

Module 1 – MINUSCA



Scenarios and Snap Situations

Part I: MINUSCA CRSV Operational Scenarios

Scenario 1: Rape in an Unauthorised Roadblock

Scene 1.

While on a routine patrol (20 soldiers), at about 9 AM in the morning, the scouts hear the cries of a woman from a nearby bush. On tactically searching the bush, the patrol locates a woman in her early twenties, injured, bleeding profusely and unable to move. On enquiry by the patrol leader, the young woman informs that her family and herself were attacked a day before at an unauthorised roadblock (approximately 2 Km from the place) established near a school building by anti-Balaka personnel. Her brother and mother were killed on the spot, while the woman and her sister (aged 16 years) were taken into custody and brutally raped by 3 to 4 persons. Though she managed to escape somehow taking advantage of the darkness, she is sure that her sister will continue to be raped and killed soon.

On further enquiry, she informs of the following:

- a. There are approximately 10 to 12 or more armed locals, mostly boys (between 10 and 16 years), one or two women (probably domestic helps) and two to three elders. The elders were in control of all the members.
- b. The children were wearing dirty clothes, and around their neck they strapped anti-sorcery charms, mostly amulets and leather pouches of herbs.
- c. Some of them had rifles; some had pistols and others had traditional swords, and crooked, blunt scythes.
- d. Some members of the group are inside the school building and the group is expected to leave the area by noon.

Points for Deliberation:

- a. What violations have been committed by the armed group?
- b. As a patrol leader, what are your responses?
- c. As a Company Commander in location, what is your assessment of the situation and courses of action? What advice will you provide to the patrol leader?
- d. What assistance will you provide to the survivor?
- e. What action will you take against the unauthorised roadblock?
- f. What assistance do you require from the Battalion/Sector/Force HQ to execute your plan?

Scene 2.

On reaching the roadblock site, a frail looking armed person, probably a child soldier challenges you and warns not to proceed further. In the meantime an older looking armed man appears behind a wall and points a rifle at you and shouts in vernacular language, which you couldn't hear clearly. As you begin to reason it out with the man behind the wall, two armed boys jump out of the school building rushing at you yelling in French 'save us, kindly save us!!!'. The yelling is muffled with intermittent cries of a girl from inside the school building. Situation is highly charged, unpredictable and a serious threat looms large on the two child soldiers trying to escape, the captive girl and your patrol. Moreover the additional reinforcement asked by you from the COB is yet to arrive.

Points for Deliberation:

- a. What is your assessment of the situation and the best course of action?
- b. What actions will you take as immediate protective measures?
- c. What is your response to the child soldier who challenges you?
- d. What actions will you take to engage the man behind the wall who is probably the leader?

- e. How will you handle the child soldiers who are attempting to escape from the group?
- f. What actions will you take regarding the child soldiers who are still part of the group?
- g. What actions will you take to extricate the girl (victim) under their captivity and what actions will you take to assist the survivor?
- h. How will you handle the women associated with the armed group?
Considering that the incident took place not far from your COB, what actions by the Company could have prevented it from happening?

Scenario 2: Security of Survivors and Inhuman Act

Scene 1.

Until recently, the majority and minority communities lived peacefully in Village Karangwa. However the situation turned bad as fallout of atrocities perpetrated by the Ex-Séléka group mostly made up of foreign mercenaries and members of minority community. As a counter, the locals from the majority community organised itself as anti-Balaka to fight the Ex-Séléka group. The conflict between the two soon takes the colour of sectarian violence.

One evening, at dusk, 2 adult women and 6 girls chased by a mob and in danger of being lynched, rush to the gate of your COB, pleading to save them. Sensing grave danger, and with presence of mind, the sentries at the gate immediately allow them into the COB. Soon the mob is stamping at the entrance to the post demanding the immediate hand over of the girls and women, and warns of dire consequences if the peacekeepers do not comply with their demand. Some members of the mob start sloganeering and accusing the company and the TCC of taking up a partisan approach and abusing the local women and girls.

Additional information:

- a. The girls and women are from the minority community and one of the women is pregnant.
- b. They claim that some armed men (probably anti-Balaka) abducted them from a nearby minority village while collecting water and raped and tortured them for the last two days. However, they managed to escape at an opportune moment, but the alerted perpetrators are close on their heels.
- c. Your COB is located in the majority community area, but not far from the minority community area.
- d. Sentries at the gate and the COB watch tower report the presence of approximately 300 people, mostly men, including a small number of women and children congregated along the front perimeter of the COB.
- e. Many of them are carrying traditional weapons and on close observation, the watch tower also reports some men in the middle and rear of the crowd to also have firearms.

Points for Deliberation:

- a. As a Company Commander in location, what is your assessment of the situation and courses of action?
- b. What would be the implication of letting in the distressed women and girls into the COB in normal circumstances?
- c. What will be your approach in handling the mob vis-a-vis release of the survivors?
- d. What assistance will you provide to the victims?

- e. Do you require any external support or assistance from the Battalion/Force HQ, or any other entities/agencies in the mission area?
- f. What preventive actions would you like to take to avoid further escalation of the incident?

Scene 2.

As the darkness settles, the mob becomes more violent. While the Company Commander tries to engage with some of the likely leaders of the mob, someone from the rear starts to pelt stones at the COB. The sentry post at the corner reports movement of some locals to the rear of the post. All of a sudden there is a scuffle within the crowd, and you hear screams of women, probably being assaulted by some members of the crowd. In the midst one of the protesters tries to snatch the weapon from the sentry at the gate. Your medic reports that the condition of the pregnant woman (survivor) in the camp is deteriorating, requiring immediate medical attention or evacuation. A UN humanitarian partner operating in the area informs you that they saw some armed men in the minority community area preparing to come and rescue the girls and women from the mob. You hear two shots being fired by someone in the crowd.

Points for Deliberation:

- a. What is your response to the changing aggressive behaviour of the crowd?
- b. How will you handle the situation of women being assaulted in the mob?
- c. What is your response to the deteriorating condition of the pregnant women?
- d. What measures would you like to take to prevent a sectarian clash in the proximity of your COB, in the given context?
- e. In retrospect, what actions/best practices could have averted such an incident or contained at successive levels of escalation?

Scene 3.

The company commander, after due deliberations and reporting to the Battalion Commander refuses to hand over the survivors to the mob. Soon, some armed members of the mob bring a man's body (probably a dead body), presumably from the minority community, to demonstrate to the peacekeepers that their sanctuary means nothing; that there is always another victim who cannot be protected. The dead body is still oozing with warm blood and is tossed in front of the COB. Two men armed with machetes hurl abuse and start severing the dead body, starting with the genitals, in front of you. Your sentry at the OP observes an increase in the number of persons with firearms in the close proximity of the gate and they are edging forward. The sentry at the rear exit gate observes some suspicious moves close to the perimeter.

Points for Deliberation:

- a. What is your assessment of the situation?
- b. What is your response to the mutilation of the body?
- c. Do you envisage any threat to the survivors or to your base from the mob?
- d. What actions will you take as part of graduated response?

Scenario 3: Control and Safety in IDP/Temporary Camps

Scene 1.

In December 2013, tens of thousands of majority community relocated to a muddy area of Bangui's M'Poko International Airport after being driven out of their homes in the Third Arrondissement by Ex-Séléka fighters. M'Poko is still a functioning airport, though about half of it is now covered by tents. Their security and living conditions are somewhat better than some of

the other camps occupied by the minority community. Although there are reports of domestic violence and petty crimes in the camp area, they are bound together to fight back and avenge the atrocities perpetrated against them by Ex-Séléka fighters which were in power.

Most camp residents seethe about the minority community. They accuse that the minority community (those who spoke Sango and lived peacefully until recently) became crazy when Ex-Séléka fighters arrived in Bangui, killing, raping and looting indiscriminately. Some residents were noticed carrying knife, machetes and scathes on their body. There are unconfirmed reports that some firearms (including hunting rifles and artisanal weapons) are hidden in the camp area, ready for use at an appropriate time. Information from sources also indicates that the anti-Balaka is using the camp premises as a staging ground for attacks. Informal interaction indicates that the anti-Balaka guards have been the saviours for the majority community from the threat posed by Ex-Séléka fighters (primarily from minority community) and therefore begets their trust and tacit support.

The anti-Balaka is preparing and awaiting an opportunity to take revenge against Ex-Séléka fighters and the members/pockets of minority communities, primarily women and girls. Many of the victims of the atrocities perpetrated by Ex-Séléka fighters, work for the anti-Balaka discretely. Some of the previous government soldiers have grouped themselves in support of the anti-Balaka, providing them with additional weapons to fight against and eliminate Ex-Séléka fighters, which are more professional in nature supported by mercenaries from neighbouring countries.

Not far away from the camp at M'Poko, in the area of Third Arrondissement, a motely crowd of approximately 400 (including 140 male and 260 female and children) displaced people from the minority community, lying on mats, looking idle and abandoned in the large courtyard of their place of worship. They want to leave to seek safety but security conditions do not permit. They are waiting for an eventual attack by the anti-Balaka and a possible mayhem. The women and girls are particularly terrified (taking past incidents into consideration) that the anti-Balaka will kill all the men and boys, while carrying out mass rape and abducting them to torture as sex slaves; and eventually kill them too. Their hope is pinned on the COB deployed at about equidistance from the Airport and the Third Arrondissement. Inputs indicate that some people have contacted the minority rebel armed group, and that help is on the way. Helpless and distressed, the people are preparing to meet the threat with machetes.

The atmosphere is filled with a sense of distrust, fear and anguish, which may erupt into targeted sectarian violence from both sides, if not acted upon immediately.

Points for Deliberation:

- a. As a Battalion Commander of the Reserve Battalion in location, what is your assessment of the situation and courses of action? What advice would you like to give to the Force Commander and mission leadership?
- b. What are the early-warning indicators that you would look for to prevent such an incident or respond to manifestations of the threat?
- c. In the given context, what actions do you feel would be appropriate in handling community/sectarian dynamics?
- d. What measures would you like to take on the following?
 - i. Protection of the minority community personnel at the place of worship?
 - ii. Engagement of majority community at M'Poko?
 - iii. Engagement of rebel armed group and local armed group?
 - iv. Safety of women and children in both camps, with particular emphasis on measures to prevent mass rape?
 - v. Domestic violence in M'Poko?

- e. What actions will you propose to sanitise M’Poko of firearms and prevent it being used as a staging area for attacks on minority community?
- f. How do you intend to prevent a clash between the rebel armed group and the local armed group?
- g. What actions do you propose to mitigate the threat, prevent further deterioration and stabilise the situation at successive levels?

Scene 2.

An informer from the IDP camp located at M’Poko reports that some of the influential persons connected to anti-Balaka have forcefully taken control of six to seven young girls (aged between 16 to 18) from the camp and are using them as sex slaves. All efforts by family members and the girls have been quashed with threat and force.

This is also probably connected to illegal liquor and contraband drugs smuggling into the IDP camp. There are approximately 15 to 20 perpetrators, and slowly it is turning into forced prostitution. Many outsiders are also spotted visiting the camp during night hours.

Points for Deliberation:

- a. What is your assessment of the situation and likely courses of action?
- b. What is your plan of action to save the girls from sex slavery?
- c. What is the nature/status of an IDP camp?
- d. What and with whom would you like to coordinate in execution of your plan?
- e. What actions would you suggest to prevent such incidents in future?

Scenario 4: Impending Attack (threat of mass killing and mass rape) on a Village

With the exile of the coalition President, the Séléka group was dissolved, though they continued to operate in small groups in their respective areas. Consequently, forces from a foreign country have conducted active operations to disarm the rebels. The peacekeepers from a regional mission are also playing a vital role in maintaining peace. However sectarian violence leads to further polarisation of communities. As tension and animosity mounts between communities, the ongoing threat to women and girls is imminent and omnipresent.

On being deployed in the Northern part of the country, information obtained from multiple sources indicates that approximately 100 to 150 armed men,(probably located approximately 10 to 15 Km to the North of the village) including mercenaries (some of them speaking Arabic), with small arms are regrouping in the border area to carry out a retribution/revange (for atrocities done by the local people in other parts of the country) on an isolated village at Markounda, occupied by the majority community, in the coming few days.

The village has approximately 60 hutments with 180 people (including 120 women and children), spread over an area of 300 x 800 meters. Evidently, the intention of Ex-Séléka fighters is to take revenge for the atrocities committed by the anti-Balaka guards on the minority community, by targeting the women and girls of the village. The attack is impending and the probable intent is to rape all the women and girls and torture the men folk. The men in the village do not have fire arms, though they are organised to defend themselves with traditional weapons (machetes, scythes, etc.). The area has poor road/track network. State machinery is non-existent and law and order is defunct.

Additional information indicates that many such rebel camps have proliferated along the Northern border, with the possible aim of marching into Bangui to unleash a reign of terror once again. The

nearest COB is approximately 25 Km South of the village. The Battalion HQ is approximately 200 Km away.

Points for Deliberation:

- a. As a Company Commander in location, what is your assessment of the situation and courses of action?
- b. What preventive actions will you take to deter the armed group?
- c. What assistance would you require from the Battalion HQ and Force HQ?
- d. What actions will you take/institute in addressing the following:
 - i. Advocacy/engagement.
 - ii. Surveillance & monitoring.
 - iii. Early-warning (including early-warning indicators).
 - iv. Community protection.
- e. As a Battalion Commander, what preventive action will you institute within the battalion resources and capabilities?

Scenario 5: Abduction, Forced Marriage, Sex Slavery and Extortion

Your COB is deployed in the Northeastern part of the country. One morning, the village chief is accompanied by a delegation to the COB and informs that a female political leader, who had been an activist against sexual violence, and three other young girls, aged between 16 to 18 years, were abducted by the Ex-Séléka fighters the night before. The armed personnel brutally beat up the woman's family members (which included the husband, mother and two minor children) and require immediate medical evacuation. The rebel armed group vowed to return and demanded a tax of 500,000 CFA Franc to be paid in over the next two days if the villagers wish to live peacefully. The chief of the Ex-Séléka group also announced that he would be marrying one of the girls the next day, while the other two girls would work as domestic helps in their camp.

The delegation requests that you save the female leader and the girls from sexual violence and torture by Ex-Séléka fighters.

The delegation is willing to provide a guide and informs of the following:

- a. Ex-Séléka group operating in the area are approximately 30 in number.
- b. All of them carried rifles.
- c. Most of them spoke Arabic.
- d. They are probably camping temporarily in a nearby wooded area, approximately 5 Km from the COB.
- e. It is expected that the armed group will kill the woman political leader, since she has been publically denouncing the atrocities committed by Ex-Séléka.
- f. They also fear that while one of the girls will be forcibly married to the chief of the group, the other two girls will be used as sex slaves as opposed to domestic helps. The girls will never be able to return home since the group keeps moving from one place to another.

Points for Deliberation:

- a. As a Company Commander in location, what is your assessment of situation and courses of action?
- b. What assistance do you intend to ask from the Battalion Commander and higher-ups?
- c. What is your plan of action on the following issues?
 - i. Saving the abducted woman and girls?
 - ii. Preventing further extortion.
 - iii. Engaging/reigning in Ex-Séléka fighters.

- d. What coordination measures are required to execute your plans?
- e. What assistance will you provide for the severely injured family members of the woman political leader?
- f. As a Battalion/Company Commander, what actions at respective levels could have averted such a complex situation?
- g. As a Battalion Commander, what support do you wish to seek from the Sector/Force HQ and other components/actors to effectively address the challenge?

MINUSCA CRSV Snap Situations

Snap Situation 1: Rape During House to House Search

On deployment in the Northern Area of CAR, your COB had established an effective Community Liaison Network. Your AOR has been witnessing sporadic clashes between Ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka forces. Militarily, Ex-Séléka forces maintained an edge over anti-Balaka. Since anti-Balaka forces are difficult to identify and are immersed within the local population, Ex-Séléka has been carrying out selective village searches to target them.

On a rainy day, at about 10 AM, a CLA informs you over the radio that approximately 15 Ex-Séléka armed fighters have entered the village from the Northern side and are carrying out house to house searches. He also informs that he heard screaming coming from the third house, and stated that the girl is probably being raped by the Séléka fighters. From past experience, you know that the Ex-Séléka generally rape the young women and girls to settle scores.

The village is approximately 5 Km from your COB and has approximately 22 hutments with 70 people.

What is your response?

Snap Situation 2: Forced Abortion

1. A medical attendant from the MSF informs you quietly that two armed men in a pick-up have brought a young girl of 16 years and demand the female doctor to immediately carry out an abortion. The girl appears to be bruised all over, is terrified and is weeping quietly.
2. The doctor is confined to the medical examination room by the armed persons. The healthcare facility is located in a town adjacent to the COB.

What is your response?

Snap Situation 3: Forced Marriage

In a nearby village, two pick-ups with 10 armed men from Ex-Séléka fighters arrived at the house of a pretty girl of 16, and the leader of the group informed the parents of the girl that he had seen the girl in the market before and liked her very much. The leader offered 200 dollars and demanded that the girl be sent with him in marriage.

The terrified parents tried to reason it out with the leader of the armed group that they and the girl are not in agreement for the marriage. The terrified girl locked herself in a room to escape abduction. The father and mother were beaten badly by the armed personnel. They broke open the door and forcibly took the girl to the pick-up and drove off.

This information was provided to you by the village chieftain. You know the area where Séléka fighters are camping.

What is your response?

Snap Situation 4: Murder and Abduction

20 Ex-Séléka armed fighters raided a pro anti-Balaka village during day, and apprehended two men suspected of having allegiance with anti-Balaka. Subsequently, all the villagers were ordered to congregate in an adjacent open ground. The group leader threatened the villagers of dire consequences for supporting anti-Balaka and ordered his comrades to brutally behead both the suspected men in the presence of the family and others. After the public execution, they collected tax, publicly tortured the wives of the slain men and took the widows away to their camp.

What is your response?

Snap Situation 5: Sexual Mutilation

Your COB is located in a town in the western part of the country. The previous night witnessed a fierce encounter between the Ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka forces in the outskirts of the town, in which five Ex-Séléka fighters were killed. In the morning, their dead bodies were brought to the area of town hall, and were publically mutilated.

Soon you find a mob of 300 persons from the local community (including some anti-Balaka personnel) parading in the town with the mutilated genitals on a long skewer and yelling for more blood and violence. The procession is currently approaching your COB.

What is your response?

Snap Situation 6: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

1. Your COB is deployed in the North Eastern area of the country. A CLA informs you that an FGM ceremony will take place in a village approximately 50 Km from your COB in 3 days. Special invites have been sent to nearby villages to take part in the ceremony. An estimated 30 to 40 girls are expected to be put through the process. The event is being held at the behest of the Ex-Séléka fighters.
2. It appears that pressure on some tribal communities which do not traditionally practice FGM is mounting to ensure their participation in the process. FGM is legally prohibited in CAR.

What is your response?

Snap Situation 7: Sexual Violence Offenders

1. Your battalion is tasked by the Mission HQ to assist in both SSR and DDR processes. The battalion has a very effective information network and a detailed databank of people in your area,

which includes details of sexual offenders/criminals from the former FAC, Ex-Séléka, anti-Balaka and other local criminals.

2. Induction of such offenders and criminals in to the newly formed security forces and rule of law agencies would continue to be detrimental to safety and security of women and girls.

What actions you propose to be factored in the DDR and SSR plans?