

Briefings of Heads of Human Rights Components in New York

(21 to 24 February 2017)

Background

With most recent peace missions being given robust human rights mandate, the Security Council has recognized that the realization of human rights is essential for building and keeping peace. Currently, around 800 human rights staff members are working in nine peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and five special political missions (SPMs). There is a continued need to strengthen the understanding among Member States and United Nations system partners of the role of human rights components in supporting overall mission mandate implementation.

One year of implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary General's report on the Future of Peace Operation has demonstrated the crucial need to better integrate human rights priorities in key work streams of peace operations. These include placing human rights at the center of conflict analyses, political strategies and prevention activities; making human rights a core factor in assessing the operational readiness of Troop and Police Contributing Countries (TCC/PCCs) to ensure UN peace operations adequately protect civilians from violence and adhere to human rights standards; and integrating human rights in the UN's engagement with the African Union (AU) and cooperation on regional peace operations, against the backdrop of the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 2320 (2016) on AU-UN cooperation.

In March 2012, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organised the first meeting of heads of human rights components of peace missions in New York. The briefing was a key element in a series of events, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Sweden, to raise awareness on the role of human rights in peacekeeping as well as the work done at Headquarters to backstop the human rights components of peace operations.

Due to budget restrictions, smaller-scale events involving a limited number of heads of human rights components of peacekeeping missions and special political missions were organised in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The organisation of briefings by a small number of heads of human rights components in early 2017 will strategically highlight the contribution of human rights components to the overall mandate of peace operations at a time where OHCHR is actively taking part in discussions to frame the implementation of the Secretary General report on the future of United Nations Peace Operations on core areas such as prevention of conflicts, enhanced coherence and impact through the consolidation of protection functions and UN-AU partnerships.

Proposal

In view of the context above, it is proposed to organise the following:

1. A briefing to Member States and United Nations partners
2. A Security Council meeting in an 'Arria' formula format
3. Internal discussions on current major issues
4. Bilateral meetings of Heads of HRC related to country-specific mandates (with UN partners, Member States and civil society organizations).

Participation

It is proposed that three heads of human rights components, two from peace missions and one from a political mission, be invited. Participation has been suggested based on above-mentioned thematic priorities, gender and regional diversity, DPA and DPKO-led missions, foreseen activities in the following year, as well as participation in past briefings:

- UNMISS (T/PCC readiness to protect civilians from violence)
- MONUSCO (human rights integration in analysis and prevention; cooperation with uniformed personnel)
- UNSOM (AU-UN cooperation and regional peacekeeping)

Organisation

The briefings will be jointly organised by the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (FOTCD) Peace Mission Support Section (PMSS) and NYO.

Dates

The visit will take place from **21 to 24 February 2017**. We would be grateful if you could kindly arrange to arrive in New York on Monday, 20 February and remain available until at least 6pm on Friday, 24 February. It is envisaged to use 21 and 22 February for internal and bilateral meetings, and to convene the briefing to Member States on 23 February and Arria formula meeting on 24 February.

Budget

Heads of human rights components will use their respective mission travel budgets.

* *NB*: Previous briefings included the following Heads of Components and main topics:

2016: MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNAMI and UNAMID: Role of human rights in supporting political dialogue and peace processes; enhanced coherence in implementation of protection functions; human rights in missions operating in a high-threat environment/CVE; dialogue with armed groups; conflict prevention and election-related violence; cooperation with uniformed components

2015: MINUSTAH, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNAMA and UNSMIL: Role of human rights in transitions/ drawdown in peace operations; combatting impunity; the use of dual reporting to OHCHR and the Mission; integrating human rights in Missions' political work; integrating human rights, transitional justice and rule of law within one Division