

**Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence**  
**Lesson Plan IV: UN Military Component Role and Responsibilities**

**Introduction.**

1. Prevention of incidents of sexual violence, constructive engagement with all parties to the conflict (including communities), assistance to survivors and prosecution of perpetrators are central to a comprehensive approach to address CRSV. Although prevention and response to CRSV is a whole of Mission effort, in most conflict settings, elements of the UN Military Component are the first responders to incidents of CRSV. Along with other Mission components, the Military Component plays a significant role in preventing CRSV from a security perspective (as part of PoC framework). The wide and visible presence, proactive posture and profile, as well as high operational readiness of the military force can credibly prevent CRSV incidents, deter perpetrators, protect vulnerable people (specifically women and girls) and neutralise threats.

**Aim.**

2. To provide an overview of the UN Military Component role and responsibilities in prevention and response to CRSV.

**Scope.**

3. The session on procedural aspects pertaining to prevention and response to CRSV comprises:
  - a. Part I : UN Military Component's Approaches to address CRSV.
  - b. Part II : Preventive Measures.
  - c. Part III : Response Measures.
  - d. Part IV : Do's and Don'ts in addressing CRSV.

**Learning Outcomes.**

4. The session intends to bring out the following:
  - a. Comprehend/understand UN Military Component's role and responsibilities;
  - b. Understand the nuances of designing preventive and response measures to address CRSV;
  - c. Be able to implement preventive measures in a proactive and pre-emptive manner;
  - d. Be able to respond timely and effectively to address potential, impending and ongoing CRSV; and,
  - e. Be prepared to respond to all forms of sexual violence (SGBV and CRSV) as part of the mandated activities.
  - f. Be able to train the contingent/military peacekeepers on CRSV responses.

**Part I: UN Military Component's Approaches to address CRSV.**

5. **Approaches.** Military Component in peacekeeping operations must protect civilians against sexual violence. Primarily, women and girls are most vulnerable in conflict and post-conflict situations, compounded by increased tendencies by armed actors to use sexual violence as a strategy and tactic of war. Military commanders need to develop creative and practical approaches to protect women and children from CRSV as per mission-specific operational environment. Some of the steps that enhance responsiveness to combating CRSV are:
  - a. **Mainstreaming.** Mainstreaming CRSV concerns and mandated arrangements through operational orders, guidance; planning processes, operational coordination (including designation of lead staff branch) as well as training;
  - b. **Accountability.** Establishing command responsibility, setting priorities and sensitisation (through interactions and in-Mission training), as well as implementing prevention and response measures to address CRSV;
  - c. **Analysis.** Identification, analysis and recording CRSV threats and incidents;
  - d. **Coordination.** Coordinating prevention and response activities with other Mission components as well as protection forums, working-groups, clusters and mechanisms at appropriate levels;
  - e. **Prevention.** Instituting comprehensive and proactive measures to prevent CRSV;

- f. **Response.** Responding in a timely, credible, effective and positive manner to CRSV threats;
  - g. **Female Military Peacekeepers.** Representation of female military peacekeepers in frontline duties can augment community engagement, particularly with local women and children; and,
  - h. **Focal Points.** Designation of CRSV Focal Points to work alongside Women’s Protection Advisers (WPA) and other designated focal points (Protection Advisors, Child Protection Advisors, Human Rights Officers, Gender Advisors, etc.) and establishing clear reporting lines vis-à-vis civilian staff members.
6. **Cardinal Points on PoC.** Cardinal points to be kept in mind by UN Military peacekeepers while protecting civilians from CRSV are:
- a. PoC is a priority obligation; specifically of women and children;
  - b. PoC includes all forms of sexual violence;
  - c. Take all necessary actions to prevent CRSV in the areas of deployment and within capability; without prejudice to host Government responsibility and irrespective of the source of the threat;
  - d. May operate independently to address CRSV when host Government is unwilling or their effort is ineffective;
  - e. Uphold and adhere to international humanitarian law, human rights law and code of conduct for UN peacekeepers;
  - f. Show or use force to prevent, deter and respond to threats as per ROE;
  - g. When and where possible, permission to use force should be sought from immediate superior commander; and,
  - h. Adhere to United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy when operating with host State security and law enforcement forces.

## **Part II: Preventive Measures.**

7. **Overview.** Situational awareness, gender-sensitive early-warning, operational readiness and committed leadership as well as the will and determination of all peacekeepers (particularly of Commanders) are crucial for combating CRSV successfully. Some of the recommended preventive measures are:
- a. **Protective-Grid.**
    - i. Identify CRSV threats and vulnerabilities (areas and population of concern) through hotspot mapping (including through unmanned surveillance systems, etc.);
    - ii. Deploy static (COBs), Semi-static (TOB/MOBs, etc.) and mobile (patrols and manoeuvre units) forces to prevent and respond to CRSV; and,
    - iii. Planning, deployment and operational activities must also ensure protection of vulnerable population in and around IDP/Refugee Camps and as well as those undergoing DDR Processes.
  - b. **Constructive Engagement and Advocacy.**
    - i. Constructive engagement of armed groups (to end impunity and enforce accountability), host State authorities - Civil, military and police –(to be responsive, accountable and proactive) and local communities (to develop joint protection measures); and,
    - ii. Advocacy with parties to the conflict on key messages pertaining to end/prevent CRSV as per Mission SOP.
  - c. **Conflict Mitigation.** Assistance in mediation and reconciliation efforts between parties to the conflict to prevent CRSV and sustain peace.
  - d. **Engagement of Local Women.**
    - i. To understand security concerns of women and girls; and,
    - ii. To identify risks and vulnerabilities and develop effective joint responses.
  - e. **Community Support.** Engage with local communities (including key leaders, women leaders and groups, youth organizations, etc. to understand security concerns, priorities and jointly design protection measures. Mission’s effort must build on existing local and community security measures. Requests/information received from the communities must be appropriately responded to build the confidence, since lack of response will adversely affect the credibility of the mission.

- f. **Quick Impact Projects (QIPs).** Instituting security oriented gender-sensitive quick impact projects and welfare activities.
- g. **Monitoring and Reporting.**
  - i. Gender-sensitive monitoring and surveillance of alleged perpetrators and vulnerable areas/populations to obtain early-warning;
  - ii. Defining and recognising early-warning indicators specific to CRSV; and provide early-warning on potential or impending CRSV incidents/threats for timely response;
  - iii. Objective, accurate and timely reporting on potential, impending and on ongoing CRSV incidents; and
  - iv. Military Component also supports the gender-sensitive monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements (MARA).
- h. **Presence.** Ensuring visible, day and night (24x7) enduring presence in vulnerable and unconventional areas to CRSV is vital for prevention of CRSV incidents (highlight that presence may not always be deterrence; where required force may be used as per ROE).
- i. **Proactive Posturing.** Proactive posturing by military units/sub-units/detachments and peacekeepers displays UN resolve and commitment in mandate implementation and act as deterrence to the armed groups/perpetrators; while instilling confidence in the minds of people.
- j. **Pre-emptive Interventions.** Pre-emptive interventions to deter CRSV perpetrators, such as interposing between a perpetrator and vulnerable section of population.
- k. **Escorts.** Escorting women and girls for livelihood activities (markets, water/firewood collection, etc.).
- l. **Safe Areas.** Establishment and protection of safe areas/sites/corridors to protect threatened or displaced people.
- m. **DSR/DDR.** Assist in Mission's Security/Defence Sector Reform (SSR/DSR) and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes.
- n. **Physical Security.**
  - i. Provide physical security to civilians in the area of deployment and with capability; and,
  - ii. Provide physical security to designated key national stakeholders/leaders Political leaders, women leaders, survivors, witnesses or their family members.

### **Part III: Response Measures.**

- 8. **Overview.** To combat CRSV, military peacekeepers are required to take direct military actions and are authorised to use force, including deadly force. Some of the recommended response measures are:
  - a. **Active Patrolling.** Sustained presence in vulnerable areas (or areas frequented by women and girls) through static, roving and mobile patrols to reassure, deter or prevent CRSV.
  - b. **Direct Military Action.** Physical domination of vulnerable areas (with static and mobile elements) and neutralise CRSV threats through a range of actions including use of force as per RoE.
  - c. **Cordon and Search.** Conducting cordon and search operations to apprehend perpetrators, recover weapons or save/extricate CRSV victims.
  - d. **Extraction.** Extracting abducted women and girls (sex-slaves) from the bush/camps/built-up areas.
  - e. **Disarming.** Disarming CRSV perpetrators and listed armed groups/actors as per mandate.
  - f. **Detention.** Identify and detain perpetrators and hand them over to the authorised law enforcement agency for prosecution (in accordance with Interim SOP on Detention).
  - g. **Survivor Assistance.** Assisting the CRSV survivor(s)<sup>1</sup> as per Mission SOP and country specific 'Referral Arrangements' (military responsibility ends with handing over of survivor to a designated service provider). Immediate assistance includes provision of first aid, food, water, clothing, safety and security, etc. Ensure rape survivors have access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) within 72 hours of the incident to prevent HIV infection.

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<sup>1</sup>In case of minor survivors, also consult with CPA.

9. **Consolidation.** Some of the actions recommended as part of consolidation are:
- a. Assist communities to recover (assist in provision of medical aid, humanitarian support, etc.);
  - b. Reassure vulnerable sections through continued presence and support;
  - c. Assist host State law enforcement agencies/other actors to investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice;
  - d. Assist in capacity building of host State institutions and communities (if mandated as per Mission's SSR/DSR programmes) ; and,
  - e. Foster reconciliation and rapprochement between communities.

#### **Part IV: Do's and Don'ts in Addressing CRSV.**

##### **10. Do's:**

- a. Be a 'Role Model' (good conduct and discipline, representation of female military peacekeepers and respecting local women) and be approachable;
- b. Respect the dignity and confidentiality of the survivor;
- c. Document/record the incident and preserve evidence;
- d. Obtain necessary information for reporting of the incident (if possible). Actionable information that can prevent further human rights violations/CRSV must be responded immediately;
- e. Report on chain of command and to the designated WPA/CPA;
- f. Assist and protect the survivor(s) and witnesses as required;
- g. Obtain informed consent from the survivor (on whom to inform, which service provider to be approached, etc.);
- h. Follow 'Referral Arrangements' for transfer and handover of the survivor to the designated service provider;
- i. Follow detention procedures in handling perpetrators;
- j. In case of doubt, assume sexual violence has taken place;
- k. Follow ROE and principles of Use of Force. Ensure command and control, restraint, maturity and discretion; and,
- l. Do No Harm/Avoid collateral damages.

##### **11. Don'ts:**

- a. Do not interview the survivor(s) or investigate the incident (it will be done by the authorised officials);
- b. Do not follow up (it is the responsibility of human rights officers and the WPAs);
- c. No action, such as informing local authorities, should be taken without confirming with WPAs/CPAs; and
- d. Do not reveal the particulars of the survivor (maintain confidentiality and anonymity - name, details of the family, village, personal identification, photos, not to be reflected in reports, etc.).

#### **Takeaways.**

##### **12. UN military peacekeepers addressing CRSV are:**

- a. Authorised to:
  - i. Prevent and respond to all forms of sexual violence, remembering that women and girls are particularly at risk of CRSV;
  - ii. Search, disarm and detain CRSV perpetrators; and
  - iii. Use force, including deadly force in combating CRSV.
- b. To be conversant with:
  - i. The guidelines on advocacy with the parties to the conflict to end/prevent CRSV;
  - ii. Gender-specific CRSV early-warning indicators; and,
  - iii. Referral pathways to assist survivors.
- c. Carry out proactive and targeted community engagement with the local populace, including with local women and girls, women leaders and women's organisations.
- d. Support WPAs in MARA.
- e. Maintain a parallel reporting channel with designated WPA.

- f. Support other Mission components in addressing CRSV.

**Conclusion.**

13. The military component of peacekeeping operations can play a vital role in the protection of women and children as part of its mandated task of protecting civilians. Everything that the UN Military does contributes to providing a safe and secure environment, protection of civilians and restoration of state authority. It can reassure populations, build confidence and faith in the peace process and contribute to broader Mission objectives. Military peacekeepers must be sensitive to CRSV threats and respond with the seriousness it deserves. Since combating SV is a unique obligation of the military peacekeepers, it is imperative that the tactics, techniques and procedures must be oriented and systematized to also address CRSV threats and challenges optimally. Military peacekeepers must always be approachable, accessible and responsive to the vulnerable population and help the women to protect their lives and livelihoods.