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Civil Affairs

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DPO POLICY ON CIVIL AFFAIRS

Contents:	A. Purpose and Rationale
	B. Scope
	C. Policy
	D. Terms and Definitions
	E. References
	F. Monitoring and Compliance
	G. Contact
	H. History

A. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

1. This Policy provides a conceptual framework for Civil Affairs components in United Nations peacekeeping operations. It defines how Civil Affairs contributes to mandate implementation by building trust, promoting community engagement, addressing local conflict dynamics, advancing political solutions, and creating conditions for inclusive and sustainable peace in close collaboration with national and local stakeholders and international partners.
2. Since the late 1990s, Civil Affairs components have assumed broad responsibilities, including conflict prevention, local dialogue facilitation, and strengthening state–society relations. Civil Affairs leverages community engagement as a key tool to foster inclusive political processes, to manage local tensions, and to ensure that national peace efforts are informed by and responsive to local realities. They serve as a bridge between the Mission and communities, linking mission Leadership with community perspectives and needs in line with UN values of inclusion, participation, and human rights.
3. This Policy updates and replaces the 2008 Civil Affairs Policy, incorporating major developments including the heightened prominence of Protection of Civilians (POC) mandates, the findings of the [High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations \(HIPPO, 2015\)](#), the adoption of [Women Peace and Security \(WPS, 2000\)](#), the adoption of the [Youth, Peace and Security \(YPS\) agenda \(2015\)](#), the twin [Sustaining Peace resolutions \(2016\)](#) and successive reviews, the [2024 DPO policy on Information Integrity](#), the Secretary-General's [New Agenda for Peace \(2023\)](#) and the [Pact for the Future \(2024\)](#).
4. The Policy also addresses emerging challenges such as climate-related peace and security risks, digital transformation, and the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech (hereafter MDH), which require adaptive and flexible approaches aligned with the Secretary-General's prevention agenda.
5. The Policy outlines core principles, institutional support, and management arrangements to guide and support Civil Affairs in diverse and volatile settings, enhancing their contribution to mandate implementation and Mission effectiveness.

B. SCOPE

6. This Policy applies to all personnel involved in the planning, implementation, coordination, or support of civil affairs' work in UN peacekeeping operations. This includes Civil Affairs¹ staff, Senior Mission Leadership (including heads of other components), personnel from DPO, Mission Support staff, and uniformed personnel engaged in civil affairs-related activities, particularly at the community level.

C. POLICY

C.1 Purpose and core roles

7. Civil Affairs is a civilian component of United Nations peacekeeping operations that operate primarily at the subnational level. They engage with local stakeholders, including local authorities, traditional leaders, communities and civil society actors, and facilitate political processes. Through this engagement, they contribute to mandate implementation by building trust, promoting community engagement, addressing local conflict dynamics, advancing political solutions, and creating conditions for inclusive and sustainable peace in close collaboration with national and local stakeholders and international partners.
8. Civil Affairs contributes to mandate delivery through three core roles, in line with UN Peacekeeping Principles and Guidelines (Section 2.3) and detailed in Section C.2:
 - Local level engagement, monitoring and facilitation: Civil Affairs supports political and peacebuilding strategies by engaging directly with local actors. Through this engagement, they build trust, gather information and contribute to the mission's integrated analysis, and facilitate inclusive dialogue between and among communities, local authorities, and national actors. This role is often supported by Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs)², who extend mission presence in hard-to-reach or high-risk areas.
 - Support conflict prevention, conflict management and local peace building: Civil Affairs supports and reinforces local efforts to prevent violence, mediates disputes, and promotes reconciliation and social cohesion through sustained engagement with local authorities and traditional leaders, civil society actors, including faith-based groups, community leaders, youth and women's groups, and other community-based actors.
 - Support to the extension of state authority: Civil Affairs assists in consolidating civic space for inclusive, legitimate governance and supports state institutions in re-establishing their presence and services in underserved or conflict-affected areas.
9. The focus on each role varies according to mandate, mission priorities, and evolving needs.

¹ Civil Affairs components have been occasionally named differently in mission settings, as for instance in Kosovo where the section is known as the Office of Community Support. However, the core functions described under para 8 determine the nature of civil affairs' work.

² See Policy on Community Liaison Assistants, DPO, 2024.

Roles may be pursued individually or in combination with other mission components and in line with the mission's strategy. In exceptional cases, upon determination by Senior Mission Leadership, Civil Affairs may also support specific mission initiatives outside the core roles, such as electoral assistance, transition planning, public health response, or other cross-cutting efforts requiring community engagement.

10. In missions with a Protection of Civilians (POC) mandate, Civil Affairs contributes substantively to the Mission's POC mandate across all three tiers of POC action³. Under Tier I, Civil Affairs facilitates locally driven processes that help communities, local authorities, and leaders identify, plan for, and take steps to mitigate risks, including by linking them with regional, national, and international protection mechanisms. Civil Affairs also promotes reconciliation, dialogue, and conflict management at the local level to address triggers of violence and advocate for peaceful solutions. Under Tier II, Civil Affairs contributes to early warning and risk mitigation by drawing on sustained contact with communities and local authorities to relay to civilian and uniformed components credible information on emerging threats. Civil Affairs provides analysis of local dynamics that informs operational decision-making and helps mitigate civilian harm. Under Tier III, Civil Affairs supports national and local stakeholders, including local authorities, traditional leaders, communities and civil society actors in strengthening longer-term political, social and civic conditions⁴ needed to address the root causes of protection risks.
11. In addition, Civil Affairs contributes to broader POC efforts by coordinating with UNCT and engaging, as appropriate, with the Protection Cluster and other protection actors. Further, community engagement efforts by Civil Affairs help to understand the different protection needs, concerns, strategies, capacities and existing mechanisms of the local population, which in turn serve to inform all mission's plans and activities for the protection of civilians.
12. Beyond POC and across all roles, Civil Affairs works in close coordination with other mission components and external partners. Clear, coordinated, and mutually reinforcing relationships - with mission support, political affairs, human rights including Women Protection Advisory Units, police, military, and the UN Country Team (UNCT) - are essential to achieving impact, consistent with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.
13. Civil Affairs supports mission transitions and drawdown processes by facilitating the gradual handover of local relationships, knowledge, and functions to national, UN and other international partners. Drawing on their field presence and networks, Civil Affairs helps sustain community engagement, local governance support, and peacebuilding activities throughout the transition. They contribute to joint, integrated transition planning with the UNCT, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and national counterparts, document lessons learned and help manage expectations through clear and consistent communication with local stakeholders. Civil Affairs also supports protection risk assessments for local partners and promotes continuity of trust and dialogue, in line with the UN's transition principles of national ownership, integration, and capacity development.
14. Civil Affairs staff may also be designated, on an interim basis, as Heads of Field or Regional Offices, or as Regional Coordinators, with additional management responsibilities beyond

³ Tier I: Protection through dialogue and engagement

Tier II: Provision of physical protection

Tier III: (Re-)establishment of a protective environment

⁴ These can range from supporting the rule of law, to building confidence between citizens and the institutions, promoting peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms, facilitating access and sharing of natural resources, etc. The Civil Affairs Handbook provides additional details on the work of Civil Affairs in this area.

the scope of this Policy.

15. Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) are national staff managed by Civil Affairs Officers or, exceptionally, by Heads of Field Offices (HOFOs)⁵. They are deployed in the field to support mandated mission tasks, including the protection of civilians, by gathering information, assessing threats and needs, contributing to early warning, local-level protection planning, coordinating and following up on field visits and patrols, and strengthening the resilience of local communities. They work often in cooperation with uniformed personnel at permanent operating bases (POBs) and temporary operating bases (TOBs).
16. As outlined in the [DPO Policy on Quick Impact Projects \(QIPs\)](#), individual QIPs may be identified and implemented by any mission component. Given Civil Affairs officers' local presence and relationships, they are well placed to identify needs, engage stakeholders, vet partners, and monitor implementation, ensuring projects respond to community priorities and support mission objectives. They can also play a central role in coordinating and/or providing advice on QIPs implementation.

C.2 Core roles performed by Civil Affairs

17. This section outlines a range of typical activities for each core role. The Civil Affairs Handbook provides additional guidance on their performance. Activities are shaped by the mission's mandate, political strategy, and direction from the senior leadership. Not all will be relevant in every context; Civil Affairs is expected to adapt flexibly to the mission's mandate, environment, and planning frameworks.

C.2.1. Local level engagement, monitoring and facilitation:

18. Monitoring, reporting and situational awareness. With their consistent presence at a subnational level - often in remote or hard-to-reach areas, Civil Affairs is well-placed to monitor political, socio-economic, and security developments affecting mandate implementation and peace processes. Their reports and context analysis feed mission-wide situational awareness and planning. Civil Affairs also extends the mission's reach through participation in long-range patrols and the facilitation of joint assessment missions. CLAs are often the mission's only continuous civilian presence in remote locations such as temporary operating bases (TOBs).
19. Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) prevention and response. Civil Affairs supports CRSV prevention and response, drawing on their local presence and trusted relationships. They sensitize local stakeholders to the CRSV normative framework, ensure CRSV considerations are integrated into gender-sensitive conflict analysis and dialogue facilitation, and relay relevant information to the Human Rights Division/CRSV Unit for verification and follow-up, in accordance with the United Nations CRSV policy. Where the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA) is active, Civil Affairs participation is recommended, to foster collaborative information sharing and analysis.
20. Community engagement.⁶ Civil Affairs fosters trust-based, two-way communication between the Mission and local stakeholders, including local authorities, traditional leaders,

⁵ See [Policy on Community Liaison Assistants, DPO, 2024](#).

⁶ The [UN Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, 2020](#), defines community engagement as: "a strategic process to directly involve local populations in all aspects of decision-making and implementation to strengthen local capacities, community structures and local ownership as well as to improve transparency, accountability and optimal resource allocations across diverse settings".

communities, and civil society actors, like youth and women's groups. Acting as a bridge between communities and the mission, they help identify local priorities related to peace, protection and governance, build inclusive partnerships, and clarify false or misleading information on mandate related issues. They also promote national ownership, strengthening both legitimacy and effectiveness. In addition, Civil Affairs contributes to understanding and monitoring local perceptions by organizing community forums, liaising with local actors, and facilitating dialogue. These inputs feed into the Mission's planning at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, including the organization of daily patrols, providing data to monitor progress toward peace and stability, and help shape political dialogue, protection strategies, and peacebuilding approaches.

21. Community outreach. Community outreach helps build public understanding of the Mission's role and mandate. Civil Affairs provides accessible information and engage in public dialogue on issues such as POC, CRSV, MDH, or mission transition. Often coordinated with Strategic Communication and Public Information (SCPI), their outreach activities contribute to managing community expectations, enhance transparency, and strengthen trust.
22. Confidence building. Civil Affairs fosters an environment of trust by engaging local actors, facilitating dialogue, and briefing mission personnel on local norms. QIPs support these efforts by visibly addressing community needs and reinforcing trust in the mission and the peace process.
23. Promoting Information Integrity and Addressing Misinformation, Disinformation and Hate Speech (MDH). Civil Affairs plays a vital role in promoting information integrity in the face of the growing threat posed by harmful information in peacekeeping settings. Through their community presence and trust-based relations, Civil Affairs staff contribute to monitoring, analyzing, and responding to MDH by identifying harmful narratives, de-escalating tensions and promoting accurate information. They also support locally led initiatives to prevent the spread of MDH and strengthen community resilience, as well as contributing to capacity-building of journalists, media workers and other civil society members promoting information integrity. Civil Affairs, like other relevant substantive sections, designates focal points to proactively contribute to the work of the Information Integrity mechanism or Working Group established in missions and integrates MDH considerations into their regular reporting chain.
24. Coordination. At the local level, Civil Affairs contributes to operational coherence under the leadership of the Head of Field Office (HOFO), working with all mission components and, as appropriately, with non-mission actors, such as UNCT, humanitarian partners, and peacebuilding actors. Regular engagement with diverse stakeholders also positions Civil Affairs to play a key role in civil-military coordination (CIMIC).
25. Facilitation of the work of other Mission or UN actors. Where other mission components or UN agencies are not present at the local level, and an explicit arrangement has been reached with the Head of Civil Affairs, Civil Affairs may facilitate or enable their work by sharing information, assessments, monitoring, or enabling research—ensuring alignment with mission priorities and coordination frameworks.

C.2.2. Supporting conflict prevention, conflict management and local peace and reconciliation initiatives:

26. Conflict and political economy analysis: Civil Affairs Officers analyze local political, social and economic dynamics that affect stability and the peace process. Drawing on community engagement and local knowledge, they identify emerging risks and conflict drivers, taking into account gendered power dynamics. Given the growing impact of climate change on

local conflict dynamics, Civil Affairs Officers integrate consideration of climate-related risks and their interlinkages with socio-economic, political, and demographic factors when analyzing local dynamics and planning interventions. This analysis supports prevention, informs mission planning and anchors national processes in local realities. Civil Affairs Officers participate in joint analytical processes with other mission components, the UN Country Team, and national counterparts, and are trained in the use of the Local Conflict Analysis and Planning (LCAP) methodology⁷.

27. Community-based early warning and conflict risk sensitization: Civil Affairs Officers provide timely, field-based information on potential or imminent conflict and protection threats, enabling missions and where appropriate state authorities to take preventive or mitigating action. This may include MDH that could exacerbate local tensions. In missions with a POC mandate, they often support a variety of early warning mechanisms, such as Community Alert Networks (CANs) and work with local stakeholders to develop Community Protection Plans (CPPs), in close coordination with uniformed components. By doing so, they aim at strengthening community-led early warning and response. Civil Affairs may also facilitate outreach activities to raise awareness of threats and link local mechanisms to mission-wide or inter-agency responses.
28. Conflict resolution: Civil Affairs supports local conflict resolution efforts that are critical to reducing violence against civilians and advancing sustainable locally owned political solutions. Drawing on sustained engagement with stakeholders, Civil Affairs leverages its understanding of the local political, social, and cultural dynamics to shape appropriate approaches. While circumstances dictate the method, Civil Affairs typically enables, promotes and supports local mechanisms rather than replace them.
 - Contribute to the capacity-strengthening of local stakeholders: Civil Affairs Officers support local authorities, civil society actors, and community groups -including youth, women, minority-led organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities to build their capacities to address conflict dynamics. Support may include sensitization and awareness-raising activities, training in conflict management, negotiations and mediations, and reinforcing skills that can contribute to conflict resolution and local peacebuilding initiatives. Particular attention is given to civil society actors operating in remote or hard-to-reach areas and to promoting the meaningful participation of women and youth.
 - Community dialogue: Inclusive dialogue is central to conflict prevention and trust-building. Civil Affairs contributes by facilitating dialogue among diverse groups, engaging directly with communities, and partnering with civil society actors. In doing so, they also help strengthen community resilience to MDH, which can undermine social cohesions and peacebuilding efforts.
 - Mediation: Civil Affairs primarily enables local mediation efforts, supporting existing local mediators and mechanisms - drawing on traditional or indigenous conflict resolution systems where appropriate. Civil Affairs helps communities manage conflict, build confidence, and advance inclusive political processes. In exceptional cases, where no credible or impartial local actors exist, Civil Affairs may assume a direct mediation role, strictly as a last resort. In such cases Civil Affairs personnel must first undergo specialized training.

⁷ Civil Affairs personnel is expected to take the online LCAP training, available in both English and French languages, found on iSeek (https://iseek.un.org/departamental_page/local-conflict-analysis-and-planning-tool-lcap)

- Support peace and reconciliation initiatives: Civil Affairs supports local actors in developing and implementing peace and reconciliation initiatives based on agreed and viable political solutions. Civil Affairs also supports follow-up and monitoring mechanisms to track implementation of resulting agreements. Civil Affairs promotes inclusivity in these processes by promoting the participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups, and by linking local initiatives to national and mission-level peace strategies.
29. Contribute to local peace-building efforts: While peacekeeping operations are primarily deployed to support ceasefire or peace agreement implementation, they are also expected to contribute to early peacebuilding. Civil Affairs ensures that mission-led strategies are informed by local perspectives, responsive to community needs and aligned with national priorities. Where appropriate, Civil Affairs may support initiatives addressing access to basic services, land and property disputes, and reconciliation, particularly in coordination with partners such as UNDP or the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).
 30. Engagement with traditional leaders: Civil Affairs engages with traditional leaders such as elders, clan leaders, or customary chiefs who hold influence and legitimacy at the local level. In many contexts, these actors are central to community cohesion, dispute resolution, and local governance, particularly where formal state institutions are weak or absent. Such engagement must be impartial, inclusive, and cognizant of existing power dynamics, to promote the meaningful participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups. Civil Affairs must engage with traditional leaders as part of broader community engagement strategies, informed by perception analyses and coordinated with other mission components and relevant UN actors.

C.2.3. Supporting extension of state authority and civic engagement

31. Supporting the presence, capacity and accountability of state institutions: In mission settings where local government has been absent, weakened, or delegitimized by conflict, Civil Affairs may support the return, redeployment of government officials and civil servants or support the strengthening of accountable, service-oriented state institutions. Such support is provided under the Mission's mandate and in close coordination with the host government and partners such as UNDP, World Bank or bilateral actors. It can include coordinating with other mission components to develop integrated interventions in support of state actors, including to provide technical expertise, logistical, material, and/or security support as required. Civil Affairs engagement must be informed by local context and perceptions and approached with sensitivity to the political dynamics surrounding the re-establishment of state authority. Where relevant the return and redeployment of government officials and civil servants must comply with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. Close coordination with mission components working on governance, rule of law, human rights, and stabilization is essential to ensure a coherent, conflict-sensitive, and integrated approach.
32. Facilitating local governance capacity and partnerships: When requested by the host government, and in line with the Mission's mandate and political strategy, Civil Affairs may support local governance by facilitating needs assessments and enabling training in areas such as finance, administrative procedures, and governance frameworks. Such programmes must be co-designed with national authorities and, where possible, delivered by state institutions like civil service commissions or local training bodies. Civil Affairs may also connect local authorities to development actors and donors to ensure that planned programmatic activities by these actors are context-specific, coordinated, and aligned with peace-building priorities.

33. Supporting civil society actors and politically inclusive processes: Civil Affairs may support inclusive political space by fostering dialogue between communities and local authorities. This can include civic education, organizing pre-election fora, and structured engagement between civil society and government representatives, with special attention to youth, women, and marginalized groups. Such initiatives build trust, transparency, and institutional legitimacy.
34. Support local accountability and transparency: Civil Affairs may support local authorities in developing participatory planning processes and mechanisms to strengthen accountability and transparency. By introducing inclusive methodologies and performance-assessment tools, they encourage governance that is transparent, accountable, and responsive to community needs.

C.3 Guiding Principles

35. Primacy of politics: Sustainable peace depends on inclusive and legitimate political solutions, not on military or technical measures alone. Peacekeeping mandates are shaped by political strategies at every level. Civil Affairs contributes by engaging locally, facilitating inclusive dialogue, and connecting grassroots perspectives to national political processes, anchoring peace in community realities.
36. Impartiality: Peacekeeping must act without bias toward any party, upholding international norms and mandate while treating all actors equitably. For Civil Affairs, this requires transparent decision-making, consistent standards, and active communication to sustain credibility and trust. Impartiality is not neutrality - it is principled engagement that avoids favoritism and reduces misperceptions.
37. Do-no-harm: UN missions must minimize the negative impacts of their actions, strategies and implementation frameworks. For Civil Affairs, this means avoiding approaches that reinforce grievances, divisions, exclusion, or power imbalances. Engagement must be guided by conflict analysis, be sensitive to political and social dynamics, be designed with proactive risk mitigation and be informed by human rights analysis, as applicable. Civil Affairs should respect community agency and avoid undermining existing coping or dispute resolution mechanisms.
38. National and local ownership: Effective peacebuilding depends on inclusive participation by state institutions, civil society, and local communities including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. At the subnational level, local ownership means communities meaningfully set priorities, inform decisions, and lead implementation. Civil Affairs promotes ownership by enabling participatory processes, integrating community perspectives into national strategies, and strengthening legitimate local mechanisms for conflict resolution even in fragile or contested contexts. Promoting both national and local ownership enhances the effectiveness and legitimacy of peace operations and supports sustainability beyond the Mission.
39. Demographic diversity: Activities must reflect the needs of diverse groups, including women, youth, minorities, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized populations. This requires disaggregated data, targeted consultations, and partnerships with representative organizations to ensure meaningful inclusion in political and peace processes.
40. Gender sensitivity: Gender roles and power dynamics shape experiences of conflict and recovery. A gendered lens/analysis ensures that civil affairs' work and initiatives are inclusive

and locally relevant, effectively engaging with diverse communities, and avoids reinforcing gender inequalities. Women, Peace and Security (WPS): Civil Affairs promotes women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in peacebuilding and governance processes, in line with the WPS agenda. Through consultations with women's networks and community groups, it helps ensure women's perspectives inform decision-making and recovery efforts. Civil Affairs also supports broader mission efforts to prevent gender-based violence by promoting safe, inclusive engagement and coordination with protection actors, while expanding civic space for women's leadership in post-conflict governance.

41. Youth agency: Sustainable peace requires the meaningful participation of young people, who are disproportionately affected by conflict yet essential to recovery, as affirmed in the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda. Civil Affairs applies this principle by engaging youth as equal partners across the peacebuilding process, from analysis and decision-making to programme design, implementation, and monitoring. This includes applying a youth-sensitive lens through age-disaggregated data, adapted outreach methods, and support for youth-led initiatives that foster long-term participation. Engagement must remain inclusive, context-sensitive, and free from tokenism.
42. Contextual Awareness: Approaches must be tailored to the unique political, social, and institutional realities of each mission setting, adapting strategies to ensure relevance, credibility, and impact.
43. Conflict Sensitivity: Interventions must reduce, not heighten, tensions. Civil Affairs ensures this by integrating local perspectives, taking into account cultural norms and historical grievances into planning and maintaining awareness of how mission activities are perceived.
44. Credibility: Trust is built through consistent presence, professional conduct, inclusive engagement, and follow-through commitments. Civil Affairs also helps promote an open, inclusive, safe and secure information environment by addressing MDH and supporting community resilience to harmful narratives that undermine confidence in peace processes and the Mission.
45. Integration (Whole-of-Mission): Effective peacekeeping is grounded in a coherent, integrated mission strategy that leverages the comparative advantages of all components and UN actors. Civil Affairs contributes by promoting shared analysis, joint planning, and coordinated engagement, ensuring complex and cross-cutting challenges are addressed in a unified manner.
46. Accountability & Transparency: Civil Affairs must maintain open communication, inclusive feedback channels, and clear reporting to communities. By ensuring that priorities, decisions, and resources are transparent and accessible, Civil Affairs strengthens trust, mitigates misperceptions, and enhances mission credibility.
47. Human Rights-Based Approach: Peacekeeping is guided by the principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, and accountability, requiring the systematic addressing of structural inequalities, protection of marginalized groups, and integration of human rights into all peacebuilding efforts. Civil Affairs contributes by strengthening the capacity of both rights-holders and duty-bearers, ensuring these principles guide community engagement, and governance support.
48. Sustainability: Civil Affairs supports resilience by reinforcing local systems for governance, dialogue, and service delivery, ensuring solutions are led and sustained locally without fostering dependency.

C.4 Roles and Responsibilities

C.4.1. Civil Affairs components

49. Civil Affairs field teams: Civil Affairs field teams report through the Head of Field Office and/or the Head of Civil Affairs to senior mission leadership. Their work spans multiple priorities but remains anchored in Security Council–mandated objectives. In integrated missions, the Civil Affairs component typically sits under the political pillar to ensure alignment with the broader political strategy. However, Senior Mission Leadership can determine, based on the Mission’ specific mandate, country context, the overall political goals and the specific phase in the lifespan of the Mission, that Civil Affairs would be best placed under the DSRSG/RC/HC.
50. Head of Civil Affairs: The Head of Civil Affairs sets strategic direction, ensures operational coherence, and aligns Civil Affairs with evolving local dynamics. Responsibilities include strategy development, staff deployment and capacity strengthening, as well as coordination with mission and external partners. Heads of Civil Affairs consolidate field-level analysis for mission-wide planning and political assessments and oversees efforts to track local perceptions and MDH. Where Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) are deployed, Heads of Civil Affairs must ensure that they have the necessary training and resources to effectively support civilian and uniformed components. Heads of Civil Affairs meet bi-annually with the Civil Affairs Team at UN Headquarters to ensure alignment in the implementation of civil affairs mandates and to identify guidance gaps and needs.
51. Civil Affairs Team leaders: Civil Affairs Team Leaders manage field teams, implement component priorities, and maintain regular engagement with local stakeholders, including local authorities, traditional leaders, communities and civil society actors. They ensure that civil affairs’ work is responsive to local dynamics, aligned with mission priorities, and grounded in systematic reporting and analysis. Team Leaders are expected to exercise sound political judgment, support conflict-sensitive approaches, and lead initiatives that build trust, promote dialogue, and address core peacebuilding priorities such as protection of civilians, responses to MDH, youth inclusion, and community-based engagement.
52. Reporting and Planning Unit: Depending on the size of the component, a Civil Affairs Reporting and Planning Unit should be established at Mission Headquarters. The unit processes field information into accurate reporting and actionable analysis for decision-making, synthesizing inputs from Civil Affairs teams. It also ensures systematic collection, verification, and sharing of relevant information through established mission mechanisms such as early warning, situational awareness, or mission information management and analysis platforms (e.g. Peacekeeping Information Management (PKI) or other situational awareness tools) in coordination with JMAC, JOC, and other components. The unit contributes to trend analysis, scenario development, and coordination with other mission components and external partners, enhancing the integration of Civil Affairs insights into broader mission strategy. In addition, the unit plays a key role in internal knowledge management, capturing lessons learned and good practices to support continuous improvement and cross-mission learning. The Civil Affairs Team in the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET) in DPO supports the dissemination of lessons and good practices across missions.

C.4.2. Strategic alignment with mission priorities

53. Mission Planning and Performance Assessment: Civil Affairs’ field presence and engagement with local stakeholders are critical for validating planning assumptions. Civil Affairs contributes to integrated mission plans, mission concepts and mission transition plans, as applicable. Using tools like the Local Conflict Analysis and Planning (LCAP) tool,

Civil Affairs contributes to the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System, supports scenario planning, and monitors progress throughout the mission lifecycle.

54. Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC): Civil Affairs contributes directly to the Mission's analytical and operational functions by maintaining regular information exchange and coordination with both the JMAC and the Joint Operational Center (JOC). The JMAC integrates Civil Affairs insights into mission-wide situational awareness, early warning, and strategic analysis, while the JOC relies on Civil Affairs inputs for real-time operational awareness and field-level coordination.
55. Strategic Communications and Public Information: Civil Affairs provides field-based insights on local perceptions and on both emerging and entrenched MDH narratives, to shape context-sensitive messaging. Civil Affairs works with Strategic Communications and Public Information Units to ensure communications are credible, conflict-sensitive, and aligned with community concerns, with CLAs playing a key role in sentiment monitoring and message delivery. Civil Affairs also helps convey and amplify mission's messages at the community level. Their insights into the civil society landscape informs communications strategies.
56. POC Advisers or Focal Points: POC Advisers or Focal Points are deployed to missions with POC mandates. They are responsible for supporting mission leadership on POC analysis, planning and response, and coordinating POC mandate implementation, including liaison and engagement with the UN Country Team and humanitarian protection actors. They advise on how the mission can assist national authorities to strengthen POC capacities and ensure POC concerns are reflected in mission operations. POC Advisers also facilitate the development and implementation of the mission's POC strategy and related guidance. In this capacity, they work closely with Civil Affairs to ensure that protection strategies are grounded in local realities and informed by ongoing community engagement and conflict analysis.
57. DSRSG/RC/HC: In integrated missions, the DSRSG/RC/HC, serving in a triple-hatted capacity, plays a central role in aligning peacekeeping activities with broader UN system efforts, particularly in peacebuilding, recovery, and development. Where Civil Affairs components do not report directly to the DSRSG/RC/HC, close coordination between the Head of Civil Affairs and the DSRSG/RC/HC's office is essential to ensure coherence with UN Country Team (UNCT) strategies and joint planning processes. This collaboration is particularly important in contexts where Civil Affairs activities support local governance, institutional resilience, and early recovery where mission and UNCT engagement often intersect.
58. Climate, Peace and Security (CPS) Advisers: CPS Advisers help UN missions analyze and address the impacts of climate change on peace and security, guiding the integration of climate risks into conflict prevention and resolution strategies. They also strengthen partnerships, facilitate early warning, and provide technical expertise on climate-related risks to support effective and resilient mission operations. They work closely with Civil Affairs in detecting how climate exacerbates local tensions and designing interventions that promote peace while building resilience to climate impacts.
59. Electoral Processes: Where mandated, United Nations peacekeeping operations establish dedicated electoral components guided by the Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA). These components provide technical expertise and strategic guidance to national electoral stakeholders. Civil Affairs supports these efforts through its sustained engagement with local communities, traditional leaders, and civil society actors, helping to create an enabling environment for inclusive political participation.

C.4.3. Operational coherence in the field

60. Heads of Field Offices (HOFOs): HOFOs serve as the First Reporting Officers for Civil Affairs Team Leaders and, as the senior mission representatives at the local level, lead integrated field offices ensuring mission activities are coordinated, context-sensitive, and aligned with strategic priorities. They provide overall direction across civilian, uniformed, and mission support components, and play a key political and coordination role, engaging local authorities, civil society, and communities to promote dialogue, strengthen state–society relations, and support peace processes. They work with Civil Affairs Teams to ensure that their work on local analysis, engagement, and conflict prevention is integrated into mission-wide planning processes. In volatile settings, HOFOs often lead or oversee crisis response, ensuring that all mission components act in a coordinated and principled manner.
61. Uniformed Components: Military and police components play a vital role in enabling Civil Affairs activities, particularly in high-risk or hard-to-reach areas, by maintaining security, deterring threats, and contributing to early warning and community protection through presence and patrolling. Civil Affairs, in turn, provides localized conflict analysis, perception monitoring, and context-specific advice to ensure uniformed engagement is informed by local dynamics and sensitive to community concerns. In missions with POC mandates, including at the subnational level and deep field where CLAs are deployed (i.e. POBs, TOBs), Civil Affairs should closely coordinate with military and police planning processes. This ensures that community concerns on security threats inform the design of operational activities meant to prevent, mitigate or dissuade violence against civilians. Coordination between uniformed components and CLAs is detailed in the [CLA Policy](#).
62. Political Affairs: Political Affairs components typically lead on national-level political engagement, while Civil Affairs supports sub-national processes and localized dialogue. Civil Affairs contributes to the Mission's political strategy by reporting on local developments and perceptions, particularly where these influence or are influenced by national dynamics. Close coordination, including regular information sharing, joint analysis, and aligned messaging between Political Affairs and Civil Affairs is essential to ensure a coherent political approach to fostering the primacy of politics at the local level.

Human Rights: Many UN peacekeeping operations are mandated to promote and protect human rights, often through dedicated Human Rights components supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Civil Affairs and Human Rights components work in complementary ways, through local engagement, governance support, monitoring, reporting, and capacity-building. Where Human Rights components are not present at the local level, Civil Affairs can support early warning by sharing community-level information on human rights violations, while respecting confidentiality and established data protocols. Civil Affairs must refer issues requiring specialized follow-up to appropriate personnel, notably referring CRSV issues to Women Protection Advisors and Child Protection issues to Child Protection Advisors where such specialized capacity exists, and otherwise referring these issues, and broader SGBV issues to Human Rights Divisions. This cooperation helps ensure a rights-based, context-sensitive approach to peacekeeping and protection.
63. Coordination with UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes (AFPs): Civil Affairs coordinates with AFPs present in the field for information sharing purposes and to foster joint planning of programmatic activities, shared context analysis, and developing synergetic approaches

to effective governance, peacebuilding, recovery, and service delivery.

C.4.4. UN Headquarters

64. DPO - HQ level: DPO provides strategic guidance and technical advice to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Civil Affairs Team (CAT) within the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training of DPO coordinates the development and distribution of policy, guidance, training and best practices relevant to civil affairs' work. Peacekeeping Missions must provide regular reporting on Civil Affairs activities to CAT as part of standard mission reporting channels, including code cables and daily situation reports. CAT enters daily and weekly reports into the Civil Affairs Activities Database (CAAD) to preserve institutional knowledge, and to support trend analysis and lesson learning. The team also identifies opportunities to improve institutional support, promote learning across missions, and ensure alignment of civil affairs' work with broader peacekeeping priorities.
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D. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

65. The Local Conflict Analysis and Planning Tool (LCAP) is a step-by-step methodology developed to enable Field Offices to analyze local conflict dynamics, map stakeholders, and identify viable entry points for designing integrated interventions to support the peaceful transformation of conflict dynamics. LCAP resources for self-paced training are available on [iSeek](#)
66. Community Engagement: Community engagement refers to the systematic, inclusive, and sustained process of building trust and maintaining relationships between peacekeeping operations and local communities. It enables missions to better understand local dynamics, identify community priorities, and support conflict-sensitive, people-centered interventions. This approach supports local ownership of peacebuilding efforts and is most effective when coordinated across mission components in alignment with the Mission's mandate and strategy.
67. Information integrity: Information integrity refers to an information ecosystem where freedom of expression is fully enjoyed and where accurate, reliable information, free from discrimination and hate, is available to all in an open, inclusive, safe and secure information environment. Promoting information integrity involves empowering people to exercise their right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds and hold opinions without interference. The erosion of the integrity of information through misinformation, disinformation, or hate speech can undermine people's ability to exercise their human rights and hamper efforts to achieve peace, prosperity and a livable future.
68. Community Alert Network (CAN): A tactical level early warning tool. Networks are human and/or technology-based communication systems to reinforce the capacities of communities to protect themselves, by enhancing and organizing their means of communication. They aim at providing early warning information on threats to communities or individuals at risk of violence and can assist tactical level mission presences (including POBs and TOBs) and state security actors to triangulate information and prevent or respond to PoC threats. A CAN is able to facilitate and enable a community at risk to contact the closest mission presence and alert them to likely impending threats.
69. Community Protection Plan (CPP): At the tactical level, each mission base or field presence

is expected to have a Community Protection Plan, which provides an overview of the security situation, threats to the civilian population, priority communities at risk of violence and actions planned or required to address POC risks. Depending on the composition of the base or field presence, CPPs will often be drafted by the field Commander (UNPOL/Force) and CLA, with support from civilian components, in consultation with local communities.

70. Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC). UN-CIMIC is a military staff function that contributes to facilitating the interface between military and civilian components, which also includes humanitarian and development actors in the mission area.
71. Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS): CPAS is a platform-backed process to help missions assess their performance and make recommendations to decision-makers and mission leadership on how to enhance the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, to better achieve peace and security objectives.
72. Quick Impact Projects (QIPs): QIPs are small-scale, rapidly implementable projects, of benefit to the population. These projects are used by United Nations peacekeeping operations to establish and build confidence in the Mission, its mandate, and the peace process.
73. Climate, peace and security: When interacting with socio-economic and political factors, climate change can exacerbate conflict risks, thereby affecting human, national and international peace and security. UN Peace Operations are increasingly mandated to analyze and report on the linkages between climate, peace and security and with the UN Country Team to catalyze climate-informed approaches to peace and security, forge partnerships with actors at all levels and advance peace- positive climate action.

E. REFERENCES

Normative or superior references

- United Nations Charter (1945)
- United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines (Capstone Doctrine) (2008)
- Security Council resolutions on the Protection of Civilians: 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1674 (2006), 1894 (2009).
- Security Council resolution on Children and Armed Conflict: 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014), 2225 (2015), 2427 (2018), and 2601 (2021)
- Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), 2493 (2019), 2664 (2022)
- Security Council resolutions on trafficking in persons in conflict situations: 2331 (2016), 2388 (2017)
- Security Council resolutions on Sustaining Peace: 2282 (2016)
- Security Council resolutions on Youth, Peace and Security: 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018), 2535 (2020)

Related policies

- Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces (HRDDP) (2011)
- OHCHR/DPKO/DPA/DFS Policy on Human Rights in United Nations Peace Operations and Political Missions (2011)
- DPKO-DFS Policy on the Planning and Review of Peacekeeping Operations (2016)
- DPKO/DFS Policy on Quick Impact Projects (2017)
- DPO/DOS Policy on Authority, Command and Control in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2019)
- DPO Policy on Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) (2020)
- DPO Policy on United Nations Field Missions: Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2020)
- DPO/DPPA Policy on Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning (2020)
- DPO Policy on Civil-Military Coordination in UN Integrated Peacekeeping Missions (UN-CIMIC) (2022)
- United Nations Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning (2023)
- DPO Policy on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping (2023)
- DGC/DPO/DPPA Policy on Strategic Communications in Peace Operations (2024)
- DPO Policy on Information Integrity in Peacekeeping Settings (2024)
- DPO Policy on Community Liaison Assistants (2024)

Other Related Guidance

- DPKO/DFS Civil Affairs Handbook (2012)
- DPKO/DFS Guidelines on Understanding and Integrating Local Perceptions in UN Peacekeeping (2014)
- Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) (2015)
- DPKO/DFS Guidelines on Engagement with Civil Society (2017)
- DPKO/DFS Presence, Capacity and Legitimacy: Implementing Extension of State Authority Mandates in Peacekeeping (2017)
- DPKO The Role of UN Peacekeeping Operations in Addressing Local Conflict (2017)
- DPO Practice Note on Community Engagement (2018)
- United Nations Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (2020)
- DPO Preventing, Mitigating, and Resolving Transhumance-Related Conflicts in UN Peacekeeping Settings: A Survey of Practice (2022)
- DPO/DPPA/DOS Guidelines on Mission Concept and Mission Plan (2025)

F. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

74. In field missions, overall management oversight of Civil Affairs within the Mission is the responsibility of the Head of Mission and is usually delegated to a DSRSG. The Head of Civil Affairs component is responsible for oversight at the operational level.
75. At Headquarters, compliance with this policy shall be the responsibility of the Civil Affairs Team (CAT) within the Policy and Best Practices Service (PBPS) of DPO's Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET), under the over authority of USG DPO.

G. CONTACT

76. The contact for this policy is the Civil Affairs Team within the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET) at pbps-civilaffairs-unhq@un.org.

H. HISTORY

77. This Policy was first issued in 2008 (as the Policy Directive on Civil Affairs dated April 2008 (ref. 2008.09). It was revised in 2025.

APPROVAL SIGNATURE:



NAME, TITLE, DEPARTMENT

Jean-Pierre Lacroix
Under-Secretary-General
Department of Peace Operations

DATE OF APPROVAL: 10 June 2026