

## Chapter 4 | Cross-cutting themes: peacebuilding and protection



*This chapter introduces peacebuilding and the protection of civilians, which are two important cross-cutting themes in civil affairs work. The chapter considers the role of Civil Affairs Officers as local peacebuilders and discusses the evolving engagement of UN peacekeeping in efforts to protect civilians.*

### 4.1. Civil affairs as local peacebuilders

#### **What is peacebuilding?**

“Peacebuilding” is a deeply political process that entails a range of activities – varying from context to context – aimed at making peace self-sustaining and reducing the risk of a relapse into conflict. It is work that happens at many different levels and is carried out by many different actors, both national and international.

The *Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict* (2009) sets out five recurring priorities:

- Support to basic safety and security, including mine action, protection of civilians, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, strengthening the rule of law and initiation of security sector reform;
- Support to political processes, including electoral processes, promoting inclusive dialogue and reconciliation, and developing conflict-management capacity at the national and subnational levels;
- Support to the provision of basic services, such as water and sanitation, health and primary education, and support to the safe and sustainable return and reintegration of internally displaced persons and refugees;
- Support to restoring core government functions, in particular basic public administration and public finance, at the national and subnational levels;
- Support to economic revitalization, including employment generation and livelihoods (in agriculture and public works), particularly for youth and demobilized former combatants, as well as rehabilitation of basic infrastructure.

The term “peacebuilding” has been evolving since its first use in the former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s *Agenda for Peace*. The establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and the authorization of several special political missions with peacebuilding mandates has generated a need to clarify the nexus between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

DPKO has emphasized that peacekeeping is not an alternative or precursor to peacebuilding but that peacekeepers are important peacebuilding actors, particularly in the early stages of peacebuilding. The work that civil affairs components have been doing globally for almost twenty years to try to support societies in transition from conflict to peace has essentially been local peacebuilding work.

In order to clarify better the relationship between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and the comparative advantage of peacekeeping operations within the broader enterprise of peacebuilding, DPKO identified three roles for peacekeepers in a 2010 paper called *Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding: Clarifying the Nexus*.<sup>21</sup> These roles are to “articulate, enable and implement”. The chart below briefly summarizes these, and explains the ways in which civil affairs supports them from the local level.

<sup>21</sup> These are also laid out in the Secretary-General’s report: *Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, A/65/680 (2011).

## Articulate

### Mission-wide role

The SRSR and leadership team work with national and international partners to articulate strategic priorities and a critical path towards them, brought together in the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) and elsewhere. The SRSR reports through the Secretary-General to the Security Council and engages with other actors to sustain international political support. Where the country is on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, the mission and DPKO/DFS provide support. The mission supports effective consultation and communication between state and society and – together with partners – assists government in articulating priorities, plans and programmes.

### Civil affairs contribution

Civil affairs components assess the perceptions and priorities of the local population around the country, in order to ensure that national peacebuilding efforts by the mission are developed with sensitivity to local realities, and to flag up any contradictions between elite-oriented and bottom-up perspectives. They help to ensure awareness of different regional realities. They provide a platform so that the voices of diverse stakeholders can be heard in negotiations or processes of priority-setting. They also help local government to articulate priorities, plans and programmes linked to the national-level process. They are also involved in the process of monitoring countrywide progress against benchmarks.

## Enable

### Mission-wide role

Missions help to create a conducive environment for peacebuilding countrywide by providing a security umbrella through uniformed peacekeepers. They also work with national counterparts to create and maintain political space, including through political dialogue and conflict management. Missions help to coordinate the efforts of the broader international community and strengthen national coordination mechanisms. They help to mobilize assistance in order to fill critical peacebuilding gaps from both UN and external partners, particularly where the Resident and/or Humanitarian Coordinator is also the DSRSG. Missions repair, within their capacity, the public infrastructure on which they must rely, and provide logistical support to other partners involved in peacebuilding (such as transport and communications).

### Civil affairs contribution

Civil affairs components address local-level and inter-community conflict, work to build confidence in the peace process, facilitate processes of reconciliation and support the development of political space countrywide. They also help to provide an enabling environment through hands-on support bringing government officials out to districts and helping strengthen relationships between state and society around the country. Civil affairs helps uniformed components to perform their tasks, ensuring that they are well briefed on the cultural and community contexts within which they are working. Civil affairs can also facilitate, enable or help to mobilize development and humanitarian actors at the local level, including through providing an interface to assist their operations in locations where they may not be represented.

## Implement

### Mission-wide role

In limited areas, missions are mandated to perform peacebuilding tasks themselves – generally catalytic tasks intended to generate momentum or lay a foundation for the future. Areas of focus could include security sector reform, mine action, protection of civilians, justice and corrections, and so on. The objective is usually to lay the foundations for the development of national capacity. This may include capacity assessment, support to planning and training or other capacity-building support.

### Civil affairs contribution

Civil affairs components sometimes play a direct implementation role, primarily at the local level, through their efforts to strengthen the capacity of state authorities to function. This work is usually done in partnership with other actors with technical expertise in this field. Among other things, these interventions are often focused on strengthening the capacity for effective engagement between local authorities and the central level, and between local authorities and the local population.

There are continuing debates at the policy level on the degree to which peacekeeping missions should be carrying out an “implementation” role in peacebuilding, rather than just coordinating and supporting the implementation work of other actors. This will likely be an ongoing tension, with a different balance found in each context depending on a number of factors – including the strength and presence of the UNCT.

### Priorities and sequencing in peacebuilding work

Peacebuilding can cover a myriad of areas and possible tasks, and ultimately the identification and sequencing of tasks will vary enormously depending on a thorough analysis of each situation. Civil affairs can contribute to this a great deal, particularly by helping to ensure that there is an awareness and understanding of what “peace” means for the ordinary people of the country in question, and what their priorities may be.

As the *Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict* (2009) points out: “Local and traditional authorities as well as civil society actors, including marginalized groups, have a critical role to play in bringing multiple voices to the table for early priority-setting and to broaden the sense of ownership around a common vision for the country’s future.”

In addition to the priorities set out in the 2009 *Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict*, outlined above, DPKO has developed an Early Peacebuilding Strategy, which contains some suggestions for sequencing and prioritization between tasks for many of the functional areas in missions. This document introduces two tracks, one involving short-term stabilizing

tasks and the other the early initiation of tasks with more far-reaching impact. It stresses the need to focus simultaneously on the short and medium term.

The *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* identifies “legitimate institutions that provide citizen security, justice and jobs” as being central in breaking cycles of violence. It asserts that these three areas should be prioritized, meaning that other reforms – such as political reform, decentralization, privatization and shifting attitudes towards marginalized groups – should be more paced and gradual in most situations. In terms of programming, it maintains that priorities should be laid out in a very limited number of core programmes that should be delivered at scale, in large national or subnational programmes, rather than small projects. Of particular relevance for civil affairs, the *World Development Report 2011* stresses the importance of strategic communications and confidence-building in peacebuilding contexts, and identifies support for bottom-up state-society relations as one of the top five lessons in programme design.

The latest initiative to guide the enterprise of peacebuilding is the “New Deal for engagement in fragile states”, endorsed in November 2011 at the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea. Through this initiative, a broad collection of states and international actors commit to five peacebuilding and statebuilding goals that should guide the work of fragile and conflict-affected countries and development partners. Again, there is a focus on state-society relations, as well as the question of supporting national capacities: “We will increase our support for credible and inclusive processes of political dialogue. We will support global, regional and national initiatives to build the capacity of government and civil society leaders and institutions to lead peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts.” This initiative includes the G7+ countries, many of which themselves host UN peacekeeping missions, including DRC, Haiti, Liberia, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Timor-Leste.

## 4.2. Protection of civilians

A number of peacekeeping missions have a mandate to “protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence”, bearing in mind that the host state is primarily responsible for protecting civilians within its borders. Implementation of the protection of civilians (POC) mandate requires all mission components to work in a coordinated way, each bringing their own unique contribution to the table. While there is no one uniformed or civilian element that is solely responsible for implementing POC mandates, civil affairs is a key player in this area of work.

Missions with POC mandates are required to conduct a detailed analysis of risks facing civilians in the area of operations and to devise a comprehensive POC strategy that

articulates the mission's approach towards addressing the priority POC risks that it has identified. The DPKO/DFS Framework for Drafting Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Strategies in UN Peacekeeping Operations explains that a POC risk is calculated by weighing a given threat to a civilian population against its vulnerability to that threat. Civil Affairs Officers contribute to that analysis by relaying relevant information from the community level, including perceptions of the communities about their own vulnerabilities and capacities, which are all-important measures in this regard. Civil affairs components can play an important referral role through relaying information on allegations or risks of human rights violations to Human Rights Officers for further investigation and action. (It should be underscored that monitoring and protection work should be performed by trained staff with the necessary expertise and knowledge.) Civil Affairs Officers also act as an important link between the mission and external POC stakeholders, including local communities and civil society actors. In some cases, civil affairs has been tasked with coordinating the mission's overall POC activities.

A variety of measures can be taken by a mission in order to prevent and respond to the identified POC risks. The DPKO/DFS Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping Operations, which stresses prevention as a priority, organizes the work of UN peacekeeping missions in support of this mandated task into three tiers, each of which is pursued simultaneously:

- **Tier one: protection through political process**
- **Tier two: providing protection from physical violence**
- **Tier three: establishing a protective environment**

**In support of tier one**, civil affairs contributes by facilitating processes that enable local political leaders, local authorities and communities to identify, plan for and take concrete steps to protect local communities from risks, and by helping them to link up with regional, national and international protection resources. Civil affairs also contributes to protection by supporting reconciliation and conflict management at the local level, promoting the use of dialogue to address triggers for violence against civilians and advocating for the peaceful resolution of conflict.

**In support of tier two**, based on their regular contact with local authorities and community leaders, civil affairs plays a particularly important role in an early warning function: relaying information on potential risks and threats to civilians to other civilian elements of the mission and uniformed components. Civil affairs can also provide information on overall local dynamics, which help to inform operational responses, in turn helping to enhance the capacity of the peacekeeping force to answer to protection needs and to prevent and mitigate any unintended consequences of military operations.

**In support of tier three**, civil affairs supports national actors – including authorities, communities and civil society – in strengthening longer term social and civil conditions for peace and addressing the root causes of POC risks.

The General Assembly has welcomed the role of civil affairs in the protection of civilians (A/65/19), stressing:

[...] the importance of the mission having the capacity to interact closely with the host government, local authorities and the local population in order to raise awareness and understanding of its protection of civilians mandate and activities. [...] The Special Committee welcomes practices such as the fielding of joint protection teams, community liaison interpreters and Civil Affairs Officers, which improve local level analysis and assist with expectation management among the local community regarding the role and limitations of the peacekeeping mission.

It is important to bear in mind that different actors approach the challenge of protection differently. Peacekeeping missions are usually mandated to focus on the protection of civilians from the imminent threat of physical violence, creating a safe and secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid, as well as on issues related to child protection and protection from sexual violence in conflict. Humanitarian actors, on the other hand, generally adopt a much wider understanding of protection which focuses on ensuring respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Therefore, the types of issues identified as protection risks, as well as the proposed responses to these risks, often differ between the mission and humanitarian actors. In this respect, it is important that missions and the Global Protection Cluster, which also comprises humanitarian organizations involved in protection activities, jointly engage in the POC risk analysis, to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the risks facing civilians in the mission area and in the strategy to mitigate them. As a key interface with humanitarian actors in the field, Civil Affairs Officers have a role to play in *enabling* the protection work of humanitarian actors. At the same time, civil affairs plays a key role in *implementing* the mission's POC mandate. These are two distinct functions of the civil affairs component.



DPKO has developed specialized training modules on POC and conflict-related sexual violence in order to improve the overall coherence and effectiveness of POC activities. The DPKO training modules on POC can be downloaded via the peacekeeping resources hub. See [Recommended resources](#) section below for access details.

## Recommended resources

<b>Name</b>	<b>Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding: Clarifying the Nexus (September 2010)</b>
<b>Description</b>	A short and clear explanation of the relationship between these two concepts.
<b>Source</b>	UN peacekeeping personnel can access this document via the Policy and Practices database on the POINT intranet: <a href="http://ppdb.un.org">http://ppdb.un.org</a>
<b>Name</b>	<b>Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, A/63/881—S/2009/304 (June 2009)</b>
<b>Description</b>	Lays out the current UN-wide position on the enterprise of peacebuilding.
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/63/881">http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/63/881</a>
<b>Name</b>	<b>Progress report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, A/64/866—S/2010/386 (July 2010)</b>
<b>Description</b>	Formal progress report on peacebuilding with several references to the work done by civil affairs in this field.
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/64/866">http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/64/866</a>
<b>Name</b>	<b>World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development</b>
<b>Description</b>	The latest thinking on the complex relationship between conflict and development.
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://wdr2011.worldbank.org/">http://wdr2011.worldbank.org/</a>
<b>Name</b>	<b>A New Deal for engagement in fragile states</b>
<b>Description</b>	Details the commitments and priorities made by donor and recipient states on the path out of fragility. Likely to significantly impact how peacebuilding is supported in the years ahead.
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://www.g7plus.org/new-deal-document/">http://www.g7plus.org/new-deal-document/</a>



<b>Name</b>	<b>DPKO/DFS Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (April 2010)</b>
<b>Description</b>	Provides the conceptual framework for the protection of civilians in the context of UN peacekeeping operations.
<b>Source</b>	UN peacekeeping personnel can access this document via the Policy and Practices database on the POINT intranet: <a href="http://ppdb.un.org">http://ppdb.un.org</a>
<b>Name</b>	<b>Framework for Drafting Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Strategies in UN Peacekeeping Operations</b>
<b>Description</b>	Provides missions with a set of practical guidelines to assist them in drafting comprehensive POC strategies tailored to their mission context.
<b>Source</b>	UN peacekeeping personnel can access this document via the Policy and Practices database on the POINT intranet: <a href="http://ppdb.un.org">http://ppdb.un.org</a>
<b>Name</b>	<b>Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, A/65/19 (2011)</b>
<b>Description</b>	The General Assembly formally recognizes the work of civil affairs in supporting both peacebuilding and the protection of civilians.
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/65/19">http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/65/19</a>
<b>Name</b>	<b>OHCHR/DPKO/DPA/DFS Policy on Human Rights in United Nations Peace Operations and Political Missions (September 2011)</b>
<b>Description</b>	Outlines the role of human rights components in protection of civilians.
<b>Source</b>	UN peacekeeping personnel can access this document via the Policy and Practices database on the POINT intranet: <a href="http://ppdb.un.org">http://ppdb.un.org</a>
<b>Name</b>	<b>DPKO Training on Protection of Civilians</b>
<b>Description</b>	DPKO training modules on POC can be downloaded via the peacekeeping resources hub. These modules are a useful resource for Civil Affairs Officers involved in POC.
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org">http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org</a>

