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GOING FURTHER TOGETHER

The contribution of **human rights components**
to the implementation of mandates of United
Nations field missions

ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION

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FOREWORD

At a time when the world faces multiple and unprecedented crises, understanding how human rights strengthen and support the other political, operational and peacebuilding objectives of the United Nations (UN) has never been more important. The promotion and protection of human rights has been a key purpose and guiding principle of the UN since the establishment of the Organization in 1945. As we mark the 75th anniversary of the UN, Secretary-General António Guterres reiterated in his Call to Action (C2A) for Human Rights that “human rights are the responsibility of each and every UN actor and that a culture of human rights must permeate everything we do, in the field, at regional level and at Headquarters.”

UN field missions are one of the most important tools to implement the Secretary-General’s C2A. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet stressed in her 7 July statement to the UN Security Council “UN peace operations are among the Organization’s most significant achievements, and a powerful tool to protect and promote human rights.”

For more than 25 years, human rights components have been core elements of UN field missions operating in very diverse, challenging, and constantly evolving environments. This report examines the ways in which human rights components contribute to an extensive array of strategic goals of the UN. Developed from numerous, in-depth interviews with senior UN officials, civilian, military and police personnel as well as civil society and host government representatives, this study builds a collection of concrete case studies from a wide range of UN field missions.

The case studies identified through this research show contributions in areas that go far beyond the human rights monitoring and reporting functions traditionally associated with human rights work, highlighting the role played by human rights components in supporting political processes, building sustainable peace, and preventing, deterring and mitigating violent conflict. From supporting field missions in responding to the novel COVID-19 pandemic to advising Special Representatives of the Secretary-General to reach political solutions to conflict, the breadth of the roles played of human rights is rivaled only by the depth of their impact.

Building upon the findings set out in this report, notably the success factors that allow human rights components to positively contribute to mandate implementation, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will work with stakeholders in the field and at Headquarters to ensure that human rights components of UN field missions continue to support mandate delivery and the effective protection and promotion of the human rights of the people we serve.

Ilze Brands Kehris
Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than twenty-five years, human rights components have been core elements of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations and special political missions (collectively, “field missions”).¹ Field missions are among the most visible, effective tools of the UN to prevent and manage conflict and to advance peace and security. The UN increasingly focuses on preventing conflict, sustaining peace and becoming more cost-effective—making human rights-based approaches in these missions more important than ever.

Human rights have been a pillar of the UN since its founding and a concept that has influenced the work of all of its Member States, its principal organs, its Secretariat, and its agencies, funds and programmes. In February 2020, UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched his Call to Action for Human Rights, detailing a seven-point blueprint aimed at promoting positive change.²

Most often, concern for human rights creates the political momentum for a field mission to be mandated by the Security Council; similarly, the improvement in the human rights situation is the single biggest measure for when a mission can be drawn down. This report demonstrates that human rights components contribute not only to addressing the human rights that are central concerns of field missions, but also play fundamental roles in creating the political conditions essential for such missions to build sustainable peace and relaunch development progress when conflict recedes.

The report presents cases that demonstrate how human rights components in field missions strengthen UN efforts across a broader agenda that includes preventing human rights abuses in times of crises, promoting international peace and security and public participation and civic space, and addressing frontier human rights issues; all while helping to prevent and resolve violent conflict.

Human rights and UN field missions share a common history, principles and objectives. The Security Council referenced human rights in mandating the earliest peacekeeping operations and a dozen UN field missions include integrated human rights components today.³ Human rights violations are recognized as a root cause of numerous conflicts and are a central part of the General Assembly’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁴ At every step along the road from conflict prevention and conflict management, to peacemaking, peacekeeping, stabilization, peacebuilding and development, human rights issues play an important role.

This report complements previous studies on human rights components and the closely related task of the protection of civilians (POC),⁵ examining the ways in which human rights components contribute to the implementation of broad strategic goals of UN field missions; this includes objectives that are not always associated with a narrow interpretation of human rights work or with human rights components. It finds that human rights components are important enablers across a wide swath of mission actions.

The study finds that, when properly leveraged, human rights components become significant enablers for these mandates by creating opportunities for mission initiatives, managing risk and offering leverage with key actors. These contributions strengthen the mission’s pursuit of political solutions, its ability to build a sustainable peace, and its prevention of violent conflict. The study also finds strong support for the importance of human rights principles in mission mandates and the role of human rights components integrated into field missions amongst mission leadership and mission personnel. Staff from UN field missions felt that their work would be detrimentally affected if the human rights component were a stand-alone office rather than a part of the mission. Interviewees felt that including the human rights component within the mission facilitated information sharing, led to more effective political engagement, strengthened the mission’s ability to support the government institutions as part of peacebuilding programmes, and created greater opportunities for collaboration with joined-up chains of command. While this study is not sufficiently broad to argue that all UN field

1. The first modern recognizable human rights component dates to 1992, in the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).
2. “The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights” (United Nations, 2020) www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The_Highest_Aspiration_A_Call_To_Action_For_Human_Right_English.pdf.
3. See complete list below in footnote 10.
4. See United Nations and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2018) chapter 5; General Assembly resolution 70/1 (A/RES/70/1) OP 10, 19, 20.
5. See, for example, OHCHR, “Evaluation of OCHR’s Support to Legislation in Conformity with International Standards” (Geneva, OHCHR, 2018) www.ohchr.org/Documents/About/Us/Evaluation/Evaluation_legislation_international_standards.pdf; Victoria Holt, Glyn Taylor and Max Kelly, “Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations: Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges” (New York, United Nations, 2009).

missions should include an integrated human rights component, this was the clear consensus that emerged amongst the staff from missions where such components are integrated. There was a clear consensus that it has added value to the mission as a whole.

This study uses illustrative case studies that elaborate in concrete terms the link between human rights work and the peace, security and peacebuilding goals of the United Nations. The case studies highlight the many ways in which human rights components contribute across a range of missions operating in different contexts. The report focuses on three baskets of mandated tasks, drawn from a list of 21 mandate areas,⁶ including (1) supporting political objectives; (2) building sustainable peace; and (3) support to preventing, deterring and mitigating conflict.

SUPPORTING POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

All field missions seek political solutions and, as articulated by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations,⁷ should emphasize the primacy of politics and political solutions to conflict. The impartial and principled framework guiding the work of human rights components support these efforts by strengthening the mission's credibility and legitimacy. A vivid example of this is found in civilian casualty reporting, which was an important component in strengthening the standing of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) with all actors, including the Taliban, and expanded the mission's political space for dialogue. Human rights components also support missions to respond to tense political environments, such as through the monitoring of hate speech in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Libya.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE

Building sustainable peace has long been an important aspect of UN field missions, including multidimensional peacekeeping operations and special political missions, with a number of special political missions specifically designated as peacebuilding missions.⁸ Human rights components support key efforts in this regard, such as the restoration of state authority in CAR and Somalia, police reform efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Haiti, and justice reform in South Sudan. The reporting of human rights components also helps inform the good offices efforts of senior leadership in diverse areas such as monitoring of political participation during elections in DRC, and supporting reconciliation and transitional justice in Libya and Kosovo⁹. The Heads of human rights components of UN missions report to the Head of Mission and to the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, and represent OHCHR in the UN Country Team. Human rights components also contribute to the work of human rights monitoring mechanisms in the UN system, including the Human Rights Council.¹⁰ As a result, this allows for continuity in sustaining support for the international commitments of the country and related engagement by the UN during mission transitions.

SUPPORTING THE PREVENTION, DETERRENCE AND MITIGATION OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

Deterrence and prevention are key tasks of many field missions and human rights components support the full spectrum of related tasks. These range from early warning to good offices and dispute resolution, to military and police operations and POC. Human rights components also contribute significantly to situational awareness and crisis response. Missions' responses to and support for host country institutions dealing with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and Ebola are informed by human rights insights that help prevent abuses while building public trust and confidence in the UN, the mission and the host government.

6. The report utilized a list of mandated tasks developed by the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), available at: www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/field-missions-dashboard.

7. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446.

8. These include, for example, the UN Peacebuilding Office in Liberia (UNOL); the UN Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA); the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau; the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Support Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL); the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA); and the UN Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP).

9. All references to Kosovo are to be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (S/RES/1244, 1999) and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

10. Human rights monitoring mechanisms include UN Charter-based bodies and treaty-based bodies. For more information, see <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx>.

LESSONS LEARNED

This report gathers many examples of ways in which human rights components are contributing to the mandate objectives of current and past field missions, including the broader political strategies of various missions as well as their human rights work. One of the most significant lessons concerns the importance of ensuring complementarity and coherence between human rights work and the mission's overall goals and political strategy.

The report also recognizes success factors for effective contribution to mandate implementation and effective human rights work generally. These include senior mission leaders who understand the role and potential strategic benefits of human rights and how to leverage human rights as an entry point for political dialogue within the political strategies of the missions. Mission leaders regularly face difficult choices on a multitude of issues and human rights components can support them by serving as important points-of-contact for government on sensitive issues and providing legal and technical advice on human rights. At the same time, human rights components must tailor their work to a given context, ensuring that they are engaged with key actors (including the host government) and aligning their strategies with the political vision of the Head of Mission. It is also incumbent upon human rights components to develop priorities to focus their work, avoiding overlap and maximizing available resources as well as to engage in the cross-component coordination forums established by mission leadership. Similarly, the findings of the report underscore the importance of the host authorities and the Security Council themselves recognizing the crucial role of human rights components in addressing the political and sustaining peace aspects of missions, and of providing human rights components with the political support and resources to fulfil these roles.

The report further identifies ways in which human rights components could make an even greater contribution through addressing practices that pose challenges for cross-mission collaboration. Interlocutors frequently cited a culture of confidentiality within human rights components—a byproduct of the sensitive work that they often carry out—that was seen by some outside the component as overly strict, hindering information-sharing and collaboration with other mission components. Staff also noted a tendency by human rights components to focus on individual cases, rather than engaging on the broader strategic objectives of a mission. Effective leadership and cross-component communication can manage these negative aspects of what may otherwise be virtues in human rights work: responsible handling of information and concern for the protection of individuals.

INTRODUCTION

In recognition of the importance of human rights issues in resolving conflict and building sustainable peace, human rights components have become an increasingly common part of UN field missions. Today, the twelve largest peacekeeping operations and special political missions include integrated human rights components.¹¹ This study examines whether and how human rights components in UN field missions contribute to broader mission mandates, such as mandates focused on politics, peacebuilding and military or police that may not be associated with human rights narrowly defined. The study grew out of reflections on the work of human rights components in field missions and progressive policy development, such as the Policy on Human Rights in UN Peace Operations and Political Missions and the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces. The study began in 2019 as a series of strategic-level discussions on the role of human rights in peacekeeping and special political missions, with many senior interviewees raising the broad impact of human rights work. These preliminary discussions progressively evolved into a more focused study of the contributions of human rights components beyond “traditional” human rights mandated tasks.

Building upon the work of the Security Council Affairs Division (SCAD) in analyzing mandated tasks, this study groups mission mandates into three general areas to which human rights components can contribute: (1) supporting political objectives, including good offices, peacemaking, strategic communications and support to key political events (such as elections); (2) supporting peacebuilding, including building host-state institutional capacity, strengthening the rule of law, and supporting reconciliation; and (3) supporting prevention and deterrence of violent conflict, including strengthening crisis response, contributing to early warning and situational awareness, advising the military and police, and advising on POC. The study found significant contributions in all these areas, while recognizing that implementing mission mandates is always a team effort and that human rights components do not work alone.

THE POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN UN PEACE OPERATIONS AND POLITICAL MISSIONS

The head of human rights components in field missions serves as the human rights adviser to the Head of Mission, reporting to the SRSG (directly or through the Deputy Head of Mission), as well as the representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the mission area. The Policy on Human Rights in UN Peace Operations and Political Missions formalized this arrangement in 2011.¹² Interviews for this study indicated that this policy and the dual reporting line are generally well understood, with the vast majority of interviewees (including the vast majority of senior mission leaders interviewed) expressing appreciation for the dual reporting line. Virtually all interlocutors cited the technical expertise, human rights machinery and public voice external to the mission as assets. OHCHR and other human rights machinery outside the mission area increased the tools available to missions to deal with a range of situations affecting different aspects of mandate delivery—from encouraging parties to resolve conflicts to building capacity of in-country institutions. Many senior mission leaders interviewed noted that understanding how to leverage this relationship with the Office of the High Commissioner in Geneva was important for effective political messaging and good offices.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE POLICY ON UN SUPPORT TO NON-UN SECURITY FORCES

The 2011 Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces (HRDDP) established a human rights-based framework for enabling UN assistance to governments and partners, even in situations where such assistance creates potential risks for the UN’s reputation.¹³ The HRDDP thus increases the UN’s ability to support host governments

11. The current peacekeeping and special political missions with integrated human rights components include the UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), the United Nations-African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM). In addition, this report discusses four recently completed field missions with integrated human rights components: the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI), the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). This report does not include missions with no human rights component, such as the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), missions that work alongside a stand-alone OHCHR office, such as the UN Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC), or offices of Special Envoys or liaison offices that may include Human Rights Officers or Human Rights Advisers, such as the Office of the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes. For further details, see OHCHR, “Human rights components of UN peace missions”, at: ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/PeaceMissionsIndex.aspx.

12. UN OHCHR-DPKO-DPA-DFS, Policy on human rights in peacekeeping and special political missions (1 September 2011).

13. Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces (originally signed 2011, transmitted through A/67/775–S/2013/110, 2013).

by establishing a common understanding between the UN and the recipients of support regarding universally recognized norms and standards of human rights that apply to all security forces. The policy also provides mechanisms for working together to prevent or mitigate risks that would create obstacles to UN support. Nearly all of the field missions surveyed reported that they actively use HRDDP mechanisms, with the human rights component often playing a leading role. Interviews confirmed that this is a tool that, in many cases, has helped the UN to stay and deliver on critical mandated tasks while managing or mitigating human rights-related risks.

METHODOLOGY

This study was initiated in 2019 by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and guided by a steering committee composed of representatives of the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the Department of Operational Support (DOS) and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG). This group provided guidance and input on the scoping and framing of the study and commented on early work products and initial drafts. The study team, composed of one OHCHR staff member and one consultant, also established an internal OHCHR reference group to draw upon the expertise of a select group of experienced human rights officers.

To assess the contribution of human rights components, the study team conducted a wide range of interviews to build case studies based on the three baskets of mandated tasks described above. All of these case studies are verified with mission staff or other personnel outside the human rights components for accuracy. The case studies highlight positive contributions to mission objectives, including those contexts where the conflict parties did not make sufficient progress towards sustainable peace.

The study team engaged in desk research and conducted 131 in-depth interviews with current and former staff from more than 20 field missions, ranging from the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in the late 1990s to recent multidimensional field missions such as the UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). The interviewees included 20 (15.5%) current or former civilian senior leaders, 42 (32%) currently serving human rights officers, 50 (38%) civilians serving outside of a human rights component, 11 (8.5%) current or former mission military component officers, 4 (3%) current or former mission police component officers, 3 (2%) representatives of host country civil society and 1 (less than 1%) member of host government. Approximately 35% of the interviewees were female and 65% were male. The study team initially planned at least two field visits and a comprehensive staff survey, however these programmes were interrupted by the COVID-19 global pandemic and its impact on field missions and headquarters staff. These travel limitations, combined with internal movement restrictions in place in many host countries and crisis-mode operations for many field missions, significantly impacted the study team's ability to conduct interviews with host state governments and civil society.

All interviews conducted for this study were strictly confidential to encourage frank and honest feedback and this report references individual interviews in an anonymized form. In the interest of transparency, the anonymized interviews distinguish between human rights interviewees (whether in human rights components or OHCHR headquarters), which are prefaced with "HR" ("Interview HR-1", "Interview HR-2", etc.) and interviews with non-human rights personnel, which are simply referenced by a number ("Interview 1", "Interview 2").¹⁴ Where quotes are attributed to specific interviewees, those interviewees provided prior consent with an opportunity to view and, if necessary, correct their quote in the context of the report.

Throughout this report, the term "human rights component" is used generically to refer to integrated components of UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The names, structures and detailed portfolios of the human rights components in field missions may vary.¹⁵ In addition, most missions have now consolidated specialized protection functions relating to child protection and conflict-related sexual violence under the human rights component, as recommended by the Secretary-General.¹⁶ Given the variety of configurations and small sample size, this report does not attempt to draw lessons from these different types of human rights components.

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14. Note that the interview numbers refer to individuals interviewed, not to a particular interview date (e.g., an individual may have been interviewed more than once but would still be referenced by a single interview number).
15. For example, in UNSOM, it is the Human Rights and Protection Group, similar to UNMIL's Human Rights and Protection Section; in UNSMIL, the human rights component was referred to as the Human Rights, Transitional Justice and Rule of Law Service; in MONUSCO, the human rights component is referred to as the Joint Human Rights Office, a reference to the fact that OHCHR's stand-alone presence preceded the peacekeeping operation and retains an independent legal existence.
16. "With due consideration for the requirements of flexibility to respond to differing contexts, a dedicated capacity for specialized protection functions relating to child protection and conflict-related sexual violence will be consolidated within mission human rights components". A/70/357-S/2015/682.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMPONENTS

The study found that human rights components of UN field missions contribute to a wide variety of mission mandates, well beyond the traditional areas of monitoring and reporting on human rights violations traditionally associated with human rights components and specific human rights language in Security Council mandates. Many interlocutors stressed that the nature of conflict today almost always has a human rights dimension and that human rights concerns are also essential for the peace-development-humanitarian nexus approach to conflict prevention.¹⁷ The contributions of human rights components are particularly evident in three areas: supporting political objectives, building sustainable peace and preventing conflict.

It should be emphasized that while the examples in this report highlight the work of human rights components, the work of field missions is always a collective effort and human rights components almost never work alone. All case studies presented below should imply the collaboration of many uncited participants, from the special assistants of senior leaders to substantive components and mission support, as well as contributions from both international and national staff, the latter contributing greatly to all UN field mission work. The contributions of other mission components were highlighted where interviewees and desk research referenced the work of specific components.

SUPPORTING POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

“We have moved from viewing human rights as an impediment to striking a deal to viewing any deal that doesn’t make progress on human rights as an insufficient deal.”

François Grignon, DPO official and former Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Protection and Operations ad interim of MONUSCO

UN field missions are political tools and, as articulated by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the Secretary-General’s Action for Peacekeeping initiative, political solutions to conflict are often the most effective and enduring. While this might at first appear to create tension with traditional conceptions of human rights, this study finds that human rights mandates are not only one element in missions’ broader political objectives, they are often key enablers of missions’ political strategies. Human rights components contribute to political objectives through their support to the impartiality and credibility of UN field missions in politically sensitive contexts; through supporting peacemaking and governance institutions; and through supporting strategic communications to facilitate a conducive political environment.

SUPPORTING CONFIDENCE-BUILDING AND CREDIBILITY

The international human rights architecture relies upon verified fact-finding as well as the universal application of international standards. This has resulted in a global cadre of UN human rights professionals skilled at establishing credible facts and who prize objective determinations of the situation. These skills are particularly useful in turbulent political contexts, where facts may be difficult to establish or intentionally obfuscated, and where the credibility and impartiality of a UN field mission are often its most important political assets. There is perhaps no other area of engagement where the capacities of human rights components can so effectively bolster the work of senior political leaders and further the mission’s political strategy as a whole.

17. See, for example, Report of the Secretary-General, Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system (A/75/79–E/2020/55, 2020) para 254; ‘Secretary-General-designate António Guterres’ remarks to the General Assembly on taking the oath of office’ (New York, UN News Centre, 12 December 2016) <www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2016-12-12/secretary-general-designate-ant%C3%B3nio-guterres-oath-office-speech>.

The relevance of the human rights component to political engagement is clear in the case of UNAMA. When UNAMA deployed in 2002, the Taliban were sceptical of political engagement with the mission, viewing the UN as an actor biased in favor of coalition forces. The human rights component began regular reporting on POC in 2007, documenting civilian casualties resulting from actions by all actors, including coalition and pro-government forces.¹⁸ This reporting greatly contributed to the mission's reputation for credibility and impartiality. Engagement with the parties and public reporting also resulted in changes in tactics by the coalition, government forces and the Taliban. Along with continued political efforts from the mission, this helped to open the door for a dialogue with the Taliban, first on issues related to civilian casualties from their operations then broadened to include human rights issues impacting their own fighters, such as torture. The impartial, structured, fact-based approach of the human rights component created space for the SRSG and the mission as a relevant and important actor in political dialogues. These political dialogues were one of only a handful of other diplomatic initiatives that the Taliban maintained.

The 2016 bombing of a public protest in Afghanistan also highlights how the fact-finding capacity of a human rights component can support the mission to navigate a sensitive political context. That year, the long-marginalized Hazara community marched in public protest in Kabul's Deh Mazang Square when two bombs went off, killing at least 97 people.¹⁹ Rumours spread that the bombing was orchestrated by the government, threatening to radicalize this peaceful protest movement and further undermine political stability in the country. An investigation by the human rights component of UNAMA and the publication of a credible and independent report helped contain tensions and aided engagement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) with the key leaders, avoiding a dangerous escalation of events.²⁰ The mission's record of credible and impartial investigation provided a strong basis for the SRSG and the mission to engage with the Afghan government and Hazara leaders.²¹

The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) also contributed to building confidence between Arab and Kurdish groups in the Kirkuk area of Iraq from 2010 to 2012. Kurdish claims to areas around Kirkuk and Mosul were creating significant tensions²² and the mission identified a set of priorities for political engagement, including the treatment of detainees by both sides.²³ The ability of the human rights component of UNAMI to conduct thorough and impartial detainee reviews was critical to building trust between the parties.²⁴ This helped create the political space for further dialogue and mediation.²⁵

The peace process in Mali provides another example of the ways in which impartial human rights work can help build confidence between the parties. The political process in Mali involved an iterative series of peace documents, beginning with a preliminary agreement in 2013 that called for exchanges of detainees on both sides.²⁶ However, when the civil war began in 2012, government authorities moved prisoners detained in the north to facilities in Bamako en masse, resulting in mass incarceration, usually with no registry of inmates.²⁷ This slowed down the process of exchange of detainees, creating mistrust between the armed groups and the government, with the former believing that the latter was acting in bad faith and refusing to release captured individuals. The human rights component of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) gained access to detainees on both sides—those held in government facilities as well as prisoners taken by the armed groups—and was able to verify which armed group members were indeed held in government facilities. By working impartially, the human rights component built confidence between the parties during this critical period.²⁸

18. See UNAMA, "Reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict", at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports>.

19. UNAMA, Human Rights and Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Special Report: Attack on a Peaceful Demonstration in Kabul, 23 July 2016, at: unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/23_july_suicide_attack_against_peaceful_demonstration_-_18_oct_2016.pdf.

20. Interviews 71, HR-15.

21. Interviews 71, HR-15.

22. See Secretary-General's reports on Iraq for 29 July 2010 (S/2010/406), para. 24; 26 November 2010 (S/2010/606), para.21; 31 March 2011 (S/2011/213), para. 25; and 28 November 2011 (S/2011/736), para. 30.

23. Interview HR-39.

24. Interviews 70, HR-39. See and compare previously referenced reports of the Secretary-General for Iraq, supra note 21, notably S/2011/736, para. 30.

25. Interviews 70, HR-39.

26. Accord préliminaire à l'élection présidentielle et aux pourparlers inclusifs de paix au Mali (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 18 June 2013), at: peacemaker.un.org/mali-accord-preliminaire-elections2013, see art. 18 ("[Les Parties] s'engagent à libérer les personnes détenues du fait du conflit armé dès l'entrée en vigueur du cessez-le-feu" / "[the Parties] undertake to release those detained as a result of the armed conflict immediately after the entry into force of the cease-fire" [unofficial translation of the original French]).

27. Interview HR-10.

28. Interviews 58, HR-10.

The human rights component of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) also played an important role in re-building the Haitian people's trust in the UN and in peace operations. Following a devastating earthquake in 2010 and a cholera epidemic to which UN peacekeepers were linked, MINUSTAH's credibility as a guarantor of security was seriously damaged. Over the next five years, however, the human rights component engaged in quiet but important work of outreach to civil society and communities, listening to their concerns, following-up on their problems, and ensuring that they felt that the international community heard their voices. This helped to re-build the population's trust in the UN mission and strengthen the mission's political role in the face of a turbulent electoral period (2014-2016).²⁹

SUPPORTING PEACEMAKING AND SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE

Even where perceptions of UN impartiality are strong, human rights components can support field missions to achieve key political benchmarks such as supporting national peace agreements, the holding of elections and promoting political space, and mediating local conflict. As long-time UN official Tamrat Samuel noted, "raising human rights issues offers opportunities for engaging parties even when their positions are far apart."³⁰ Similarly, as DPO official and former Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) for Protection and Operations ad interim of MONUSCO, François Grignon, noted, "we have moved from viewing human rights as an impediment to striking a deal to viewing any deal that doesn't make progress on human rights as an insufficient deal."³¹

MINUSMA's engagement in mediation efforts continued after the 2013 preliminary agreement (see above) and the human rights component played a supporting role in the Algerian-led mediation.³² MINUSMA human rights officers assembled a multi-lateral team including representatives from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union (EU) to highlight the importance of sustainable reconciliation and justice measures within the peace agreement.³³ Establishing this group, which brought together important UN and regional voices, allowed the international mediation team to remain impartial on key issues—some of which, such as amnesty, remained contentious—while creating the space to include such provisions in the agreement. This effort helped bring the final agreement into conformity with international standards and align it with the mission's overall political strategy for achieving a lasting political settlement.³⁴

Human rights components also serve an important function in providing reliable information to inform engagement with government and other actors by senior leadership. This link can be particularly important during elections, which often are pivotal events in peace processes and may serve as a key strategic benchmark for field missions. Human rights concerns are often prominently reflected in the political strategies and priorities of missions during electoral periods.³⁵ In the DRC, for example, the human rights component of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) consistently engaged in monitoring and reporting on measures negotiated by the government and the opposition in a political agreement on the conduct of the country's delayed elections.³⁶ Issues monitored included the release of political prisoners, the opening of perceived "opposition" media outlets, and the lifting of a ban on political protests and meetings. By generating regular, reliable information, the human rights component informed the SRSG's political engagement with

29. Interviews 81, HR-32.

30. Interview with Tamrat Samuel, 11 March 2020.

31. Interview with François Grignon, 20 March 2020.

32. Interviews 58, 51, HR-3.

33. Interview HR-3.

34. Accord pour la paix et la réconciliation au Mali, issu du processus d'Algier (Algiers, Algeria, 15 May 2015), at: [peacemaker.un.org/node/2681](https://www.peacemaker.un.org/node/2681).

35. See, for instance, the extensive use of human rights indicators in MONUSCO's performance reports to the Fifth Committee during the electoral and pre-electoral period in DRC. See Reports of the Secretary General, Budget performance of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the following periods: from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, (A/72/638, 11 December 2017), p. 32-40 ("Expected accomplishment 3.1: Progress towards democratization, peace consolidation and support for political dialogue"); 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/73/633, 10 December 2018), p. 14-16 ("Expected accomplishment 1.1: Establishment of an environment conducive to peaceful, credible and inclusive elections"); 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 (A/74/617, 2 January 2020), p. 19 ("Expected accomplishment 1.2: Progress in respect of political space and human rights").

36. See UN News, "UN welcomes signing of political agreement on elections in DR Congo", 31 December 2016, at: news.un.org/en/story/2016/12/548752-un-welcomes-signing-political-agreement-elections-dr-congo.

the Government.³⁷ Numerous MONUSCO interlocutors emphasized the importance of human rights-related information for effective dialogue with the government during this critical period.³⁸

The work of the human rights component of UNAMI in Iraq has similarly supported the mission's good offices function during a turbulent political period. During demonstrations held from October 2019 to February 2020, the human rights component monitored indiscriminate or excessive use of force, resulting in hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries.³⁹ The SRSR and other members of the senior leadership used this reporting to engage with protestors, government, and civil society to identify solutions and facilitate dialogue.⁴⁰

Restrictions on political space have been a similar strategic concern for the mission in Somalia. At the federal level, ensuring political space for opposition parties and freedom of speech for journalists have been an important part of the political strategy of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and is an area where the mission leadership have leveraged human rights monitoring and dialogue.⁴¹ Opposition political parties have complained, for instance, that the government has prohibited their meetings. In a coordinated dialogue to raise the issue of political space and freedom of assembly for opposition parties, the political component of UNSOM has engaged with political parties and federal actors while the human rights component has followed up through the inter-ministerial taskforce on human rights (see Sustaining Peace section below). Through UNSOM's engagement and good offices, political parties have become more active again but obstacles to full political participation remain.

The human rights component of UNSOM also supports the political component to mediate inter-clan conflict at the local level. Somalia's political landscape is complex, with a nascent federal government that faces all of the challenges of emerging democracies as well as vigorous and sometimes violent local politics at the state and region level. At the local level, information sharing between the human rights and political components of the mission has facilitated more effective conflict resolution responses, such as mediation during inter-clan conflict in Galmudug and Hirshabelle states in 2014-2016.⁴² The political component of UNSOM was active in supporting conflict resolution in these areas and the human rights component's information networks were instrumental in providing early warning and ongoing situational awareness.

SUPPORTING COMMUNICATIONS IN FRAGILE POLITICAL CONTEXTS

Many conflict-affected communities are also faced with public messaging that deepens societal divides and spreads messages of hatred. This challenges the work of peacemakers and presents obstacles to many field missions that seek to prevent conflict and build sustainable peace. Through their monitoring and fact-finding capacities, human rights components have been well positioned to support field missions in identifying, raising awareness about and addressing hate speech and similar public messaging.

In CAR, for instance, divides between Christian and Muslim communities, exploited by political actors and intertwined with ethnic rivalries, fueled violence and led to atrocities on both sides. Before MINUSCA's deployment, the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide stated that "Incitement to commit violence on the basis of religion or ethnicity and deliberate and targeted attacks against civilians based on their identity are both factors that indicate a high risk both of

37. See MONUSCO-OHCHR, "Recours illégal, injustifié et disproportionné à la force lors de la gestion des manifestations publiques en République Démocratique du Congo de janvier 2017 à janvier 2018" (March 2018), at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CD/BCNUDH-UnlawfulUnjustifiedUseofForce_Jan2017-Jan2018.pdf; MONUSCO-OHCHR, "Reporting on Human Rights Violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Context of Events on 19 December 2016" (February 2017), at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CD/UNJHRODecember2016_en.pdf; MONUSCO-OHCHR, "Preliminary investigation report on human rights violations and violence perpetrated during demonstrations in Kinshasa between 19 and 21 September 2016" (7 October 2016), at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CD/UNJHROSeptember2016_en.pdf; MONUSCO, Press Release: "MONUSCO Expresses Serious Concern about Rising Political Tensions in some parts of the DRC" (23 April 2016), at: monusco.unmissions.org/en/monusco-expresses-serious-concern-about-rising-political-tensions-some-parts-drc; MONUSCO-OHCHR, "Report of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms during the Pre-Electoral Period in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 1 January and 30 September 2015" (December 2015), at: monusco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/UNJHRO%20Report%20on%20HRV%20linked%20to%20electoral%20process%20December%202015.pdf.

38. Interviews 4, 6, HR-8, HR-9, HR-13.

39. UNAMI, "Human Rights Special Report: Demonstrations in Iraq" (22 October 2019), at: reliefweb.int/report/iraq/human-rights-special-report-demonstrations-iraq-1-9-october-2019-enar.

40. Interview HR-15.

41. Interview 43.

42. Interview 43. See also the Secretary General's reports on Somalia on 25 September 2014 (S/2014/699), para. 15 (on interclan fighting in Hiraan and Shabelle Hoose); and 12 May 2015 (S/2015/331), para. 18 (on clan conflict in Shabelle Hoose). Interviews also referenced clan conflict in Gaalkayco, Galmudug and Hirshabelle.

crimes against humanity and of genocide... If not halted, there is a risk of genocide in this country.”⁴³ While MINUSCA has conducted active operations to protect civilians and restore the authority and legitimacy of the government in Bangui, the political situation remains extremely delicate, with continued animosity that provides opportunities for spoilers to manipulate opinion through social media and create instability.

The human rights component of MINUSCA monitors hate speech on social media and, through an initiative between OHCHR and the social media company Facebook, seeks the removal of posts that violate the company’s Community Standards and the internationally agreed Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.⁴⁴ This contributes to initiatives undertaken by the mission and the government to promote stability and reconciliation. The information gathered is also used to identify perpetrators and, where appropriate, establish profiles to share with the Sanctions Committee on CAR, to raise awareness with the government and support legal reforms and administrative actions.

As in the Central African Republic, virulent messages on social media have deepened divides between communities in Libya. The Libyan population, moreover, has a much higher internet usage rate than CAR,⁴⁵ with 74% of the Libyan population using Facebook by some estimates.⁴⁶ The human rights component of UNSMIL has worked with Libyan journalists and Facebook to develop a shared understanding of hate speech and strengthen responsible journalism.⁴⁷ This ongoing work seeks to dampen the potentially malicious messages spread online and their impact in inciting and fueling violence.

■ BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE

“The Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 are a human rights manifesto.”

Adam Abdelmoula, DSRSG, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia

Human rights have long been recognized as a key element for building sustainable peace and human rights components contribute to mission mandates to support state institutions and promote reconciliation and transitional justice processes. There is a long and well-established history of human rights components supporting national human rights institutions; in addition, this study found many examples of support to governments in areas as diverse as the re-building of host nation militaries, providing training for courts and prisons, and reforming police services. As Adam Abdelmoula, DSRSG, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, stated, “the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 are a human rights manifesto.”⁴⁸

In many missions, the human rights component is an indispensable partner for the mission’s dedicated capacities working to build or transform security and rule of law institutions. A number of specialists in field missions appreciated

43. The statement of Under Secretary-General/Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Mr. Adama Dieng on the human rights and humanitarian dimensions of the crisis in the Central African Republic (22 January 2014), p. 2-3, at: www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/early-warning.shtml.

44. Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the expert workshops on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, 11 January 2013).

45. International Telecommunications Union, Country ICT Data 2018, at: www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx.

46. See Internet World Stats, at: www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm. The “estimated audience size” for creating an advertisement on Facebook.com through the website’s advertisement creation tool indicates a potential reach of 5,500,000 for an audience over the age of 13 years, or approximately 80% of the country’s population. See www.facebook.com/adsmanger.

47. Interview HR-40; UNSMIL, Press release: “Libyan Journalists, Activists and Social Media Influencers meet in Cairo and Agree to Combat Hate Speech” (13 November 2019), at: unsmil.unmissions.org/libyan-journalists-activists-and-social-media-influencers-meet-cairo-and-agree-combat-hate-speech.

48. Interview with Adam Abdelmoula, 12 May 2020.

the perspective that human rights officers brought to the work of security sector reform (SSR), identifying problematic issues before they grew out of control. The legal expertise of human rights staff has been instrumental to advancing good security sector governance by ensuring that adequate policies, legal instruments and accountability mechanisms are in place to guide the work of security institutions in full respect of human rights. Human rights components also contribute to reconciliation and transitional justice. While human rights work is most often associated with accountability for perpetrators of violations, the research for this study found many examples of human rights-supported processes of reconciliation between communities in places as diverse as Kosovo and Libya.

SUPPORTING THE RESTORATION AND EXTENSION OF STATE AUTHORITY

The restoration and extension of state authority is a core activity of many UN field missions.⁴⁹ Field missions bring numerous resources to this objective, including police, justice and corrections as part of the rule of law and SSR expertise, but also engagement from the human rights component. Human rights components are important partners in this endeavor, enabling field missions to engage with and provide support to security forces of the host country as well as enabling the state to bring government services to reach remote and often inaccessible areas of its territory.

The work of UNSOM in Somalia clearly demonstrates the role of human rights components in supporting the extension of state authority. This is a challenging task with a developing federal government, where key federalism issues are still to be decided among political stakeholders, and state and local governments operate with significant influence from clan-based social and power structures, and an ongoing insurgency from Al Shabab extremists. The human rights component of UNSOM found ways of contributing directly to this mandate by partnering with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in a Joint Programme that established an inter-ministerial taskforce on human rights and provided support to parliamentary committees.⁵⁰ This created an important entry point for UNSOM to engage the federal government across various ministries, as well as to engage state governments.⁵¹ Through this forum, UNSOM could raise human rights concerns with the government in a collaborative way. Human rights inputs are evident throughout the UN Country Team's annual country results, including in the areas of strengthening accountability and protective institutions,⁵² but also of deepening federalism and state-building,⁵³ supporting institutions to improve security and the rule of law,⁵⁴ and strengthening the resilience of the Somali population.⁵⁵

UNSOM also has a unique disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme that helps the federal government reintegrate members of Al Shabab who voluntarily leave the group. This process is particularly sensitive given the risk of defectors feigning civilian status in order to gain entry into Somali society, on the one hand, and given the potential for heavy handed interrogation tactics by government security actors seeking to gain information on the armed group, on the other.⁵⁶ Through its investigations, the human rights components of UNSOM has assisted the DDR component and national authorities to triage individuals leaving Al Shabab into low risk and high-risk categories.⁵⁷ Low risk individuals can be accepted into rehabilitation centres and more conventional DDR programming, freeing resources for the government to focus on how to handle high-risk individuals.

UNSOM also engages in an array of tasks to support the Somali security sector and contributions from the human rights component are important for a number of them. These include strengthening administration and civilian oversight within a nationally-owned framework that emphasizes respect for human rights; right-sizing and integration of the security forces; and review of constitutional questions.⁵⁸

49. See, for example, UN DPKO, Capstone Doctrine (January 2008), p. 26-27, at: www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf; see also, for example, Security Council resolution 2009 (S/RES/2009, 2011), OP 12(c) (UNSMIL); Security Council resolution 2102 (S/RES/2102, 2013), OP 2(b) (UNSOM); Security Council resolution 2449 (S/RES/2449, 2019), OP 33(a) (MINUSCA).

50. Interview HR-1, HR-38.

51. Interviews 54, HR-1, HR-38.

52. See United Nations Somalia, "UN Somalia Country Results Report 2019", 2019, p. 23-27, at: somalia.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/UN%20Country%20Results%20Report%202019.pdf.

53. Ibid, p. 14-15.

54. Ibid, p. 18-19, 21.

55. Ibid, p. 32-33.

56. Interview 56.

57. Interviews 56, HR-38.

58. Interview 65; see also UNSOM, "Security Sector Reform", at: unsom.unmissions.org/security-sector-reform.

MINUSCA has also taken on an important role in supporting the re-establishment of the security sector in CAR and its human rights component has been a key enabler in this regard. The security forces in the Central African Republic—including the army, police and gendarmerie—fell apart when the Bozizé government collapsed in 2013. A key task of MINUSCA is supporting the government to rebuild the security forces, often from scratch,⁵⁹ and establishing an accountability framework. The human rights component has been a key partner in these efforts, supporting training for police and gendarmerie and conducting vetting for all recruits.⁶⁰ This vetting is vitally important to sustain international support for the government and for a sustainable security force that abides by domestic and international law. Through this vetting, the mission and international partners have supported the re-deployment of security forces throughout CAR.

South Sudan also provides an example of a country where years of conflict and a lack of infrastructure have made it difficult to provide government services in many areas of the country. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has supported the government in its efforts to extend judicial capacity in these areas through the deployment of mobile courts. The rule of law component of UNMISS originally developed mobile courts, with the support of the human rights and police components, to adjudicate serious cases within the POC sites, where tens of thousands of internally displaced people sought refuge from the violence. With initial successes and a partnership with UNDP, mobile courts have been deployed to other areas of the country that lack a continuous judicial or prosecutorial presence.⁶¹ As South Sudan moves forward with a transitional government and peace agreement,⁶² the mobile courts are the first government rule of law presence in years.⁶³

SUPPORTING HOST COUNTRIES TO ESTABLISH THE RULE OF LAW

Even in countries where state authorities are physically present nationwide, supporting the government to establish the rule of law is frequently another important area of field mission work. Accountable institutions are an important ingredient of sustainable peacebuilding, a key component of the sustainable development goals,⁶⁴ and an area of human rights components' expertise. Some human rights officers have legal backgrounds that enable them to provide expert advice on technical questions, while also bringing an understanding of the value of the social compact between a responsive government and its people.

One of the most visible areas where field missions support security institutions is the area of police reform. Human rights components regularly support the UN Police (UNPOL) to build the capacity of the police services of the host country to become more efficient, effective, representative, responsive and accountable, in line with the Strategic Guidance Framework for International Policing supported by the Security Council.⁶⁵ As one official in the DPO Police Division stated, "Human rights [components] and UNPOL are like two sides of the same coin."⁶⁶ Recent examples of this work include initiatives in Haiti under the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) and in the DRC under MONUSCO. In both MINUJUSTH and MONUSCO, UNPOL and the human rights component worked with national authorities in Port-au-Prince and Kinshasa, respectively, to strengthen the offices of the Inspectors General.⁶⁷ These offices standardized human rights violation criteria and ensured joint follow-up of cases.⁶⁸ In MONUSCO, the human rights component also supported the training and deployment of officers from the Inspector General to provinces.⁶⁹

59. Security Council Resolution 2248 (2018), OP 40(b).

60. Interview HR-36.

61. Interview 66; see also UNDP, "Mobile Courts in South Sudan", 25 March 2019, at: www.ss.undp.org/content/south_sudan/en/home/library/democratic_governance/mobile-courts-in-south-sudan.html.

62. UN News, "UN chief welcomes South Sudan's Unity government, lauds parties for 'significant development'", 22 February 2020, at: news.un.org/en/story/2020/02/1057941.

63. See UNifeed, "South Sudan / Mobile Court Rape Cases", 11 December 2018, at: www.unmultimedia.org/tv/unifeed/asset/2333/2333652; Tony Muwangala, "Mobile courts deliver long-awaited justice in Western Lakes", UNMISS, 25 September 2019, at: unmiss.unmissions.org/mobile-court-delivers-long-awaited-justice-western-lakes.

64. United Nations Rule of Law, "Sustainable Development Goal 16", at: www.un.org/ruleoflaw/sdg-16.

65. See Security Council Resolution 2382, S/RES/2382 (2017), OP 4; see also Strategic Guidance Framework for International Policing, at: police.un.org/en/strategic-guidance-framework-international-policing.

66. Interview with Police Division official, 15 April 2020.

67. See Reports of the Secretary-General on the MINUJUSTH for 1 March 2019 (S/2019/198), para. 21, 31, 37; 28 November 2018 (S/2018/1059), para. 56; MONUSCO, "Press release: La Police MONUSCO accompagne l'Inspection Générale de la Police Nationale Congolaise (IGPNC) pour une police 'professionnelle à l'écoute de la population'", 22 June 2019, at: monusco.unmissions.org/la-police-monusco-accompagne-l%E2%80%99inspection-g%C3%A9n%C3%A9rale-de-la-police-nationale-congolaise-igpnc-pour-une.

68. Interview 38.

69. MONUSCO, "La MONUSCO forme les agents de l'inspection générale de la Police Nationale Congolaise", 30 November 2016, at: monusco.unmissions.org/la-monusco-forme-les-agents-de-l%E2%80%99inspection-g%C3%A9n%C3%A9rale-de-la-police-nationale-congolaise; MONUSCO, "Formation des inspecteurs de police en contrôle et évaluation de la gestion sécuritaire des manifestations publiques", at: monusco.unmissions.org/formation-des-inspecteurs-de-police-en-contr%C3%B4le-et-%C3%A9valuation-de-la-gestion-s%C3%A9curitaire-des.

Supporting the court system is another key area of rule of law work where human rights components have collaborated with justice components and other actors. In one such example, the justice, police and human rights components collaborated with the government of South Sudan to clear backlogged detention cases in 2011-2013. When UNMISS first deployed—before the resumption of civil war in late 2013—the mission had a strong state-building mandate that included a specific provision to support the new government in building the rule of law and specifically cited reducing the backlog of pre-trial detainees.⁷⁰ The justice and corrections component of UNMISS, working with the human rights component, and the UN Police, led a country-wide review to establish the scope of the problem and identify potential solutions.⁷¹ Meeting with South Sudanese judges and legal officials, the mission identified a series of long- and short-term steps, some as simple as releasing children who had been arrested without legal basis, and others more far-reaching, such as legal reforms. Between 2011-2013, this initiative resolved more than 7,500 cases.⁷² The mission obtained the release of many detainees, although the outbreak of civil war prevented many longer-term recommendations from bearing fruit. As South Sudan nears a new milestone in its peace process, however, this work may be increasingly important.

Supporting governments to provide fair and effective accountability is an important aspect of building sustainable peace and particularly important where the perpetrators in question are members of a non-state armed group. “Victor’s justice” can lead to renewed cycles of violence and undermine faith in the government amongst some sectors of the population. Bringing armed groups to justice can also be a challenging operational feat. The DRC and Iraq provide two examples of contexts in which missions, bringing together human rights and other components, supported these efforts as part of broader mandated objectives.

The human rights component of MONUSCO provided critical support to the Congolese government in bringing to justice one of eastern DRC’s most notorious armed group leaders, Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka. After Sheka’s group attacked the town of Walikale in 2010, raping 387 civilians, the human rights component conducted an investigation documenting violations.⁷³ The government indicted Sheka in 2011 but he remained on the run for many years. In 2017, Sheka surrendered himself to MONUSCO, which handed him over to the authorities.⁷⁴ The human rights component continued to monitor his case and assisted other MONUSCO components in supporting the government to prosecute him, including through programmes for the protection of victims and witnesses. His trial for crimes against humanity continues.⁷⁵

The human rights component of UNAMI has also supported addressing root causes of violence in Iraq through its support to the rule of law. In recent years, Iraq has prosecuted thousands of cases against members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), however UNAMI reported significant problems in meeting fair trial standards and adhering to international norms on punishment, including prohibitions against torture and inhumane treatment.⁷⁶ Such abuses had provided fertile ground for past conflict and risked creating situation in which history could repeat itself. Following the release of this report, UNAMI has worked with the High Judicial Council to develop guidelines for the conduct of judicial investigations and trials in accordance with international standards as necessary building blocks for reconciliation and social cohesion.⁷⁷

Human rights components regularly support national human rights institutions, including ministries or commissions on human rights, depending on the context. This support includes capacity building and supporting these institutions to engage in key treaty obligations and in engaging with multilateral bodies such as the Human Rights Council. This support can also extend to supporting political space for greater national ownership over human rights issues and the mainstreaming of human rights throughout government. In Iraq, for instance, UNAMI has long supported the Iraqi national human rights commission. During the 2019-2020 protests in Iraq,⁷⁸ UNAMI’s public reporting resulted in the government announcing its own independent and impartial investigation into possible human rights violations during the protests.⁷⁹

70. Security Council Resolution 1996 (S/RES/1996, 2011), OP 3(b), 14.

71. Interviews 25, HR-22, HR-23.

72. Data from the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peace Operations.

73. MONUSCO-OHCHR, “Final report of the fact-finding missions of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office into the mass rapes and other human rights violations committed by a coalition of armed groups along the Kibua-Mpofi axis in Walikale territory, North Kivu, from 30 July to 2 August 2010”, July 2011, at: monusco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/UN.JHRO%20-%20Final%20Report%20Mass%20Rapes%20Kibua%20Mpofi%20-%20ENGLISH%20TRANSLATION.pdf.

74. UN News, “War crimes fugitive surrenders to UN peacekeepers in DR Congo; UN advocate urges justice for victims”, 27 July 2017, at: news.un.org/en/story/2017/07/562412-war-crimes-fugitive-surrenders-un-peacekeepers-dr-congo-un-advocate-urges.

75. TRIAL International, “Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka”, 21 August 2018, at: trialinternational.org/latest-post/ntabo-ntaberi-sheka.

76. UNAMI-OHCHR, “Human Rights in the Administration of Justice in Iraq: Trials under the anti-terrorism laws and implications for justice, accountability and social cohesion in the aftermath of ISIL” (January 2020), at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI_Report_HRAAdministrationJustice_Iraq_28January2020.pdf.

77. Interview HR-15.

78. Referenced in the section on peacemaking and sustainable governance, above.

79. Mina Aldourbi, “Iraq renews commitment to investigate protest killings after UN report”, *The National* (26 May 2020), at: www.thenational.ae/world/mena/iraq-renews-commitment-to-investigate-protest-killings-following-un-report-1.1025054.

SUPPORTING RECONCILIATION AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Where conflict leaves scars on the collective psyches of populations and deep divides in communities, sustainable peace is impossible without some form of reconciliation and transitional justice. Human rights components bring particularly important skills to these areas of work. A people-centred approach, close attention to impartial fact-finding and sensitivity to wider political contexts often place human rights components at the centre of transitional justice work.

Longstanding enmity between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo was deepened by violent conflict in the 1990s. During the conflict, thousands were killed, often with no remains found. Families on both sides of the conflict lost relatives without a trace.⁸⁰ The human rights component of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) supported the establishment of a missing persons resource centre that facilitated the two sides coming together to jointly support efforts to recover and identify bodies, and recognize the loss incurred on both sides.⁸¹ In the highly sensitive political environment in Kosovo, this kind of sustained dialogue across ethno-political lines is exceptional.⁸² Initially supported only by UNMIK, the centre now receives funding from a number of donor governments and operates independently.⁸³

In CAR, MINUSCA has provided support to the Central African Special Court, a hybrid tribunal that utilizes national and international personnel under the auspices of the government.⁸⁴ The justice section is the lead actor for MINUSCA's support but the human rights component played an important role by supporting a mapping of serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed in CAR since 2003, which guided Special Court prosecutors in assembling their prosecutorial strategy.⁸⁵ The human rights component also regularly shares information on perpetrators of serious crimes with the Special Court in support of their investigations.

Human rights work can also support reconciliation and peacemaking, as highlighted by the agreement between Misratans and Tarweghans in Libya. During the 2011 conflict, residents of Tarwegha helped lay siege to the city of Misrata. After the fall of Colonel Gaddafi, Misratans undertook revenge attacks, completely clearing Tarwegha of inhabitants and displacing 40,000 Tarweghans.⁸⁶ Through the good offices of UNSMIL, basic terms for peace were established but Misratans made compensation a clear demand.⁸⁷ Determining compensation, however, with so much bloodshed and animosity on both sides, was a challenging question. Three years of shuttle diplomacy and human rights investigations established compensation guidelines that both sides accepted, resulting in a signed political agreement between the Tarwegha and Misratans, the only such agreement reached in Libya to date.⁸⁸ While a recent upsurge in violence across the country has made consolidating these gains difficult, the Tarwegha agreement stands as an important political milestone.

SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS

As members of the UNCT and with links to the Human Rights Council network of tools, human rights components play a unique role in mission transition, the process of reconfiguring or drawing down a mission. Human rights officers are often on the ground before a mission arrives and stand-alone OHCHR offices will often remain after a mission leaves. From strategic planning for a country presence to engaging with UN groups of experts, human rights components can serve as important points of contact.

MONUSCO has been engaged in a process of phased drawdown for a number of years, retaining a strong presence in eastern DRC where violent conflict remains endemic while withdrawing from much of the rest of the country. Renewed

80. Interview HR-20; Valerie Plesche and Eraldin Fazliu, "Finding Kosovo's Missing", Al Jazeera, 30 August 2019, at: www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/international-day-disappeared-finding-kosovo-missing-190829112758558.html.

81. Interviews 55, HR-17, HR-19, HR-20; Missing Persons Resource Centre, at: mprc-ks.org/about-us; UNMIK, "Something Still Missing" (video), August 2017, at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVvrCPaeu1o.

82. Interviews 55, HR-20.

83. Interview HR-20; Missing Persons Resource Centre, at: <https://mprc-ks.org/about-us>.

84. See Cour Pénale Spéciale de la République Centrafricaine, at: www.cps-rca.cf.

85. Interview HR-36; OHCHR, "The Mapping Report and the Special Court: main recommendations", May 2017, at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CF/Mapping2003-2015/Factsheet8-EN.pdf.

86. Human Rights Watch, "Libya: Residents Barred from Returning Home", 16 February 2018, at: www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/16/libya-residents-barred-returning-home; BBC, "'Cleansed' Libyan town spills its terrible secrets", 12 December 2011, at: www.bbc.com/news/magazine-16051349.

87. HR-35.

88. Interview 40, HR-35.

conflict in the Kasai and Tanganyika areas, however, highlighted risks of violence in regions previously considered calm. The human rights component of MONUSCO, which has always maintained its joint status as a pre-existing office of OHCHR, collaborated with UNDP, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Search for Common Ground (SFCG) to implement two projects funded by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in these areas.⁸⁹ Both projects aim to support stabilization and peacebuilding efforts, including by enhancing social cohesion and reducing conflict through support to the Congolese judicial authorities and by facilitating dialogue on the needs of the local population in relation to justice, reconciliation and reparations. The projects built upon the recommendations of the team of international experts dispatched by the Human Rights Council,⁹⁰ and supported the government to fulfil the Security Council's request that it implement these recommendations.⁹¹ These projects contribute to the gradual hand-over of key prevention and protection tasks in the absence of a permanent mission presence and simultaneously reinforce the realization of mission objectives in the DRC. One interlocutor noted that the human rights component provided an important vehicle for working with an entity like the PBF because the component is able to support the coordination of mission assets while also leveraging OHCHR's dedicated planning and programmatic capacity.⁹²

PREVENTING, DETERRING AND MITIGATING VIOLENT CONFLICT

“Protection [of civilians] is sometimes seen as a military thing, but it’s not only military... We may send a standing combat deployment but we will almost always send a human rights team to document things on the ground. It gives us information to go forward, reasons to go back, and a better understanding to do some political work. It also creates a sense of impartiality.”

David Gressly, DSRSG for Protection and Operations within MONUSCO

Conflict prevention is also a core activity of many field missions, with larger missions also engaged in activities to deter conflict, and human rights components are active contributors to these activities. The extensive networks cultivated by human rights teams and their investigative and analytical capacity make them key actors in building the situational awareness and supporting crisis response. In peacekeeping operations, human rights components also regularly support military and police operations through advice to maximize their impact and minimize their risks. This includes advising uniformed components on where their deployments can most effectively protect civilians as well as advising them on ways to ensure compliance with international law and mitigate effects on civilian communities.

89. In 2018 and 2019, the PBF approved two projects, one to be implemented by OHCHR (through the human rights component of MONUSCO), UNDP and SFCG in Kasai Central and one to be implemented by OHCHR, UNDP and IOM in Kasai, Kasai Central and Tanganyika. For more information, see “SG’s Peacebuilding Fund 2019”, at: www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/final_map_2019.pdf and Peacebuilding Fund, “PBF/COD/C-1: Paix, Justice, Réconciliation et Reconstruction au Kasai Central”, 23 November 2018, at: mptf.usndp.org/factsheet/project/00113129.

90. See Human Rights Council Resolution 35/33 (A/HRC/RES/35/33, 2017), and Rapport détaillé de l’Equipe d’experts internationaux sur la situation au Kasai, 29 June 2018 (A/HRC/38/CRP.1).

91. Security Council Resolution 2502 (S/RES/20502, 2019), OP 7.

92. Interview 88.

SUPPORTING CRISIS RESPONSE, SITUATIONAL AWARENESS, EARLY WARNING AND ANALYSIS

UN field missions regularly deal with crises. Planning and situational awareness are a core part of their work. These critical aspects of mission work are directed by the mission leadership, often with the support of joint analysis and operations bodies and military or police components. In many cases, human rights components also play an important role in making crisis response and situational awareness more effective. Human rights components are often able to draw information from a wide array of sources and their in-depth investigations provide details on key events and individuals. The information corroboration procedures used by human rights components also help extract highly reliable data in complex situations of misinformation, disinformation and limited information. The contributions of human rights components to this work have become so routine that they go almost unnoticed. However, case studies of responses to the Ebola and COVID-19 outbreaks, and crises in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, CAR and the DRC highlight the value of human rights networks, reporting, analysis and information-sharing in early warning and response in a range of crisis situations.

Crisis response

UN field missions have always had to deal with unexpected, challenging crises and the recent Ebola epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic have proven to be particularly challenging. Human rights components have played an important role in helping missions to develop their responses. During the Ebola crisis in West Africa (2013-2016), the human rights component of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) led a human rights-focused monitoring campaign for Ebola, providing the mission an important entry point on political and security matters and establishing an information-sharing mechanism with UNPOL to gather Ebola-related information across the mission.⁹³ The human rights component of MONUSCO has also supported the Ebola response in the DRC. As the DSRSG, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the DRC, David McLachlan-Karr, stated, human rights “has been very important to negotiate access [to Ebola-affected areas] and to engage and direct response [to Ebola].”⁹⁴

This practice is now being adapted to many other missions facing similar public health crises due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In UNMISS, for instance, the human rights and rule of law components are working to support authorities to rapidly review cases and de-congest prisons to lessen the spread of infection.⁹⁵ UNAMA is engaged in similar work in Afghanistan, supporting the government to reduce overcrowding in prisons and to promote equal access to testing for men and women.⁹⁶ In Guinea-Bissau, the human rights component of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) is part of the UNCT’s COVID-19 communications working group, which supports the dissemination of accurate public health information in the face of emergency lockdowns that sometimes result in excessive use of force by security forces.⁹⁷ The human rights component of UNAMI has supported similar communications work in Iraq, cooperating with the al-Namaa Centre for Human Rights to produce an illustration-based social media campaign to raise awareness of COVID-19 and its human rights impacts. The Iraqi National Human Rights Commission and Independent Board for Human Rights in the Kurdish Region have both utilized the illustrations in their own work around COVID-19.⁹⁸

Situational awareness

Human rights components are important actors in increasing the mission’s situational awareness and understanding of the context, as highlighted by their work in confidential information sharing, their unique methods of information collection, and the ways in which human rights investigations can support wider understanding of the mission’s operations and activities.

Human rights components have been trusted actors where sensitive information is concerned, both as providers of important information and custodians of confidential data. In MINUSMA, the All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU),

93. Interviews HR-4, HR-30; OHCHR, “A human rights perspective into the Ebola outbreak”, September 2014, at: [globalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/A-human-rights-perspective-into-the-Ebola-outbreak.pdf](https://www.globalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/A-human-rights-perspective-into-the-Ebola-outbreak.pdf).

94. Interview with David McLachlan-Karr, 19 June 2020.

95. Interviews 66, HR-41.

96. Interview HR-43.

97. Interview HR-34.

98. Interview HR-42.

a military information collection and analysis unit within the mission,⁹⁹ had a special memorandum of understanding with the human rights component to facilitate the exchange of information. ASIFU, which maintained high standards for information protection, developed the agreement because they valued the information obtained by the human rights component but also because they could trust the component to keep ASIFU-provided information secure.¹⁰⁰ A similar arrangement was developed in MINUSCA by both the military and police components in the mission with the human rights component.¹⁰¹ MINUJUSTH established a similar agreement, where UNPOL developed guidelines for information sharing with the human rights component on sensitive criminal investigations.¹⁰² In MONUSCO, the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) developed a similar relationship with the human rights component, facilitating information sharing while maintaining the confidentiality of their respective sources.¹⁰³

Human rights components have also developed innovative methods for information collection. The investigation techniques used by human rights officers are a foundational part of their work,¹⁰⁴ but human rights components have found ways to extend their reach even where traditional investigations are not possible. First in the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and later in MINUSMA, the human rights components established call centers to better engage with community members. This tool became a vital source of information for both peace operations.¹⁰⁵ The call center of UNOCI was first established in 2010 by the human rights component to help monitor human rights violations in places staff could not access.¹⁰⁶ As elections in Côte d'Ivoire approached, the call center coordinated more closely with the mission's Joint Operations Centre (JOC) to ensure mission-wide situational awareness of events and incidents during the sensitive pre-electoral period. The call center of MINUSMA was set up under a similar model and continues to contribute to the mission's situational awareness in a context where movement and community engagement is highly limited due to security restrictions.

UNIOGBIS, a small special political mission with limited resources, established a network of more than 900 human rights defenders and civil society leaders to support the mission's situational awareness. This network became particularly important during the country's elections, when timely information was vital for the SRSG's good offices.¹⁰⁷ As SRSG Rosine Sori-Coulibaly stated, "It's very important to have a human rights component. You can't have an SPM [special political mission] like ours [in Guinea-Bissau], with [a context of] political fragility, human rights abuses, security forces intervening in the political sphere for decades, without human rights in peacebuilding priorities. We couldn't have an impact, we couldn't do proper political analysis without human rights aspects. Human rights are key facets in this situation."¹⁰⁸

The human rights components of MONUSCO, MINUSCA and UNSMIL also supported their missions in implementing explicit mandates to support the respective Group of Experts and Panel of Experts established by the Security Council Sanctions Committee to monitor the arms embargo imposed on each country.¹⁰⁹ The respective Experts faced a challenging task in monitoring the arms embargos imposed upon the DRC, CAR and Libya, where borders are porous and arms difficult to trace. In the DRC, a landmark turn came when the Council provided the Group of Experts with a human rights mandate, allowing it to examine human rights violators as well as arms traffickers.¹¹⁰ This step was key because these two groups overlapped significantly: arms traffickers were serious abusers of human rights and human rights abusers regularly purchased trafficked weapons. The human rights component of MONUSCO worked closely with the

99. See Sebastiaan Rietjens and A. Walter Dorn, "The Evolution of Peacekeeping Intelligence: The UN's Laboratory in Mali", in Floribert Baudet, Eleni Braat, Jeffrey Van Woensel and Aad Wever, eds., *Perspectives on Military Intelligence from World War to Mali: Between Learning and Law* (Asser Press, 2017).

100. Interview HR-10.s

101. MINUSCA, "Framework for Cooperation between MINUSCA Force and the Human Rights Division", 14 December 2018 (on file with authors); MINUSCA, "Cadre référentiel de coopération entre la police et la division des droits de l'homme de la MINUSCA", 8 December 2018 (on file with authors).

102. Interview 38.

103. Interview 28.

104. OHCHR, Manual on Human Rights Reporting (HR/P/PT/7/Rev.1, 2011), ch. 10-15, at: www.ohchr.org/EN/PublicationsResources/Pages/MethodologicalMaterials.aspx.

105. Interviews HR-3, HR-9.

106. Interview HR-13.

107. Interview 76.

108. Interview with SRSG Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, 9 June 2020.

109. See, respectively, Security Council resolution 1925 (S/RES/1925, 2010) para 12(t); Security Council resolution 2499 (S/RES/2499, 2019) para 34; Security Council Resolution 1973 (S/RES/1973(2011)) para 24.

110. Interview 40.

Group of Experts to support their work through providing situational awareness.¹¹¹ Similar collaboration is found in CAR and Libya, where the Group of Experts and Panel of Experts respectively receive significant amounts of information from the human rights components of MINUSCA and UNSMIL.¹¹²

Early warning and analysis

Beyond information collection and information sharing, human rights components also directly and indirectly contribute to analysis and early warning in the mission. In the course of information collection by human rights components, some degree of analysis necessarily takes place, whether in choosing which potential cases to investigate, how to proceed with an investigation, or simply analyzing the case's broader legal and political context. This work can greatly support a range of mission activities.

In missions like MINUSMA, MINUSCA and MONUSCO, UN peacekeepers increasingly operate in the context of active conflicts between the government and armed groups. The human rights components have played a key role in helping missions and their military components better understand these armed groups in order to develop tactics and strategies. In MONUSCO, there is regular and extensive information sharing between the human rights component and JMAC, which channels this information to the mission leadership and decision points for military action.¹¹³ The human rights component has also been an active participant in formulating tailored strategies to address the more than 70 armed groups operating in the country.¹¹⁴ In CAR, the human rights component of MINUSCA similarly contributed to JMAC profiles of key spoilers, enabling the mission to take decisions regarding arrests under its mandate.¹¹⁵

Human rights monitoring also provided early warning and supported the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali. The EUTM was conducting training for recruits that were being integrated into the Malian army¹¹⁶ and requested the human rights component of MINUSMA to monitor the recruits they had trained. The human rights component uncovered a number of abuses being committed by these newly trained forces, providing an early indication that the government was integrating many militia members with questionable background for military training.¹¹⁷

The human rights component of MONUSCO shared early warning information in the lead-up to the scheduled (but postponed) election in 2016. By early 2015, when the government began messaging the possibilities of postponing the electoral process, the monitoring of protests and government responses provided the mission with a more granular understanding of the potential for election-related violence in the country.¹¹⁸ The potential for such violence—and the potential for violent government responses—led to challenging political and operational questions for MONUSCO. When the elections took place in 2018, the human rights component played a strong role in staffing the mission's Tactical Operations Centre, which monitored the situation around the clock, and fielded teams of monitors at protests.¹¹⁹ This built upon a similar approach adopted around the 2011 electoral cycle, when the monitoring and reporting on violations linked to the electoral process during the pre-electoral period served as early warning of rising political tensions and related risk of human rights violations and violence.¹²⁰

The human rights component of MINUSMA also supported early warning efforts in Mali by monitoring human rights violations in the centre of the country. When the Security Council established MINUSMA, the mission's operations and deployments were focused in the north of the country, where virtually all rebel and extremist activity was located. In 2015,

111. Interview 40.

112. Interview 57.

113. Interviews 19, 28.

114. Interviews 23, 41; Paul Nantulya, "A Medley of Armed Groups Plan on Congo's Crisis", *Africa Centre for Strategic Studies*, 25 September 2017, at: africacenter.org/spotlight/medley-armed-groups-play-congo-crisis; David Gressley, "Protection of civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A new approach", *Medium*, 8 January 2019, at: medium.com/@UNPeacekeeping/protection-of-civilians-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-a-new-approach-9fa6f00df4d7.

115. Interview 2.

116. Interview 14.

117. Interview 14.

118. Interview HR-9; MONUSCO-OHCHR, "Report of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms during the Pre-Electoral Period in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 1 January and 30 September 2015" (December 2015), at: monusco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/UNJHRO%20Report%20on%20HRV%20linked%20to%20electoral%20process%20December%202015.pdf.

119. Interviews 3, HR-9.

120. Interview HR-9.

however, the human rights component recognized that there were large numbers of Fulani arrested by the government in the central areas of the country.¹²¹ In speaking to the Fulani, human rights officers learned that many of the detainees were likely innocent but had been targeted because of their ethnicity. Human rights officers further learned that the Fulani community felt that the government, in its war against extremist groups, was forcing Fulani to “choose sides”, and that many of them would probably not choose to side with the government.¹²² This was an early and clear indication that the conflict in Mali was spreading to the centre. The mission began taking steps to alter its focus, but it wasn’t until August 2015, when extremists attacked a hotel in Sevaré, killing 13 people including four UN contractors, that the world took notice.¹²³

SUPPORTING STABILITY, MILITARY AND POLICE OPERATIONS

Field missions may also be engaged in supporting police and military operations, such as MONUSCO and MINUSCA, where the missions conduct operations directly, or UNSOM, through coordination and support on security sector reform as well as human rights monitoring and compliance.¹²⁴ These operations are led by military, police and support components of the mission or by the partner force (such as the African Union Mission in Somalia, AMISOM), but human rights components can play an important role.¹²⁵ As the DSRSG for Protection and Operations within MONUSCO, David Gressly, stated, “Protection [of civilians] is sometimes seen as a military thing, but it’s not only military... We may send a standing combat deployment but we will almost always send a human rights team to document things on the ground. It gives us information to go forward, reasons to go back, and a better understanding to do some political work. It also creates a sense of impartiality.”¹²⁶

Supporting regional stability operations

The United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) provides essential logistical support for UNSOM and AMISOM, a regional peacekeeping mission with a mandate to reduce the threat posed by the Al Shabab.¹²⁷ This support includes pre-deployment training on improvised explosive devices (IEDs) for AMISOM contingents, through the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), a particularly important aspect of preparing troops for fighting Al Shabab, who frequently use IEDs.¹²⁸ Attacks involving IEDs, including vehicle-borne IEDs, cause significant casualties for AMISOM troops and civilians.¹²⁹ The support to HRDDP processes by the human rights component of UNSOM allows UNMAS to provide this pre-deployment training for AMISOM troop contributors.¹³⁰

Supporting military and police operations in peacekeeping operations

In peacekeeping missions that conduct robust military or police operations, human rights components may be key enablers, advising the military component on ways to mitigate harm to the civilian population and supporting the military-to-military liaison between the mission military component and the military of the host country or other armed actors. In CAR, for instance, one of the main tasks of MINUSCA has been restoring law and order, particularly in the capital, Bangui. Acting under its mandate to support the maintenance of law and order through urgent temporary measures,¹³¹ MINUSCA has undertaken police operations leading to arrest and detention of high-profile targets. The human rights component has been a key partner in planning these operations.¹³²

121. Interviews 69, HR-10.

122. Interview HR-10.

123. “Deadly siege targets Mali hotel popular with UN troops” (Paris, France24, 7 August 2015) <www.france24.com/en/20150807-mali-deadly-hostage-seige-hotel-sevare>.

124. As discussed below, the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) provides logistical support to AMISOM. UNSOM, like all Special Political Missions, does not carry out military or police operations.

125. See Department of Peace Operations, 2019.16 Guidelines on Combined Military and Police Coordination Mechanisms in Peace Operations (2019).

126. Interview with David Gressly, 21 May 2020.

127. Security Council Resolution 2245 (S/RES/2245, 2015), OP 1; Security Council Resolution 1863 (S/RES/1863, 2009), OP 8, 10.

128. Interview 54; UN Mine Action Service, “Somalia”, at: unmas.org/en/programmes/somalia.

129. See Louis Platts-Dunn, “Al Shabaab and increasing civilian harm in Somalia”, 22 April 2020, at: aoav.org.uk/2020/al-shabaab-and-increasing-civilian-harm-in-somalia.

130. Interview 54.

131. Security Council Resolution 2149 (S/RES/2149, 2014), OP 40.

132. Interviews 38, HR-36.

MONUSCO has also engaged in joint operations with the Congolese military for many years, during which the human rights component provided advice and input on mitigating the impact on civilians. In 2011, for example, the Head of Office of South Kivu established a Civilian Monitoring Task Force (CMTF), with close human rights component involvement, as part of joint operations with the Congolese army.¹³³ The CMTF operated at three levels: before, during and after operations. Prior to military operations, the CMTF (through the human rights component) contributed to joint planning with the military component (along with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees) and supported an early version of the HRDDP to enable mission support to the joint operations.¹³⁴ During operations, the CMTF would co-locate with the military to remotely monitor the conduct of operations. After operations, the CMTF would conduct after-action reviews (AAR).

Mission military and political affairs components also regularly engage in dialogue with security forces of the host country and other armed actors to support military operations. MONUSCO personnel reported that the information provided by the human rights component was instrumental in engaging with the Congolese army. This was a relationship that, while it generally took place military-to-military, had to be managed in a complex political environment. The human rights component supported the MONUSCO military with information on the Congolese army necessary for them to engage effectively and achieve mission goals.¹³⁵

In some contexts, human rights components also establish contacts with non-state armed groups. In Mali, the human rights component of MINUSMA regularly met with and developed an understanding of armed group commanders with influence on the ground. These relations were important when the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) began moving south in 2014 after a peace deal with the government fell apart, with the armed group occupying schools and committing human rights violations.¹³⁶ The access and credibility established by the human rights component gave MINUSMA greater leverage in its efforts to persuade CMA elements to stop their advance southward and end human rights violations.¹³⁷

Advising on the protection of civilians

Human rights components in a number of peacekeeping operations serve as advisers to the military and police components in identifying needs in military and police deployments, particularly with regard to the POC mandate. The human rights components of MONUSCO as well as in the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and later UNMISS were leaders in this regard, working closely with other civilian sections, the UNCT and non-governmental organizations to channel knowledge of threats to civilians to military and police planners.

In MONUSCO, the human rights component was one of the early innovators in the mission's protection tools, such as Joint Investigation Teams and Joint Protection Teams.¹³⁸ The human rights component obtained funding to support Joint Protection Teams, which continue to deploy preventively to gather information, support local communities to develop protection plans, and inform mission operations.¹³⁹ More recently, the human rights component, along with other civilian components, have actively provided information for the mission's "protection through projection" strategy, whereby mission assets (military and civilian) are rapidly deployed in a preventive or responsive posture, rather than relying on longer-term static temporary operating bases that diminish mobility. Such rapid deployments rely heavily on good information and the human rights component has been a key partner.¹⁴⁰

Human rights investigations in the Kasai region of the DRC also supported mission planning for deployments. Starting in August 2016, the Kasai region—where MONUSCO had a very limited presence¹⁴¹—suffered a wave of violence that

133. Interview HR-33.

134. Interview HR-33; MONUSCO and its predecessor mission, the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), established a "Conditionality Policy" for UN support to Congolese military operation, which served as a foundation for the HRDDP.

135. Interview 67.

136. Interview 58.

137. Interview HR-10.

138. Interview HR-33.

139. Interview HR-33; see also UN DPKO and OHCHR, "Report on the Joint Protection Team (JPT) Mechanism in MONUSCO" (2013) (on file with authors).

140. Interview 19.

141. In August 2014, MONUSCO finalized the implementation of its reconfiguration with the redeployment from the West to the East of civilian, police and military personnel (S/2014/698, paragraph 86). Antenna offices continued to operate in Bandundu, Kananga, Kindu, Matadi, Mbandaka and Mbuji-Mayi, carrying out monitoring and reporting functions jointly with the UN Country Team.

resulted in the killing of several thousand and the displacement of more than one million.¹⁴² Following high-level visits to the area and joint assessment missions in October 2016, the human rights component of MONUSCO deployed a special investigation mission.¹⁴³ The gravity of the situation documented by the human rights component—involving serious violations committed by both a local militia and defence and security forces—helped the mission raise awareness about the crisis, including at the international level,¹⁴⁴ and informed the mission's decision to redeploy assets from other parts of the country to the Kasai's.¹⁴⁵ MONUSCO's quick response contributed to a significant reduction in the level of violence against civilians.¹⁴⁶ As MONUSCO DSRSG David Gressly said, "the world wouldn't have understood the Kasai situation if our human rights component wasn't there."¹⁴⁷

In UNMIS and later UNMISS, the human rights component had a memorandum of understanding with the military component with regards to deployments in South Sudan (previously the autonomous Southern Sudan region of the Republic of the Sudan) for POC purposes.¹⁴⁸ Currently, human rights information is regularly integrated into UNMISS military patrol planning. In 2019, the human rights component tracked an increase in rape cases from the areas south of Bentiu, leading to increased military patrols in those areas.¹⁴⁹

142. For a comprehensive overview of the crisis, including its causes, the actors involved, and the impact on the local population see *Rapport détaillé de l'Equipe d'experts internationaux sur la situation au Kasai (A/HRC/38/CRP.1)* of 29 June 2018, and the Report of the team of international experts on the situation in Kasai (A/HRC/41/31) of 7 May 2019.

143. MONUSCO deployed a special investigation mission to several villages in the territories of Demba, Dibaya and Dimbelenge, in Kasai Central, to verify allegations of serious human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law committed from 22 July to 30 October 2016 by members of a militia led by a customary chief, Kamuina Nsapu, and by defence and security forces deployed to eradicate the group. In 17 separate incidents, at least 117 people, including at least 16 women and 22 children, of whom 7 were girls, were reportedly killed by soldiers. Reports indicate that, during the military operations, the soldiers indiscriminately opened fire against civilians, even though militiamen had already left the area (S/2016/1130, paragraph 46).

144. Interview 59.

145. Interview 59.

146. *Rapport détaillé de l'Equipe d'experts internationaux sur la situation au Kasai (A/HRC/38/CRP.1)* of 29 June 2018, paragraph 388.

147. Interview with David Gressly, 21 May 2020.

148. Interviews 37, 48, HR-21.

149. Interview 68.

LESSONS LEARNED

This section draws out a set of lessons from the case studies examined and interviews conducted. While this section is not meant as a dedicated “lessons learned” study, a number of issues arose with sufficient frequency to warrant mention. These include the assets of human rights components, the success factors that enable human rights components to contribute to broader mission mandates, and the challenges that human rights components may face in such broader contribution.

■ ASSETS OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMPONENTS FOR MISSION-WIDE WORK

Human rights components regularly contribute to a broad range of mandate activities through a set of particular attributes that, while not inherently unique to these components, are more likely to appear given the methodology, scope of work and principles developed over the years. These include bringing a set of professional standards that help leadership navigate impartial engagement; legal, policy and programmatic expertise that is connected to a broader UN architecture; diverse networks within civil society, government and non-state groups; and an adaptability to numerous types of mission settings.

STANDARDS FOR IMPARTIAL ENGAGEMENT

Inherent to human rights work is a set of universal standards that have the potential to strengthen the impartiality, legitimacy and credibility of a field mission. As indicated throughout this paper, while there is a complementarity between human rights and political objectives in field missions, balancing principled norms and political considerations can be challenging. The human rights framework is grounded in normative principles but recognizes the fundamentally political nature of change. With field missions increasingly deployed in complex and contested contexts, often in support of one party to a conflict, human rights frameworks can help reinforce the credibility and impartiality that remain central to the UN’s political, mediation and good offices efforts and, ultimately, to its success in bringing sustainable peace.

LEGAL, POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC EXPERTISE COMPLEMENTED BY A BROADER ARCHITECTURE

Human rights components, like other civilian specializations in field missions, bring a set of skills and expertise. Unlike some other civilian components, however, human rights work takes place within a broad international framework that includes connections to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the representation of the human rights component on the UN Country Team. This dual nature as a mission component and a UNCT member creates important complementarities for programmatic work. The link to Geneva also connects human rights components to the good offices of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Human rights components also play a critical role in HRDDP implementation, allowing the mission to leverage the component’s knowledge base to mitigate reputational risk, protect civilians and encourage performance improvements in recipients of UN support. Human rights components can also house the programmatic capacities of OHCHR to facilitate transition from a mission to peacebuilding setting.

NETWORKS WITHIN CIVIL SOCIETY, GOVERNMENT AND NON-STATE GROUPS

Human rights components regularly engage with members of the general public, civil society, political parties, government and, in some cases, non-state armed groups. Human rights components are not unique in this respect—civil affairs, political affairs, rule of law components and other mission actors regularly engage governments and civil society—but human rights components play an important complementary role in building a broad understanding of the context. The relationships between human rights personnel and many of these actors, coupled with the human rights component’s relationship to OHCHR and the broader UN human rights machinery, offer information and networks that multiply the tools and channels missions can use to influence behaviours of key actors through direct and indirect action. As Fabrizio Hochschild, senior UN official and former Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination under Secretary-General Guterres, stated “The political action inevitably focuses on the power holders, the most empowered men in the country, they are the ones who make or break peace. Human rights brings a bottom-up approach, a perspective of those whose rights are most trampled on. Having that perspective is very important, essential from a utilitarian perspective. Human rights components will often speak to the most marginalized and excluded populations.”¹⁵⁰

150. Interview with Fabrizio Hochschild, 29 April 2020.

ADAPTABILITY

Human rights components have shown to be highly adaptable, with a broad range of skills that can be brought to bear across a spectrum of peace and security scenarios. This applies both to the size and structure of missions as well as to the moment in the conflict continuum. From small political missions to the largest peacekeeping operations to the transition from a Secretariat field mission to a UNCT presence, human rights components regularly tailor their activities to fill a variety of roles. As highlighted by the work of human rights components in the COVID-19 crisis, they are also adaptable to new and unforeseen situations. A number of interlocutors (non-human rights officers) stressed that human rights are a pillar of UN work regardless of conflict dynamics or context. While human rights issues will vary from one place to another, human rights components are capable of addressing the full range, from active conflict to stabilization to working with governments in peacebuilding and preventing a renewed cycle of conflict.

SUCCESS FACTORS

This report also sought to identify the factors that make human rights components more successful when operating within an integrated mission context, both in terms of fulfilling the core human rights mandate as well as in contributing to broader mission mandates. These include senior leadership that understands the value of and is able to leverage human rights as a political tool; human rights chiefs who can tailor their work to the mission's strategic objectives and political strategy; tailored human rights priorities that focus the work of the component, avoiding overlap and maximizing available resources; and engagement in whole-of-mission forums for information sharing and joint planning.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP WHO UNDERSTAND OF THE POLITICAL VALUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The importance of senior leadership in harnessing the great potential of human rights components cannot be overstated. Senior leadership who understands the role and potential benefits of human rights components is a key element for effectively leveraging human rights work. Former and currently serving senior leaders—including SRSGs, DSRSGs and headquarters officials—emphasize the importance of the ability to effectively articulate a political strategy and vision for mandate implementation that integrates human rights. The selection, orientation and evaluation of senior leaders may be entry points to improve understanding of human rights. Middle-management staff, who may take up roles as heads of component, senior Special Assistants or Chiefs of Staff, may also be good candidates for dedicated training.

A political strategy incorporating human rights

Effective senior leaders are those able to develop a political strategy and vision for mission mandate implementation with a clear role for human rights work. This includes opportunities for leveraging human rights as an entry point for political dialogue, utilizing broader human rights communication streams, and recognizing the importance of impartial human rights work.

Many senior leaders described the importance of identifying opportunities to use human rights as an entry point to influence certain actors and channel political processes towards positive outcomes. This ranges from fragile political contexts like the DRC and Somalia, where monitoring political space is a key political concern, to peacebuilding contexts. A second key aspect of effectively leveraging human rights components is recognizing where they can be used to coordinate messages with and through the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Geneva and human rights monitoring mechanisms, including the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Senior leaders should also understand the particular added value of human rights components regarding technical work around fact-finding and legal and policy advice. Finally, leveraging human rights components effectively requires allowing them to pursue their mandates impartially while also understanding how such work can best be utilized.

Operational support

Human rights components require strong operational support to function effectively and good human rights work often hinges on access to remote locations. For instance, in Darfur in 2005-2007—at the height of much of the violence in that region—the SRSG of UNMIS had a standing directive that UN security officers conducting security assessments of an area should bring a human rights officer with them. This would allow the human rights officer to gather basic human rights

information even if the area was deemed too dangerous to allow further mission visits.¹⁵¹ This forward-leaning approach allowed the UN to remain well informed about events during a politically critical period.

HUMAN RIGHTS WORK ALIGNED TO THE POLITICAL STRATEGY OF THE MISSION

It is similarly important that human rights components understand the political strategy of the mission and tailor their work to the context, helping identify where human rights expertise can support a political strategy. Heads of human rights components are most effective where they have engaged with government and strategically direct the human rights work of the mission in ways that best align with its broader mandate and with the SRSG's vision. Almost all of the case studies in this report are, to various extents, examples of such politically astute human rights leadership. It will be important to ensure that heads of human rights components receive orientation from relevant headquarters and the head of mission that places their human rights role in the appropriate political and strategic context. Important examples of such an approach are evident in Somalia, where the human rights component has engaged in joint programmes to support state capacity as part of the mission's peacebuilding mandate (see the section on building a sustainable peace, above); and during critical events such as elections in the DRC, when the mission conducted extensive monitoring of the political space (see the section on supporting political objectives, above). In this regard, two areas of political strategy-as-human rights strategy come to the fore: identifying priority areas of human rights engagement and identifying modalities for effective public reporting.

Priority areas of human rights engagement

An important part of building a clear human rights strategy is clearly defining what areas the human rights component will focus on. With an extremely wide potential ambit, there is a risk that the human rights component might lose focus, potentially leading to routinized activities that lack strategic impact, or that there is a duplication of effort with other parts of the mission, leading to wasted resources at best and turf battles at worst. Identifying clear priorities for the human rights component can help address this potential obstacle. Priority areas may change over time, but they should remain focused on the mandate and political context, and firmly linked to overall mission strategies. In the DRC, for instance, the human rights component increased, decreased and then increased again its monitoring of rights to political participation during electoral and pre-electoral periods in 2010-2011 and 2015-2019. Identifying and committing to priority areas for human rights programming can help the human rights component invest resources and build competence in a particular area of work, such as the focus on profiling armed actors by the human rights component of MONUSCO to inform decision-making related to the HRDDP and other political engagement. The head of the human rights component can work with mission leadership to establish consistent priorities, such as focus on five specific areas of work by the human rights component of UNAMA.¹⁵²

Effective public reporting

Public reporting, whether in the form of public reports or public statements based on verified information, are a vital tool of the human rights components in missions but they are used with varying degrees of effectiveness. Many interlocutors for this study, within and outside human rights components, echoed findings of the joint study on public reporting on human rights by UN peace operations conducted by OHCHR, DPA and DPKO, including the benefits of engagement with government and tailoring public reporting to the mission's mandate and political context.¹⁵³

While there is often a perceived tension between public human rights reporting and maintaining close relations with the government, the majority of interlocutors with experience in this area reported that such tensions could be overcome through effective government consultation. A number of interlocutors stressed the importance of providing the government an opportunity to comment, and even to make changes to their current policies, as well as framing the exercise as one step in the variety of ways that field missions and the wider UN family supports governments. Interlocutors noted that when well-managed, these and other interactions relating to human rights, such as support for preparation of Universal Periodic Reviews, can strengthen relationships between missions and key government counterparts, even where tensions exist.

151. Interview HR-21.

152. These are protection of civilians in the armed conflict; monitoring and reporting on grave child rights violations in the armed conflict; elimination of violence against women and promotion of gender equality; human rights aspects of peace and reconciliation; and prevention of torture in detention and arbitrary detention. See unama.unmissions.org/human-rights.

153. See OHCHR, "Public Reporting on Human Rights by United Nations Peace Operations: Good practices, lessons learned and challenges" (2017), at: dag.un.org/handle/11176/400896.

In keeping with the importance of prioritization noted above, public reporting should be part of a broader strategy to achieve human rights impact, tailored to the mission context and aligned with the strategic objectives of the mission. Examples of this work include reports on specific incidents, such as the bombing of a protest march in Iraq (see the section of supporting political objectives, above) and the MONUSCO report on sexual violence in Walikale (see the section of supporting states to establish the rule of law, above). Tailoring public reporting can also involve making reporting regular and consistent, such as UNAMA's POC reports (see the section on supporting political objectives, above). UNAMA staff outside the human rights components noted that using a consistent methodology and issuing regular reports for more than ten years created a powerful tool for engaging with coalition forces, the Afghan government and the Taliban.¹⁵⁴

TAILORED CAPACITIES

Focusing human rights work to support mission priorities may require specific capacities within the human rights components. Just as justice sector support may require experts in military justice, judicial training, corrections and organized crime, human rights components often require different specializations and arrangements. MINUSCA, UNMISS and MONUSCO, for example, all established rapid response capacity—individuals or small teams—that specialized in rapid fact-finding and investigation. The human rights mapping projects that took place in the DRC and CAR (see section on reconciliation and transitional justice, above) are also examples of specific capacities deployed to address a particular need in the context, namely the documentation of human rights violations in conflict for reconciliation and accountability purposes.

ENGAGEMENT IN CROSS-MISSION COLLABORATION

Many missions have established cross-mission forums to coordinate and align mission actions to support leadership priorities. Ultimately, these mechanisms are the responsibility and prerogative of mission leaders themselves. Human rights components should be proactive in coordination and fully engage in these forums in order to mainstream human rights work and allow their insights to be fed into the mission's decision-making structures. This can include information sharing with other components (such as military, police and joint analysis components) or attendance at coordination and management meetings. It is important that human rights components also take part in operational mechanisms, like the Joint Protection Teams in MONUSCO and the integrated patrols in UNMISS. Just as important is their collaboration in information sharing mechanisms, such as contributions to JOC, JMAC, Protection Working Groups and contribution to monitoring mechanisms such as the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations of children's rights in situations of armed conflict and the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA) on conflict-related sexual violence. The information sharing protocols with JMAC in MONUSCO and with police and military components in MONUSCO, MINUJUSTH and UNMISS are examples of ways in which human rights components can accommodate both the protection of confidential information with the need to share data in real time to inform mission action.

■ CHALLENGES

The study also identified challenges that human rights components face in contributing to broader mission goals. Many of these challenges represent the "double edge" of strengths of human rights components, which make them well suited to their specific role but may create obstacles in engaging across the mission as a whole. These aspects of human rights components include a high degree of specialization; a background in advocacy distinct from military and diplomatic work cultures; a tendency at times to "stove-pipe" work within the mission; and a (misplaced) perception, particularly within the military component, that human rights components hold sway over HRDDP processes.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND CULTURE

Many human rights officers bring a strong sense of professional identity and specialization linked to their often extensive legal training. This allows them to provide knowledgeable advice on sensitive topics—such as advising security sector experts on how to deal with Al Shabab defectors in Somalia, or establishing victims' protection programmes in the DRC—but it can also lead to a focused, narrow approach to human rights work that misses opportunities to contribute to broader mandate implementation.

154. Interview 112.

In this regard, some interlocutors feel that human rights colleagues lack the delegated authority to share information or the understanding of what information can be shared without breaching confidentiality. There are, of course, real concerns with regard to the safeguarding of confidential information by human rights components; victims and local human rights defenders often place their lives at risk when speaking with human rights officers and these risks must be taken with the utmost seriousness. At the same time, many interlocutors told the study team that this protection of information was sometimes drawn too broadly, preventing the sharing of non-confidential information. Interlocutors also often felt that human rights components had such high standards for the verification of information that the information they shared often arrived too late to take preventive or responsive action.

Some interlocutors also noted that human rights officers may come from a background of public advocacy or with a “watchdog” mentality that they perceive as fitting poorly with the military culture of hierarchy or the political-diplomatic culture of behind-the-scenes dialogue. As stressed throughout this report, human rights work can and should be fully engaged with the work of other components and these differences in attitude or culture are assumptions that can be overcome; but research did reveal examples of assumptions regarding professional culture as a challenge for human rights components to address. In UNMISS, there have been recent attempts to strengthen human rights-military cooperation and interlocutors provided very positive feedback about the human rights-military working relationship.

Some of the above critiques are applicable to many civilian components in field missions, with “stove-piped” work and information-sharing a frequent problem, as well as challenges in civil-military coordination. All of these challenges, moreover, can be addressed through more strategic management (as discussed above) and strengthened training for staff of roles and responsibilities, ensuring that good practice takes precedence over ingrained institutional culture. Many human rights officers themselves also note the importance of better training for current staff and improving the ability to recruit specific profiles to human rights teams. Depending on the mission context, for example, human rights officers and mission leaders stressed the importance of analyst capacity and specialized investigative expertise.

PERCEIVED RIGIDITY OF THE HRDDP

Some interlocutors also felt that the HRDDP processes in their missions were too rigid, giving the views of human rights components too much weight compared to those of other components.¹⁵⁵ Such perceptions are important to note but they also reflect a misunderstanding of the HRDDP as a technical mechanism, in which the human rights component hands down decrees, rather than a tool designed to support the decision-making of mission leadership. HRDDP decision-making, by policy and practice, is a senior leadership decision, not the decision of the human rights components. As noted in the 2018 review of HRDDP implementation, “there is often a misunderstanding that the implementation of the [HRDDP] policy is the responsibility of the human rights component or OHCHR presence alone, rather than being a system wide policy.”¹⁵⁶

Notably, the missions with generally strong feedback on the HRDDP process are those where the human rights component is able to devote significant resources to supporting the development of a risk assessment, such as in MONUSCO, as well as those where the HRDDP process is broadly owned by different mission components and is not viewed solely as a human rights component activity, such as in UNSOM.

155. Interviews 10, 18, 48.

156. United Nations, Report of the Co-Chairs of the HRDDP Review Group: 2018 Review of Implementation (2018), p. 28 (on file with authors).

CONCLUSION

In an era of increasing uncertainty and turbulence, the UN's proven tools of peacekeeping and special political missions and its longstanding framework of international human rights remain more important than ever. While a variety of multilateral and regional organizations deploy similar operations, UN field missions are unique in bringing human rights together with political and peacebuilding capacities in a manner that strengthens all three. As field missions adapt to a changing world, this report highlights how important human rights components will be to meeting new challenges, including through their ability to strengthen the credibility of UN field missions during an era in which facts are continuously contested; their contributions to supporting host countries in a manner that builds sustainable peace; and their important work in making mission operations more effective and more rights-respecting.

Central to the case studies examined in this report is the idea that human rights are integral to the strategic consideration of field missions. It is the responsibility of the SRSG and senior leadership as a whole to understand and value human rights, and to identify how it fits within the mission's political strategy. It is similarly necessary for heads of human rights components to prioritize the aspects of their work that are aligned with this political vision, while maintaining the objective and impartial approach essential to human rights work.

Human rights components have become integral elements of an effective field mission response, acting as a force enabler across the mission's mandate. In an era where efficiency is more important than ever, few mission components have shown such enduring value.

APPENDIX I: ABBREVIATIONS

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DPO	Department of Peace Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
HRDDP	Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces
IED	Improvised explosive device
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Centre
JOC	Joint Operations Centre
MARA	Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements
MINUJUSTH	United Nations Justice Mission in Haiti
MINUSCA	United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador
PBF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
POC	Protection of civilians
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	Security sector reform
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq
UNAMID	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNIOGBIS	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo

UNMIN	United Nations Mission in Nepal
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNPOL	United Nations Police
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UNSOS	United Nations Support Mission in Somalia
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

APPENDIX II: INDEX OF CASE STUDIES BY COUNTRY AND MISSION

Contribution of human rights components in field missions to broader mission mandates

List of case studies disaggregated by mission

NO	MISSION	MANDATE	CASE STUDY	PAGE
1	UNAMA	Politics	Establishing credibility through regular public reporting on the protection of civilians	11
2	UNAMA	Politics	Establishing credibility through credible and independent investigations	11
3	UNAMI	Politics	Building confidence between groups through work on the conditions of detention of prisoners	11
4	MINUSMA	Politics	Building confidence between the government and armed groups through access to detainees	11
5	MINUSTAH	Politics	Rebuilding trust and credibility through engagement with civil society and communities	12
6	MINUSMA	Politics	Supporting engagement in mediation efforts	12
7	MONUSCO	Politics	Supporting the good offices of the SRSR during elections	12
8	UNAMI	Politics	Supporting the good offices of the SRSR during demonstrations	13
9	UNSOM	Politics	Contributing to efforts aimed at ensuring political space and freedom of assembly	13
10	UNSOM	Politics	Supporting mediation of inter-clan conflicts at the local level	13
11	MINUSCA	Politics	Combating hate speech on social media	14
12	UNSMIL	Politics	Combating hate speech on social media	14
13	UNSOM	Sustaining peace	Supporting the extension of state authority through partnership with the UN Development Programme	15
14	UNSOM	Sustaining peace	Supporting the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants	15
15	UNSOM	Sustaining peace	Supporting the reform of the security sector	15

16	MINUSCA	Sustaining peace	Supporting the Government in re-establishing the security sector	16
17	UNMISS	Sustaining peace	Supporting the government in its efforts to extend judicial capacity through the deployment of mobile courts	16
18	MINUJUSTH	Sustaining peace	Supporting the Inspector General of the national police	16
19	MONUSCO	Sustaining peace	Supporting the Inspector General of the national police	16
20	UNMISS	Sustaining peace	Supporting the rule of law through the release of prisoners in pre-trial detention	17
21	MONUSCO	Sustaining peace	Supporting national judicial authorities in bringing perpetrators to justice	17
22	UNAMI	Sustaining peace	Contributing to reconciliation and social cohesion by supporting the conduct of judicial investigations and trials in accordance with international standards	17
23	UNAMI	Sustaining peace	Monitoring and reporting on protests and galvanizing action by the Government	18
24	UNMIK	Sustaining peace	Support reconciliation through sustained dialogue across ethno-political lines	18
25	MINUSCA	Sustaining peace	Supporting the work of the Central African Special Court	18
26	UNSMIL	Sustaining peace	Supporting reconciliation and peacemaking through shuttle diplomacy between parties	18
27	MONUSCO	Sustaining peace	Supporting stabilization and peacebuilding efforts as part of the gradual handover of tasks in areas emerging from conflict	19
28	UNMIL	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting the Ebola response in West Africa	20
29	MONUSCO	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting the Ebola response in the DRC	20
30	UNMISS	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting COVID-19 response by decongesting prisons	20
31	UNAMA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting the COVID-19 response by reducing overcrowding in prisons and promoting equal access to testing for men and women	20
32	UNIOGBIS	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting communication around COVID-19	20

33	UNAMI	Prevention/ Mitigation	Working with civil society and national authorities to raise awareness about COVID-19	20
34	MINUSMA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting situational awareness through information sharing	21
35	MINUSCA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting situational awareness through information sharing with the UN military and police	21
36	MINUJUSTH	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting situational awareness through information sharing with the UN police	21
37	MONUSCO	Prevention/ Mitigation	Sharing information with the JMAC	21
38	UNOCI	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting situational awareness through information collection	21
39	MINUSMA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting situational awareness through information collection	21
40	UNIOGBIS	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting situational awareness through the establishment of a network of human rights defenders and civil society members	21
41	MONUSCO	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting the work of the Group of Experts on the DRC	21
42	MINUSCA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting the work of the Panel of Experts on the CAR	22
43	UNSMIL	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting the work of the Panel of Experts on Libya	22
44	MINUSCA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting the JMAC in profiling armed groups	22
45	MINUSMA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Monitoring recruits trained by the European Union Training Mission	22
46	MONUSCO	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting early warning on potential election-related violence	22
47	MINUSMA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting early warning through human rights monitoring	23
48	UNSOM	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting pre-deployment training through the HRDDP	23
49	MINUSCA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Advising on the planning of police and military operations	23

50	MONUSCO	Prevention/ Mitigation	Advising on the planning of military operations	24
51	MONUSCO	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting the Force liaison with the national army	24
52	MINUSMA	Prevention/ Mitigation	Supporting engagement with armed group to protect civilians	24
53	MONUSCO	Prevention/ Mitigation	Advising on military deployments to protect civilians	24
54	MONUSCO	Prevention/ Mitigation	Investigating and documenting serious violations to inform crisis response	24
55	UNMISS	Prevention/ Mitigation	Advising the UN military on the planning of patrols	25

