

**Concept Note for the 2023 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial preparatory meeting
on mental health support for uniformed peacekeeping personnel,
co-hosted by Ghana, the Republic of Korea and the United Nations**

18 July 2023, 7-10am EST (held virtually)

Ghana, as the host of the 2023 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial, in coordination with the Ministerial Co-chairs, has decided that enhancing support for the mental health of uniformed peacekeepers will be one of the themes of the Ministerial. As the concept note for the Ministerial notes, “[e]xtended deployments in harsh, remote and insecure environments puts an enormous strain on the mental health of peacekeepers”. In addition, “[m]any troop and police-contributing countries lack the capacities to provide adequate mental health support before, during and after deployments, making this another important area for capacity-building partnerships.”

In December 2022, the Security Council adopted resolution 2668 that recognized “the need to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and psychosocial support to United Nations peace operations personnel” and noted “the ongoing work carried out by the UN Secretariat ... in the area of mental health for uniformed personnel.” During the January 2023 session of the COE Working Group, Member States also endorsed an issues paper that allows for the deployment of up to two uniformed mental health professionals per mission, starting in July 2024.

Member States and the Secretariat have taken action in relation to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among uniformed personnel. Pursuant to General Assembly (GA) resolutions 74/280 and 75/293, the Secretariat conducted, in close consultation with Member States, a comprehensive study of PTSD claims relating to uniformed personnel. Based on the study, a Secretary-General report was issued in January 2022 (A/76/662) on a framework to promote a sustainable and appropriate approach to the compensation of PTSD claims. Since then, the GA has supported measures for prevention/mitigation of PTSD as well as to address disparities among T/PCCs, and the Uniformed Capabilities Support Division (UCSD) in the Department of Operational Support (DOS) has now commenced phase II of the PTSD project, which will establish guidelines for managing PTSD risk in uniformed peace operations, including prevention, mitigation, screening, and submission of PTSD claims and capacity building of T/PCCs to address PTSD issues.

Strategic Framework for mental health support for uniformed peacekeeping personnel

Working with an Advisory Committee¹ comprising mental health experts from Member States, the World Health Organisation, and other UN entities, the Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health (DHMOSH) in DOS is developing a Strategic Framework for mental health support for uniformed peacekeeping personnel. Key elements of this Framework were presented to the Advisory Board in April 2023. It is hoped that Member States will express their support for the Framework during the Ministerial in early December.

The Framework will focus on the need to raise awareness, train, educate and sensitize personnel during the pre-deployment phase, foster a culture of well-being and care during their deployment, as well as provide adequate mental health and psychosocial services post-deployment. Applying a gender-responsive approach to mental health support is also

¹ As of February 2023 the advisory board includes members from 26 Member States and nine UN entities and international organizations. All Member States were invited to nominate members for the advisory board in 2022.

emphasized. Strengthening support will further require leveraging existing trainings, capacity and expertise of Member States, organizations, and academia. Areas requiring support by Member States with capacity to provide mental health support for uniformed peacekeeping personnel include:

App for uniformed peacekeepers

- Support for development and maintaining an app for an initial period of two years which would contain the resources, information and materials that can be used for individual mental health support, including for an initial self-assessment.

Pre-deployment

- Leverage and ensure access to trainings to raise awareness of mental health issues in military personnel
- Make available and monitor training for all contingent command staff, as well as individual uniformed personnel, based on standardized and evidence-based training materials, developed by the UN, which can be adopted and adapted to T/PCCs language and cultural context
- Augment capacity in T/PCCs through bilateral partnerships to screen and mentally prepare personnel for increasingly challenging, complex and hazardous operating environments, in line with the processes recommended in the strategic framework, in addition to nationally determined processes for assessment, prevention, mitigation, and treatment of mental health conditions and associated risk factors
- Facilitate bilateral capacity-building partnerships related to mental health support.

During deployment

- Education on mental health and psychosocial services in missions
- Development and monitoring of trainings for UN and T/PCC mental health professionals, including gender-sensitive trainings
- Lowering barriers to care in culturally sensitive environments in missions.
- Access to individualized monitoring of mental health
- Training interventions that are to be scaled up in response to demand
- Enhanced logistics on crisis response structures in mission
- Optimizing capturing of stress factors and practices in place across T/PCCs through dedicated surveys

Post-deployment

- Continued provision of mental health and psychosocial services to former UN peace operations uniformed personnel by T/PCCs
- Sharing of good practices of service provision across T/PCCs and with the UN
- Emphasizing need for assessment of mental health and decompression needs

Participation and format

The preparatory conference is intended for senior representatives of foreign, defense, and interior ministries that oversee peacekeeping, including the deployment of uniformed personnel. Senior national experts on mental health of uniformed personnel are encouraged to participate. It is expected that participants will be based in the capital. The meeting will be held virtually, using Microsoft Teams and in English. All participants are encouraged to come to the preparatory meeting prepared to identify and develop deliverables related to mental health support for uniformed personnel. Delegations can register here: <https://forms.office.com/e/5ymuGUqBh0>