployment. The Secretariat should request inclusion of these additional posts in FSG's staffing;
- Supporting the Secretariat to revise staff officer evaluations up on arrival to include skills that are required for the position they have been selected for and support mission decisions to repatriate staff officers who do not have the skills needed to fulfill their roles and responsibilities; and

**Additionally, Member states should consider taking the following actions:**

- Through the preparatory conferences, Member States could work with the Secretariat to further identify what additional capacities, skills and training may be needed to strengthen core capabilities related to assessment and analysis, planning and decision-making, and evaluation.
- At the Peacekeeping Ministerial and preparatory conferences, Member States could publicly pledge to support these core capabilities by:
  - supporting mission- and Secretariat-level assessed and extra-budgetary positions and program funding related to these core capabilities, including through the Fifth Committee negotiations of cross cutting resolutions and mission budgets;
  - pledging voluntary funding for mission- and Secretariat-level extra-budgetary posts and programs related to these core capabilities,
  - pledging sustained, multi-year (versus one-off) capacity building initiatives, and expert personnel focused on these capabilities.
- At the Peacekeeping Ministerial and preparatory conferences, Member States and the Secretariat could publicly commit to systematically report on how they are implementing their commitment to support these core capabilities.