

# Finding the UN Way on Peacekeeping-Intelligence

SARAH-MYRIAM MARTIN-BRÛLÉ



**Cover Photo:** UN peacekeepers from Uruguay serving with the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) perform daily patrols on the Butembo-Kalunguta road in North Kivu, August 22, 2019. UN Photo.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

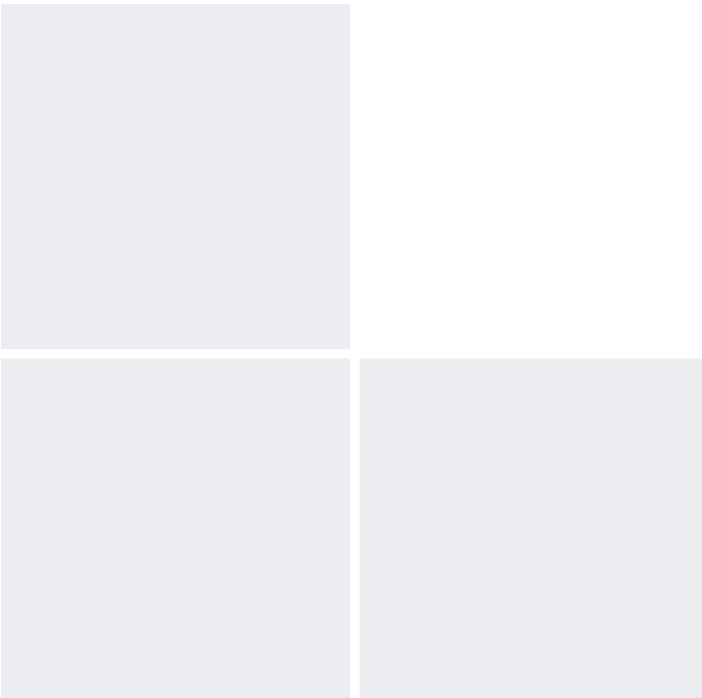
SARAH-MYRIAM MARTIN-BRÛLÉ is a Non-resident Fellow at the International Peace Institute.

Email: [smartin@ubishops.ca](mailto:smartin@ubishops.ca)

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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DPO	Department of Peace Operations
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DSS	Department of Safety and Security
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations
JMAC	Joint mission analysis center
JOC	Joint operations center
C-34	Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
UNMISS	UN Mission in South Sudan
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
UNOCC	UN Operations and Crisis Centre
MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
SAGE	UN Situational Awareness and Geospatial program



## Executive Summary

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The growing number of UN personnel deployed to missions in violent, volatile, and complex settings has pushed the UN to take all means necessary to improve the safety and security of its staff and of civilians under its protection. The UN's Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy has been a central part of these efforts. The policy was first developed in 2017 and was revised in 2019 following concerns raised by some member states. Because of these concerns, the 2019 policy does not define "peacekeeping-intelligence" but clarifies its purpose, rationale, and scope.

With this policy in place, the UN has faced the task of determining what peacekeeping-intelligence means in practice and ensuring that staff understand and have the capacity to implement it. The UN has had to pioneer an approach to intelligence that upholds its principles of transparency, impartiality, and efficiency while setting standards that are both general enough to be useful for all missions and flexible enough for each mission to adapt to its context and constraints. The UN has therefore had to remain careful to avoid adopting one member state's way of acquiring intelligence over another's and not to use any tools, tactics, or procedures that would involve either clandestine practices or information that is classified at the national level.

In response to these challenges, the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy focuses on methods and mechanisms that missions can fit into their existing arrangements. The policy thus needed to be supplemented by guidelines, including both mission-specific standard operating procedures and more generic UN-wide handbooks. However, lack of coherence between these guidance documents and inadequate access to or awareness of them have resulted in persistent inconsistencies in practices between headquarters and the field. Another challenge in developing the UN approach to intelligence has been the difficulty of recruiting candidates with both broad intelligence experience and an understanding of the UN context. This difficulty underscores the importance of training to give guidance on the core roles and expectations of personnel and to provide a common methodology. However, training remains limited and does not sufficiently professionalize individuals.

Implementing this policy has presented four additional challenges. First, while coordination mechanisms have now been put in place in every mission, coordination of tasking and planning remain insufficient both from the top-down (i.e., from headquarters) and from the bottom-up (i.e., in the field). Second, the lack of a rigorous and standardized approach to managing databases leads to limited access, delays, mislabeling, and a duplication of efforts. Third, units and personnel do not adequately share information, in part due to lack of trust and competition over information. Finally, it remains unclear to what extent a gender lens is being applied to peacekeeping-intelligence, and the relevant trainings do not include modules focused on gender.

The following are recommendations for UN headquarters, peace operations, and member states to address these challenges:

1. Optimize tasking and information sharing within missions by focusing on senior leaders' information needs;
2. Harmonize the content of peacekeeping-intelligence handbooks with standard operating procedures while ensuring they are flexible enough to account for differences among and between missions;
3. Refine criteria for recruiting civilian and uniformed personnel with intelligence expertise and better assign personnel once they are deployed;
4. Improve retention of peacekeeping-intelligence personnel and encourage member states to agree to longer-term deployments;
5. Tailor peacekeeping-intelligence training to the needs of missions while clarifying a standard set of UN norms;
6. Apply a gender lens to UN peacekeeping-intelligence;
7. Improve coordination between headquarters and field sites within missions by adapting the tempo and timing of tasking and creating integrated information-sharing cells; and
8. Establish common sharing platforms within missions.





## Introduction

One death is always one too many. The growing number of UN personnel deployed to missions in violent, volatile, and complex settings has pushed the UN and its member states to take all means necessary to improve the safety and security of its staff and of civilians under its protection. As a result, the fatality rate for UN troops has been dropping steadily over the past ten years, indicating that the UN may be becoming more effective at protecting its troops and personnel.<sup>1</sup>

The UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy has been a central part of these efforts. The policy's goal is to enhance the situational awareness of senior mission leaders, thereby supporting their decision making and allowing missions to better ensure the safety and security of personnel and to better protect civilians. This policy was developed following a recommendation from the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), which highlighted the need for "more effective information management and significantly enhanced analytical capacities."<sup>2</sup> In 2016, the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) also called for "a more cohesive and integrated UN system for situational awareness that stretches from the field to the Headquarters."<sup>3</sup>

The 2017 Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy was developed in "closer than usual" consultation with member states and was adjusted based on their concerns.<sup>4</sup> The first version of the policy defined peacekeeping intelligence as "the non-clandestine acquisition and processing of information by a mission within a directed mission intelligence cycle to meet requirements for decision-making and to inform operations related to the safe and effective implementation of the Security Council mandate."<sup>5</sup> Signaling member states' informal approval of the policy, the term "peacekeeping intelligence"

appeared in the C-34 report in 2017.<sup>6</sup> However, following concerns expressed by some member states, a revised Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy, adopted in 2019, left the term undefined, instead laying out a series of principles.

This report focuses on the challenges faced in implementing the 2019 UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy. It addresses the origin and evolution of UN peacekeeping-intelligence as a concept and explains the need for this policy. It then discusses how UN peacekeeping-intelligence was and is being developed through guidance documents, recruitment, and training. Finally, the report discusses the implementation of the UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy in multidimensional stabilization missions, including challenges related to coordination, data management, information sharing, and gender.

This report draws on visits to and interviews conducted with personnel from the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) from 2016 to 2019. It also draws on a workshop conducted in July 2019 with representatives of UN missions, UN headquarters, and member states.<sup>7</sup>

## The Need for UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence

The UN has long acknowledged its need for intelligence. Two of the first UN secretaries-general, Dag Hammarskjöld and U Thant, acknowledged that the organization's lack of knowledge, understanding, and anticipation of the environment in which it was operating was a significant impedi-

1 Sarah-Myriam Martin-Brûlé, "Cruz Report: Above and Beyond Security," *IPI Global Observatory*, February 23, 2018.

2 UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People*, UN Doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, June 17, 2015, para. 221.

3 UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, UN Doc. A/70/19, March 15, 2016, para. 52.

4 Personal communication, 2020.

5 UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department for Field Support, "Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy," UN Doc. PK/G/2017.07, May 2, 2017.

6 UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, UN Doc. A/71/19, March 17, 2017, para. 68.

7 To respect the confidentiality of interviewees, references to specific missions and the professional titles and ranks of individuals have been removed.

ment.<sup>8</sup> The UN first employed the term “intelligence” during the 1960 UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC) with the creation of a military information branch to collect information by intercepting messages, conducting aerial surveillance, and interrogating detainees. For subsequent peace operations, however, intelligence remained in the military realm and was mostly the prerogative of specific national contingents. There was no integrated approach to intelligence gathering within missions.

## Early Efforts to Improve Information Flow

In response to this challenge, in 1993, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali established a Situation Centre within the then Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to facilitate the flow of information between the civilian, police, and military components. In the 1990s, the UN created two other intelligence-oriented offices, the Office for Research and Collection of Information and the Information and Research Unit, although they were later dismantled due to member states’ suspicions that information collected could be used outside of UN missions. However, the tragedies in Rwanda and Srebrenica triggered new questions on the need for institutional mechanisms to enhance situational awareness and provide early warning both in missions and at UN headquarters.<sup>9</sup>

In 2000, the Brahimi Report reiterated the need for comprehensive information gathering and analysis and recommended the creation of the Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat at UN headquarters. This secretariat combined existing entities and

personnel working on situational awareness and policy planning related to peace and security. Its objective was to support the secretary-general, UN officials, and troop- and police-contributing countries in assessing risks in areas where personnel and troops would be deployed.<sup>10</sup> Although the General Assembly officially recognized the need for such mechanisms, some member states remained reluctant and suspicious of the capabilities being developed and limited their provision of material support and expertise to the establishment of the new unit.

Less than three years later, the bombing of the UN offices in Baghdad confirmed that missions needed the capacity to conduct integrated analysis, including both human and material resources. The Ahtisaari Report, published in response to the bombing, emphasized the need for a “dedicated risk and threat assessment unit at Headquarters with dedicated links at the field level” and a “dedicated 24-hour operations centre.”<sup>11</sup> The Department of Safety and Security (DSS) was created in the wake of the report. DSS included a Threat and Risk Unit (later renamed the Threat and Risk Assessment Service) and a twenty-four seven Communications Centre.

As an ad hoc response to gaps in analytical capacities in the UN missions in Afghanistan, Darfur, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, and Liberia, the UN first put in place joint mission analysis centers (JMACs) in 2005. In 2006, JMACs were officially incorporated into UN doctrine as a core unit in missions. JMACs were meant to provide mission-wide analysis to support strategic, operational, and tactical decision making. Later that year, DPKO released the first official policy

The UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy fulfills a dire and long-overlooked need to link enhanced situational awareness to timely decisions and actions to ensure the safety and security of personnel and the protection of civilians.

8 Haidi Willmot states that “the U.N.’s second Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, viewed the absence of a situational awareness system as a ‘serious handicap’ and that his successor, Secretary-General U Thant, “held the view that the lack of authoritative information, without which the Secretary-General cannot speak ... was one of the two ‘insuperable obstacles’ he faced during his tenure.” Haidi Willmot, “Improving UN Situational Awareness: Enhancing the UN’s ability to prevent and respond to mass human suffering,” Stimson Center, August 2017, p. 29.

9 Military information officers were trying to apply the intelligence cycle but in a non-integrated manner with only “improvised/ad hoc” access to information gathered by missions’ civilian components. Personal communication with official in UN mission, 2019.

10 Willmot, “Improving UN Situational Awareness,” August 2017.

11 United Nations, “Report of the Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of UN Personnel in Iraq,” October 2003, available at [www.un.org/News/dh/iraq/safety-security-un-personnel-iraq.pdf](http://www.un.org/News/dh/iraq/safety-security-un-personnel-iraq.pdf).

directives on JMACs, which also covered joint operations centers (JOCs). The policy was revised in 2010 and divided into two separate policies for JOCs and JMACs.

The following year, member states launched an initiative to establish a central situational-awareness unit that would combine existing entities at headquarters. This led to the creation of the UN Operations and Crisis Centre (UNOCC) in 2013, which brought together DPKO's Situation Centre, DSS's Communications Centre, and staff from the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Department of Public Information (DPI), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and UN Development Programme (UNDP). UNOCC became responsible for supporting and following up on implementation of the JMAC policy. It was also meant to be a hub for innovation on new system-wide approaches to improve the situational awareness of peacekeeping operations, such as the UN Situational Awareness and Geospatial (SAGE) program.<sup>12</sup>

Despite this effort to improve coordination, the 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) recommended "more effective information management and significantly enhanced analytical capacities." It found that "an effective system for the acquisition, analysis and operationalization of information for peace operations in complex environments is lacking."<sup>13</sup> In 2016, the UN General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) confirmed the need for "a more cohesive and integrated United Nations system for situational awareness that stretches from the field to the Headquarters."<sup>14</sup>

Beginning in 2016, efforts to improve the flow of information became increasingly linked to the safety and security of UN personnel and the protection of civilians. A high-profile attack against a UN base in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that killed several uniformed peacekeepers in 2017, together with the high casualty rate in MINUSMA, prompted the secretary-general to commission a report on the safety and security of UN peacekeepers in 2017. The Cruz Report, published later that year, emphasized the need for intelligence:

To prevent casualties, peacekeeping missions need tactical intelligence. Missions must be able to transform intelligence into simple tasks and actions that boost security, but they often fail to do this. Missions do not lack high-tech resources to collect intelligence. They lack the basics, especially human intelligence, networks of informants, situational awareness, and capacity to communicate with the population. Military units should also have more structures for tactical intelligence. And when information is available, troops sometimes do not take the appropriate action. The end state of intelligence should be action and results that increase security, not a written report.<sup>15</sup>

The secretary-general's Action for Peacekeeping initiative (A4P), launched in 2018, further stressed the link between the need for improved analysis and the safety and security of peacekeepers and the protection of civilians. Referring to A4P, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, emphasized the need for peacekeeping-intelligence, along with specialized capabilities like helicopters, to reach the overall goal of "reconfiguring missions to be more mobile and more proactive."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The UN SAGE software is an incident-reporting and situational-awareness tool.

<sup>13</sup> UN Secretary-General, *The Future of United Nations Peace Operations: Implementation of the Recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, UN Doc. A/70/357-S/2015/682, September 2, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, UN Doc. A/70/19, March 15, 2016

<sup>15</sup> United Nations, "Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers," December 19, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix, "Statement to the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial," New York, March 29, 2019, available at [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/pk-ministerial-usg-dpo-asdelivered\\_.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/pk-ministerial-usg-dpo-asdelivered_.pdf). This statement was also referring to Hervé Ladsous's take on investing in force multipliers, whether equipment such as helicopters or mechanisms such as analytical structures akin to peacekeeping-intelligence.

## Working toward Agreement on a Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy

A lessons-learned study on intelligence in peacekeeping operations that was finalized in early 2016 fueled debates within the C-34 on the development and the scope of a policy on intelligence in peacekeeping.<sup>17</sup> Discussions on such a policy progressed throughout 2016 and into early 2017, when DPKO and the Department of Field Support put forward the first Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy. The main challenge was to get member states and the different UN bodies developing the policy to agree on what intelligence should mean in the context of UN peacekeeping. The UN needed a definition that would enable missions to put in place an effective intelligence architecture while remaining transparent about their activities. In an attempt to do this, the policy defined “peacekeeping-intelligence” as

the non-clandestine acquisition and processing of information by a mission within a directed mission intelligence cycle to meet requirements for decision-making and to inform operations related to the safe and effective implementation of the Security Council mandate.<sup>18</sup>

This policy confronted divisions both among member states and among different sections of the UN. There were differences in view and approach among the five sections of the Department of Peace Operations involved in developing the policy: the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division, Office of Military Affairs, Police Division, UNOCC, and DSS. The Office of Military Affairs was focused on military intelligence, with less reference to missions’ police and civilian components. The Police Division conceived the policy as part of a broader set of standard operating procedures called the “strategic guidance framework for police peacekeeping.” UNOCC insisted on protecting JMACs from political challenges. While DSS was

initially actively engaged, notably by sharing good practices, its mandate extends well beyond peacekeeping, so it moved to the periphery as discussions with member states evolved.

Member states were also divided on the policy; the very idea of a peacekeeping-intelligence policy was political. One divide mirrored—and exacerbated—the “division of labor” on UN peacekeeping between funders and troop contributors. For many European states, the experience with NATO in Afghanistan had convinced them of the value of multidimensional intelligence units, leading them to push for the intelligence policy. Conversely, many members of the Non-Aligned Movement, which provide most of the troops for peacekeeping missions, were suspicious that European states had ulterior motives and were concerned about further European intervention in international peace and security and the “NATO-ization” of peacekeeping. Other troop contributors were reported to have remained largely silent on the policy, however, including several countries that had lost peacekeepers and had a longer-term interest in a strong intelligence capability in peacekeeping operations.

In response to protests by many member states, the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Coordination Team in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Office of Military Affairs, Police Division, UNOCC, and DSS undertook the process of revising the Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy, beginning in 2017. As part of this process, UN officials organized meetings with member states to clarify both the objectives and the application of the policy.

The resulting debate placed peacekeeping-intelligence at the epicenter of ongoing geopolitical competition over peacekeeping policy—a dynamic previously seen in debates over the protection of civilians. In both cases, the debates invoked the priorities and sensitivities of key groups of member states: while some called for more interventionist and effective peacekeeping, others advocated for retaining peacekeeping’s limited scope. The very

<sup>17</sup> Jane Holl Lute was mandated by the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training to assess intelligence in peacekeeping operations. Her conclusion was that an intelligence policy should be developed by the organization. The debates focused less on the development of the policy than on its scope (i.e., whether it should cover all activities related to the mandate or be narrowed to focus on the security and safety of UN personnel along with the protection of civilians).

<sup>18</sup> UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, “Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy,” UN Doc. Ref. 2017.07, May 2, 2017.

definition of peacekeeping-intelligence was at the heart of these discussions. Some member states insisted on restricting peacekeeping-intelligence to activities directly related to the safety and security of UN personnel; others conceived of it as essential to missions in implementing their overall mandates. Likewise, some member states conceived of intelligence as a product with intrinsic value that can only be obtained through clandestine methods; for others, intelligence was just information that has been processed through the intelligence cycle of acquisition, collation, examination, analysis, and dissemination.

As member states came forward with various definitions of intelligence, the UN became hard-pressed to choose one definition over another.

Given the time pressure to move forward with the policy (and thus with its implementation), the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training, with the approval of the under-secretary-general for peacekeeping, decided to leave the term “peacekeeping-intelligence” undefined. Instead, the revised policy clarified the purpose of, rationale for, and scope of peacekeeping-intelligence and laid out the principles under which it was to be implemented. Moreover, a hyphen was added between “peacekeeping” and “intelligence” to emphasize the distinction between peacekeeping-intelligence and national intelligence. With “peacekeeping-intelligence” presented as a new concept, unique to the UN, certain member states dropped their objections related to the definition of “intelligence.”

#### **Box 1. The 2019 Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy<sup>19</sup>**

Following two years of sustained consultation with the member states, the revised UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy was adopted and signed in 2019. In place of a definition, it included seven principles for peacekeeping-intelligence. It should be:

1. Rules-based;
2. Non-clandestine;
3. Conducted within designated areas of application;
4. Respectful of state sovereignty;
5. Independent;
6. Executed by accountable and capable authorities; and
7. Secure and confidential.

The process is to be akin to a standard intelligence cycle: decision making, assessment of requirements, tasking, and issuing of direction; acquisition; examination and collation; analysis; and dissemination (see Figure 1). The policy details how the information is to be classified, handled, shared, and used and with which mechanisms and tools it is to be managed. It defines the roles and responsibilities of mission actors from the head of mission down.

In addition to replacing the definition of peacekeeping-intelligence with principles, the policy toned down the link between the methods used and missions’ mandates. Peacekeeping-intelligence was thus presented as “a critical enabler to permit missions to operate safely and effectively” with a threefold aim: to “support a common operational picture..., to provide early warning of imminent threats..., and to identify risks and opportunities.” All of this is meant to enhance the situational awareness of mission leaders, allowing them to better gauge the stakes in terms of the safety and security of personnel and the protection of civilians. The implication is that missions should ensure the security and safety of personnel and protect civilians while implementing their mandate rather than as part of it, which some member states were concerned could lead to missions gathering intelligence on the host government in violation of state sovereignty.

<sup>19</sup> UN Department of Peace Operations, “Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy,” UN Doc. Ref. 2019.08, May 1, 2019.

## Developing a UN Approach to Peacekeeping-Intelligence

With the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy in place, the UN has faced the task of determining what this policy means in practice and ensuring that staff understand and have the capacity to implement it. As a principled multilateral organization with thirteen peacekeeping operations, the UN has had to pioneer its own approach to acquiring, handling, securing, and disseminating intelligence. In doing so, it has faced a twofold challenge. First, as an international organization that promotes transparency, impartiality, and efficiency, how can the UN develop best practices that uphold these principles, and on which bases? Second, how can it set standards that are both general enough to be useful for all missions and flexible enough for each mission to adapt to its context and constraints?

Exacerbating these challenges, member states are limited in the know-how they can contribute to peacekeeping-intelligence for two main reasons: (1) national intelligence systematically entails both clandestine practices and classified information, which are inherently not part of peacekeeping-intelligence; and (2) each state has its own way to do intelligence. Consequently, the UN has remained careful both to avoid adopting one member state's way of doing intelligence over another's and not to use any tools, tactics, or procedures that would involve either clandestine practices or information that is classified at the national level.<sup>20</sup>

These challenges have played out in the UN's efforts to standardize peacekeeping-intelligence methods through guidelines; attract, recruit, and retain qualified personnel; and train these personnel both before and during their deployment.

As a principled multilateral organization with thirteen peacekeeping operations, the UN has had to pioneer its own approach to acquiring, handling, securing, and disseminating intelligence.

## Finding the UN Way: Standardizing Methods through Guidelines

To allow missions the flexibility to adapt it to their own context and constraints, the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy focuses on methods and mechanisms instead of fixed structures or architectures. The objective is for these methods and mechanisms to fit into missions' existing arrangements. The policy is thus meant to be supplemented by peacekeeping-intelligence guidelines, including both mission-specific standard operating procedures and UN-wide training handbooks.

It is up to each mission to develop its own standard operating procedures for implementing the policy according to its context, constraints, needs, and resources. The process of developing these procedures has revealed contrasting interpretations of peacekeeping-intelligence between headquarters and missions. Differences have arisen in terms of lexicon, mechanisms, planned inputs from missions' substantive units, and the overall intended outcome of

the peacekeeping-intelligence cycle. These differences also reflect senior mission leaders' inconsistent support for and understanding of the policy, not only in terms of what it entails but also in terms of their role. This has often resulted in a disconnect between the mechanisms recommended by UN headquarters and those put in place by missions.

These mission-specific standard operating procedures are meant to be supplemented by UN-wide peacekeeping-intelligence handbooks. Serving as methodological and training tools for current and future UN staff, these handbooks are meant to remain generic and are reviewed by missions to adapt according to their mandate and context. The aim of the handbooks is to provide clear guidance to personnel with widely disparate levels of training, experience, and expertise on how to do

<sup>20</sup> Many interviewees highlighted the All Source Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU) in Mali as an example of this. While the unit's practices, workflows, and standard operating procedures provided for the careful handling of sensitive information, member states could not share classified national intelligence such as GIS or drone photo analysis with ASIFU. Personal communication, 2020.

peacekeeping-intelligence and the roles they are expected to fulfill. They are also meant to be reference guides for intelligence analysts, observers, and planners. The handbooks compile policies, guidelines, best practices, tips, methodologies, models, templates, and case studies from the UN, consultants, experts, practitioners, academics, and member states. While these handbooks share the same ultimate aim, the development of each has entailed different challenges.

### Handbooks for Military Peacekeeping-Intelligence, ISR, and Police: Products of and for Member States

Most peacekeeping-intelligence handbooks have been developed through a process of close consultation with member states. These include the Military Peacekeeping-Intelligence Handbook; the Peacekeeping-Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Staff Handbook and Units Manual; and the Police Peacekeeping-Intelligence Handbook. Member states involved in developing these handbooks recognize that their own national personnel will be the end users, and they are meant to use the handbooks for conducting their own pre-deployment training. The handbooks were thus intended to be products both for UN staff and for the police and military personnel deployed by member states. However, agreeing on the content of these handbooks among member states has been a challenge.

Each handbook is meant to complement the others, contributing to the overall picture of peacekeeping-intelligence. The Military Peacekeeping-Intelligence Handbook is meant to “support personnel deployed in [military peacekeeping-intelligence] roles in UN peacekeeping operations.” It aims to guide the conduct of peacekeeping-intelligence following the UN standards, principles, and methods. The handbook’s overall objective is to “enhance the situational awareness and the safety and security of UN personnel, and to inform operations and activities related to the protection of civilians.”<sup>21</sup> The handbook was developed for member states to use as a reference in training their own troops to promote coherence in pre-deployment trainings

among member states. Toward this end, a group of member states formed a working group in 2019 to develop a military peacekeeping-intelligence training course based on the handbook.

The handbook emphasizes how peacekeeping-intelligence differs from national intelligence both in the process and the products. It also specifies the military entities responsible for military peacekeeping-intelligence activities: the U2 at the force headquarters, the G2 at the sector level, and the S2 at the battalion level.<sup>22</sup> Its content is tailored to the needs of personnel at all three levels. As one UN official put it, “The objective of the Military Peacekeeping-Intelligence Handbook was to balance what we would like to see and what... for example, a captain in Kidal without intelligence experience would need to see.”<sup>23</sup>

The process of drafting the Military Peacekeeping-Intelligence Handbook started in 2017 amid member states’ concerns over the definition of the term “military peacekeeping intelligence.” To encourage member states to share their technical expertise, policy documents, and best practices and ensure their buy-in, the UN created working groups for member states to collectively draft the document and to agree on a UN methodology. Meetings were organized in several different countries to enable member states to share their views.

One of the main challenges was harmonizing the handbook’s content among the different working groups. During the two-year process (2017–2019), member states went back and forth providing documents and justification for why the different methodologies they put forward would best serve peacekeeping missions while meeting member states’ expectations. Some member states pushed for approaches similar to NATO, while others raised concerns about this model. Once the multinational working groups completed the draft, the UN revised it to ensure the content aligned both with the unique nature of UN peace operations and with UN doctrine. UN officials thus inserted human rights considerations and situated the military component within the larger civilian-

21 This approach of using multinational working groups originated with the chief of the Policy and Doctrine Team in the Office of Military Affairs.

22 This structure is similar to the one in NATO.

23 Interview with UN official, July 2019.

led structure of the UN and the structure of peace operations specifically.

Coherence was also a challenge in developing the ISR handbook. A group of UN staff wrote the handbook and worked with a team of member states to validate it. The aim was to get member states to engage by having a small group of them committed to understanding and contributing to the objectives of the handbook. This engagement remained limited, however, prompting the UN to mobilize experts from different member states to draft the document, which member states then honed. It was ultimately decided to draft two handbooks related to ISR: one for the staff before they are deployed and one for staff in ISR units to use once in the mission.

By far the most complex handbook to develop has been the one related to police, which is still being drafted. UN police have three main functions, which complicate their role in peacekeeping-intelligence: (1) to do peacekeeping-intelligence and to act as a core member of the mission's peacekeeping-intelligence coordination mechanism; (2) to assist in building the capacity of host states, which sometimes entails helping host-state police create and implement their own systems for national intelligence; and (3) to implement an executive mandate, which means, in certain contexts, acting as the *de facto* state police. Because of the latter two functions, UN police in places like Kosovo, Haiti, and Timor-Leste have been engaged in the clandestine practices typical of national intelligence. The challenge in developing the handbook is thus how to separate the police's functions related to national intelligence from their involvement in peacekeeping-intelligence, which is inherently non-clandestine.<sup>24</sup>

### The JMAC Handbook: A Product of the UN Itself

The development of the JMAC Field Handbook followed a different process than the other five. While JMACs are core members of missions' peacekeeping-intelligence coordination mechanisms, their composition and

function differ from those of most other intelligence structures. They are composed mainly of civilian staff who are not trained to do intelligence as conceived at the national level. Their primary function is to provide integrated analysis to the mission's leaders, which can be seen as intelligence products, as analysts are required to follow the intelligence cycle.

Initiated by UNOCC, the JMAC Field Handbook was designed as a tool to be used for both pre-deployment and on-site training of JMAC staff, with particular attention to JMAC information analysts. It was thus a product of and for the UN itself rather than member states. As the JMAC handbook was produced after the approval of the 2017 Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy and before its revision, it was not developed as part of that policymaking process or in consultation with member states. The handbook incorporated what were then broadly accepted principles of UN situational awareness and understanding, building on a decade of UN experience implementing the JMAC concept across peacekeeping missions. Through a compilation of policy, guidelines, best practices, tips, methodologies, models, templates, and case studies, it was designed to introduce JMAC staff to and guide them in implementing all aspects of the integrated approach to information gathering, analysis, and dissemination.

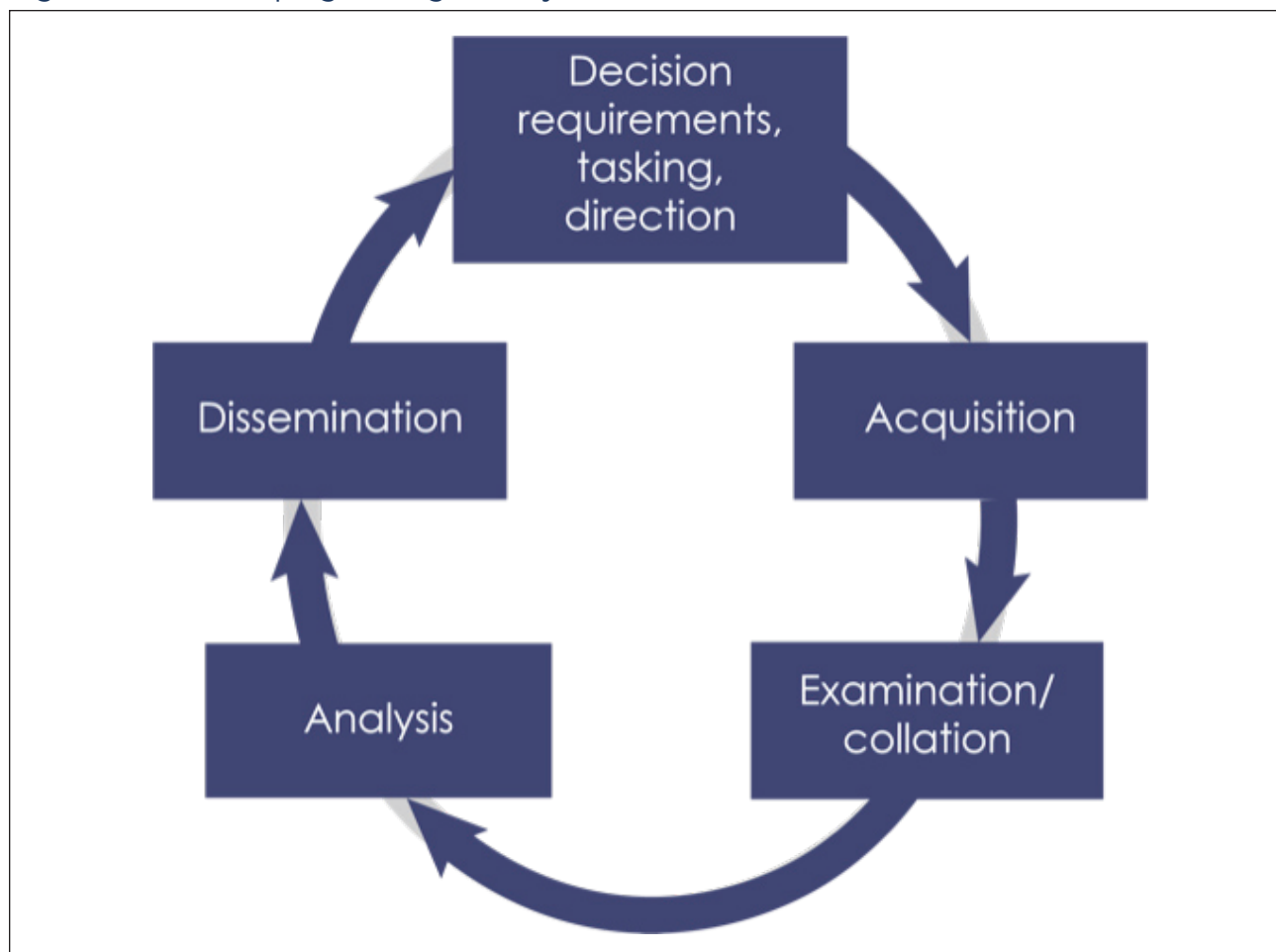
### Setting UN Standards for Complex Tasks: "Human Intelligence" at the UN

The elaboration of guiding documents unveiled the complexity of formalizing tasks related to the intelligence cycle. The UN's development of guidelines on "human intelligence" is a telling case. Each of the intelligence-related components in UN peacekeeping missions—the JMAC, the military, and the police—have long claimed to be doing "human intelligence." In the wake of the revised UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy, it became clear

<sup>24</sup> Clandestine intelligence refers to intelligence done in secrecy, which can be illegal (this is not the definition in the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy). Classified information is meant to be kept secret to protect sensitive information, tools, tactics, and procedures.



Figure 1. Peacekeeping-intelligence cycle



that methods and standards were needed to guide both civilian and uniformed personnel toward a common understanding of their human-intelligence practices and the desired outcome of their work. The main concerns were over trust and accountability. Missions need to be able to trust that sources are credible and reliable and that acquiring information from them will in no way jeopardize their security. Missions also need to be held accountable both for the information from human sources that they utilize and for the safety and security of the people from whom they acquire it.

The UN has thus developed guidelines on the “Acquisition of Information from Human Sources.”<sup>25</sup> In the development of the guidelines, a number of questions came up: How should missions frame contact and the exchange of

information between UN staff and local sources? What caveats should be put in place to foster working relationships with a variety of local sources? Should human sources be compensated or paid, and if so, how much and how? Should missions have a budget for human intelligence?

The guidelines specify who can be used as a source and what are acceptable practices to obtain information from these sources. For example, sources cannot be minors or representatives of the host-state government (unless there is written consent from the host state). It recommends that two UN staff be present at any meeting with sources. It forbids the tasking of sources and bans their monetary remuneration or compensation. Once information is acquired, the guidelines also detail how to assess its reliability and credibility

<sup>25</sup> As of February 2020, the guidelines had been developed but are still not signed.

and secure the identity of sources to ensure their long-term protection. The human peacekeeping-intelligence policy thus seeks to provide simple and clear caveats for staff who do not have a background in intelligence—let alone in human intelligence.

## Attracting, Assigning, and Retaining Qualified Personnel

The UN needs professional intelligence personnel, both among uniformed peacekeepers and among international civilian staff. These intelligence personnel also must be familiar with the context in which the peacekeeping mission operates. Recruitment thus presents a threefold challenge: (1) targeting the recruitment of qualified personnel; (2) assigning them to the most appropriate unit; and (3) retaining them long enough for them to hone and optimally tap into their expertise.

“[Civilians] who are recruited... do not have the knowledge required of the United Nations, and even less so of peacekeeping-intelligence.”

### Targeting and Attracting Qualified Personnel

As the Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy (now the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy) was first adopted in 2017, the organization has not yet developed the required expertise. This is in part because the UN hiring system for civilian, police, and military personnel fails to attract or create a pool of qualified candidates. As an international organization that promotes diversity and representativeness, the UN’s recruitment system is meant to be neutral, impartial, and based on peace operations’ needs. However, the difficulty of targeting candidates with intelligence experience highlights both general hurdles with the system, as well as hurdles more specific to peacekeeping-intelligence.

One challenge is that in Inspira, the official UN hiring platform, job descriptions and terms of reference are standardized in such a way that it is

nearly impossible for hiring managers to specifically call for candidates to have previous intelligence experience, let alone to test candidates’ actual skills and abilities to do peacekeeping-intelligence work.<sup>26</sup> A UN official explained:

In the recruitment process, it is not sufficient to add in the job description “intelligence background.” It is too general and too wide. There should be a specific intelligence background to operate and cooperate on the ground. There should be as well specific prerequisites that they need to have before they can apply.<sup>27</sup>

As an illustration, a chief of section summarized: “On the civilian side, those who are recruited have a Master’s degree (most commonly in international relations), yet do not have the knowledge required of the United Nations, and even less so of peacekeeping-intelligence.”<sup>28</sup> In addition to these difficulties, many peace operations’ substantive units rely heavily on UN volunteers, who rarely have an intelligence background.

The standard that UN recruitment should prioritize gender parity and geographic representation further narrows the pool of personnel qualified to do peacekeeping-intelligence. One observer decried the impact of these principles:

The UN is undermined by rules that have been set by [the General Assembly]. UN recruitment is appalling. We are so tied—we can’t even choose the favorite candidate because there is a panel above that says that we did not apply the criteria correctly. It comes down to this: you can leave it to the professionals or stick with a set of principles. We can never be the best we can with peacekeeping. We have to be honest about it.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> In the current system, hiring managers can include some intelligence related questions in vacancy announcements, but they are generic and do not allow hiring managers to distinguish between different tasks related to intelligence, such as between database managers and analysts. For a detailed discussion on recruitment at the UN, see Namie Di Razza, “People before Process: Humanizing the HR System for UN Peace Operations,” International Peace Institute, October 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with UN official, May 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with UN official, May 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with UN official, July 2019.

Another restriction is the informal holds some member states have on posts. For example, in MINUSCA, the JMAC is systematically composed of an American, a French, and a Portuguese staff member (the Americans rarely speak French, while the French are rarely trained as analysts), and in UNMISS, British and Norwegian personnel hold key posts in the JMAC. These national holds on posts create a twofold problem. First, they make it harder to target and attract the most qualified personnel for the job. Second, they pose questions about what information these personnel might be sharing with their embassies or capitals, leading analysts to take a cautious approach that some believe has an impact on the intelligence products. As one official deplored, “It means we end up having to put less and less in written documents.”<sup>30</sup>

It is therefore necessary to find a balance between personnel put forward by member states and the criteria prioritized by the UN in the selection process. One UN official suggested that more targeted recruitment required a partnership between the UN and member states:

This [peacekeeping-intelligence] is a new field. We are building a new concept using old criteria. As much as we have managed to get member states on board with peacekeeping-intelligence, we need the same thing with recruitment. We need to build bilateral partnerships with member states.<sup>31</sup>

Unlike civilian personnel, military personnel are put forward by member states, deployed through the Department of Peace Operations’ (DPO) Force Generation Service, and dispatched to various missions. The challenge here is that the meaning of intelligence experience varies from one member state to another. Hence, even for personnel identified as having an intelligence background, levels of expertise vary significantly, and most do not understand the specifics of how to use intelligence in the UN context. As one UN official said, “Sometime, in their own national context, intelli-

gence means taking notes and repeating it, which is disconnected with the analytical component of doing intelligence.”<sup>32</sup> Other times, when trained military analysts tried to apply analytic techniques, senior staff were reported to have requested changes in both their process and the intelligence products to make them more “UN style.”<sup>33</sup>

This highlights the UN’s challenge of recruiting from a small pool of personnel with both professional intelligence experience and an understanding of the UN context. Even when personnel do have a national intelligence background, they still need to adapt to the UN environment. Whereas national professionals tend to have a lot of expertise in one technical aspect of the intelligence cycle within a rigid hierarchy, the UN needs a broader, more generalized, and outward-facing skill set, including networking skills, language and writing skills, and the ability to function well within an ambiguous management structure.<sup>34</sup>

### Assignment and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Once recruited to a mission, even the most qualified uniformed personnel face an additional hurdle: it is up to the force commander to decide which individuals to assign to which units, and these assignments do not always align with the needs of the units or the competency of the individuals. As one UN official complained,

Out of five [military staff officers], we only have one with a peacekeeping-intelligence background, who is staying six months and does not speak any of the national languages. On top of that, his background is with naval intelligence..., which is less useful in a landlocked country.<sup>35</sup>

The few military personnel with intelligence or analytic experience are mostly dispatched to U2 units, and only rarely to civilian units such as JMACs that may be more appropriate given their

<sup>30</sup> Personal communication, December 2019.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with UN official, July 2019.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with UN official, July 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with UN official, December 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Personal communication, February 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with UN official, May 2019.

professional experience. As one UN official lamented, “When we [had] one competent military officer in the field of peacekeeping-intelligence, he was taken by the force commander. So units like the JMAC come after.”<sup>36</sup> JMACs, which are meant to combine civilian and uniformed personnel, are thus often composed of staff with limited or no experience in intelligence. As a result, these staff often lack the expertise and background to produce analytic products based on peacekeeping-intelligence.

Even after personnel are assigned to a unit, it is difficult to keep them in the mission for long enough to put the expertise they develop on peacekeeping-intelligence to optimal use. According to one UN official, “Even if you have a good and adequate job description, it is not easy to find an intelligence officer willing to go more than a year in a very difficult terrain. It remains easier to recruit them, for a longer time, at the Secretariat in New York.”<sup>37</sup> Another said that, “We need the most qualified intelligence officers... [for] two or three or five years.”<sup>38</sup>

For uniformed personnel, the limited length of deployment (six months to one year) leaves them with barely enough time to familiarize themselves with the mission’s mandate and mechanisms, not to mention the complexity of the operational context. Within such constraints, it remains difficult for any personnel to produce what is asked of them—timely, integrated, and forward-looking assessments for senior leadership.

## Enhanced Training: Sharing the Burden between the UN and Member States

The challenges related to recruitment underscore the importance of training for incoming analysts (as well as those performing any other peacekeeping-intelligence function). The objective of peacekeeping-intelligence training is to improve

the professionalism and readiness of analysts and units involved in the peacekeeping-intelligence cycle by providing them with clear guidance on the core roles they are expected to fulfill in their mission. This helps set UN standards for peacekeeping-intelligence, make sure there is a common understanding of norms, and foster a common UN peacekeeping-intelligence culture. It can ensure that the peacekeeping-intelligence efforts of substantive units are coherent and relevant to the decision making of senior leaders. By providing a common methodology for conducting analysis, it can also make the peacekeeping-intelligence cycle more efficient and improve the information flow within and between missions.

Two trainings related to UN peacekeeping-intelligence are currently offered: a UN military peacekeeping-intelligence training (provided through a cascade training-the-trainers model) and the UN’s annual JMAC training course. The pilot training on military peacekeeping-intelligence was developed and delivered in 2018 and 2019 to support member states in taking over the pre-deployment peacekeeping-intelligence training of their uniformed personnel. The JMAC course has been offered annually since 2009. It was developed in collaboration with the Norwegian Defence International Centre, and each training involves approximately thirty military, police, and civilian personnel either working in or about to be deployed to JMACs or similar entities.

Yet peacekeeping-intelligence training remains limited and does not sufficiently professionalize individuals by making them either experts or mentors for their peers. Combined with the fact that intelligence experience is not a prerequisite to be hired as an analyst, the lack of training is a significant hurdle to the quality of peacekeeping-intelligence, both at UN headquarters and in missions. Training is a challenge in terms of who is trained, when and for how long the training should

“Two weeks [of training] are not enough to make anyone a peacekeeping-intelligence specialist.”

<sup>36</sup> Interview with UN official, July 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with UN official, 2019.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with UN official, 2019.

be, who provides the training, and how to balance the role of the UN with the responsibility of member states to train their own personnel prior to deployment.

### Training Participants

Missions differ on the personnel they send or prioritize for peacekeeping-intelligence training. For the military peacekeeping-intelligence course, which is currently focused on training the trainers, the main criterion for participants is to have at least six months left in-theater. While civilian staff at the P2 to P5 levels in substantive units such as JMACs are systematically considered, missions adopt different stances toward training national staff and UN volunteers. For example, UN volunteers have had restricted access to training in MINUSCA despite being assigned key roles pertaining to peacekeeping-intelligence. This led to cases of UN volunteers being assigned as officers-in-charge of units at mission headquarters and in regional offices without any training for the work they were expected to be doing. By contrast, the chief of staff and head of the JMAC in MONUSCO would systematically make sure that all staff would be trained, including national staff and UN volunteers. This approach acknowledged the value of the work done by these staff and elevated working standards in these units.

For the JMAC course, most participants are carefully selected and approved by the heads of JMACs, chiefs of staff, and UNOCC. The participants have different ranks and statuses, from UN volunteers to P5. Some participants are preparing to be deployed to JMACs, while others already have several months or even years of experience. Careful consideration is given to having participants with varied professional backgrounds, ranks, nationalities, and genders mixed together in syndicates during the course. This strategic grouping of participants seeks to create networking opportunities among and between civilian and uniformed personnel, and to enable a clear comparison of practices.

The leaders of missions are currently overlooked by peacekeeping-intelligence training. Members of mission leadership (D1 and above) are hard-pressed to articulate what UN peacekeeping-intelligence means and how it can be used to support

them in their decision making. Similarly, many staff have a blurry understanding of what they should expect of leadership.

As for the personnel leading the trainings, trainings-of-trainers aim to bring them to a common level of understanding on the role intelligence plays in UN peacekeeping. Oftentimes, however, instructors are knowledgeable in either intelligence or in UN peacekeeping, but rarely equally knowledgeable in both. Furthermore, as the policy, guidelines, and standard operating procedures are evolving rapidly, it is difficult for trainers to remain up to date. Those who are trained as trainers also often do not stay in the mission long enough to apply the methodology they are taught and, in turn, to mentor peers and colleagues.

### Training Content

The content of both trainings is based on the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy, as well as on the military peacekeeping-intelligence and JMAC handbooks, respectively. Both trainings seek to improve the integrated working practices of both staff and managers within peacekeeping-intelligence mechanisms across each phase of the UN peacekeeping-intelligence cycle. They also seek to balance organizational standards and expectations with missions' specific contexts and constraints, including their material and human resources, geographic constraints, existing practices, relations with the host state, specific threat assessments, and time frame for deployment. Hence, depending on the topic and the constraints of trainees, some aspects of the trainings can be developed either in specific missions by staff with expertise in that context or by staff from multiple missions to cover a wider array of issues and challenges. Both trainings also distinguish UN peacekeeping-intelligence from national intelligence, taking into account both mission-specific mandates and caveats that apply to the UN as a whole.

The content of the trainings still suffers from some shortcomings, however. One is that the trainings do not clarify the line between units' roles in peacekeeping-intelligence and their broader mandates. For example, while JMACs, JOCs, and DSS are all part of the core peacekeeping-intelligence group in missions, their roles extend well

beyond this. In addition, there is no parallel to the military peacekeeping-intelligence training for civilian or police personnel not working in the JMAC. One UN official argued that “there should also be a standardized course that everybody should undergo. There is a lot of advanced courses for military that are not for police nor civilians.”<sup>39</sup>

Also missing is an evaluation of the JMAC and military peacekeeping-intelligence trainings. Because the policy is new, no methods have been put in place yet to assess: (1) the extent to which the trainings impact the practices of participants in the short and long term; (2) whether the training enables participants to develop competencies that are applicable to the peacekeeping-intelligence architecture; and (3) how well the participants engaged in the training and, in turn, how adequately the trainers adapted the training to the needs of the audience.

### Timing and Location of Training

The timing and location of trainings may also need to be reviewed. Some member states offer pre-deployment military peacekeeping-intelligence training to their military staff, and some staff also undergo JMAC training before being integrated into these units. Yet such pre-deployment trainings need to be combined with systematic on-the-job training. This can take the form of coaching by senior staff, which enables the sharing of methods to address current and mission-specific challenges and promote best practices.

In terms of more formalized trainings, these can be offered either in missions or in regional or international centers, both of which present advantages and disadvantages. In-mission training is cheaper and involves less travel time. It might also be more accessible to national staff, though these staff might be reluctant to fully engage for fear of reprisal by the host state. Another challenge to in-mission training is that participants are often still expected to perform their functions while training.

Regional and international training centers, on the other hand, can allow participants to engage in a more focused way because they are removed from

their work place. They also provide greater networking opportunities, leading to wider and more in-depth sharing of good and bad practices. However, regional and international trainings increase traveling time and costs for participants coming from peacekeeping missions. They can also strain missions, depriving them of key staff for the duration of the training with the hope that there will be a gain in efficiency afterwards.

Even so, some see the trainings as not long enough. The peacekeeping-intelligence training is only one lesson in the six-day-long JMAC course, while the military peacekeeping-intelligence training is a five-to-ten-day course. This is too short to sustainably improve and assess peacekeeping-intelligence practices and to enable instructors to tailor and calibrate these practices to the specific needs of individuals depending on their units and missions. According to one instructor, to professionalize personnel for advanced analysis, the training would need to be at least six to ten weeks long: “The two weeks are not enough to make anyone a peacekeeping-intelligence specialist.”<sup>40</sup>

## Implementing UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence

Since the Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy was adopted in 2017 and then revised in 2019, guidance on how to improve peacekeeping-intelligence practices has multiplied. Implementing this guidance has presented four main challenges: (1) how to coordinate across the peacekeeping-intelligence mechanisms in multidimensional missions; (2) how to manage data; (3) how to share information; and (4) how to apply a gender lens.

### Coordinating Peacekeeping-Intelligence in Multidimensional Missions

Coordination is key to efficient peacekeeping-intelligence. Coordination entails ensuring the flow of information between headquarters and missions and among units and staff to enhance situational

<sup>39</sup> Interview with UN official, October 2018.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with UN official, October 2018.

awareness, clarify tasking, and support timely decision making. Ultimately, it aims to harmonize headquarters' needs and the support it provides with missions' specific needs and challenges.

The UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy states that “missions shall establish a Mission Peacekeeping-Intelligence Coordination Mechanism to direct and oversee the peacekeeping-intelligence cycle within the mission.”<sup>41</sup> It specifies that the head of mission “is the most important client of the Mission Peacekeeping-Intelligence Coordination Mechanism” and is responsible for providing it strategic direction.<sup>42</sup> The core members of this mechanism are identified as the JMAC, DSS, relevant entities in the police and military components (including the U2), and the JOC (playing a supporting role by providing other entities with twenty-four seven reporting). It may also include the political affairs division, office of the legal adviser, or human rights division as supporting entities.

Peacekeeping-intelligence coordination mechanisms have now been put in place in every mission, although with different names.<sup>43</sup> To facilitate tasking, coordination, and planning between headquarters and the field and to set clearer expectations, these mechanisms hold weekly or bimonthly meetings, depending on the mission. Nonetheless, top-down and bottom-up issues related to coordination remain.

UN personnel from the substantive units involved in peacekeeping-intelligence (i.e., the JMAC, the JOC, the U2, UN police, and DSS) decried a lack of clear tasking by senior mission leaders.<sup>44</sup> Senior leaders themselves acknowledged that while each substantive unit has a key role to play in peacekeeping-intelligence, these entities do not systematically or clearly input into decision

making. According to one UN official, “If you go to a company, there is a lot of information that they gather but never share because they are not tasked. People don’t know what is required—there is a physical disconnect.”<sup>45</sup> According to the heads of these units, it was up to them to identify the needs of the leadership and to task their own teams accordingly. As one put it, “We are in the downstream of the process but we should be... upstream.... JMACs must anticipate the questions from senior leadership. The challenge is how to provide them with the tools to do so.”<sup>46</sup>

The lack of coordination is also a bottom-up problem. According to a UN official, “The problem is not a lack of leadership. The problem is too many people trying to do what they think is right—but not together.”<sup>47</sup> Substantive units continue to plan their work based on their own interpretation of what is relevant to the mission’s mandate rather

than on what information senior leaders need to ensure the safety and security of personnel and to protect civilians. This leads to the duplication of work and overlapping reports and analysis. In one mission, an analyst explained how military observers from different team sites would patrol the same region without coordinating, ultimately reporting on the same thing while leaving out areas of interest.<sup>48</sup>

Four main factors contribute to these difficulties coordinating the peacekeeping-intelligence process. The first is the tempo of tasking (i.e., the recurrence of tasks and the expected pace of their execution). The weekly or bimonthly tasking and reporting calls often do not align with realities in the field. Depending on the mission, two to three days might be necessary just to reach a location to gather information, meaning that at least four days

“There is a lot of information that [companies] gather but never share.”

41 UN Department of Peace Operations, “Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy,” UN Doc. Ref. 2019.08, May 1, 2019, para. 12.2.

42 Ibid., para. 14.1.

43 Examples include the intelligence coordination mechanism in MINUSCA and the mission intelligence coordination structure in MINUSMA.

44 These include staff at the D1 and D2 levels, as well as special representatives of the secretary-general and deputy special representatives of the secretary-general.

45 Interview with UN official, July 2019.

46 Interview with UN official, March 2019.

47 Interview with UN official, May 2019.

48 Interview with UN official, May 2019.

can pass from the moment a task is given to the time the information is retrieved. As a result, the next steps of the peacekeeping-intelligence cycle (i.e., examining, collating, analyzing, and disseminating the information) may have to be rushed to the detriment of the overall quality of the process and outcome.

A second challenge is the timing of tasking, or the specific moment when a task is given. If information is requested too far in advance, the situation in the field can change between when the task is given and when action is taken. Conversely, if information is requested with too little notice, the peacekeeping-intelligence that is produced often proves to be too general or incomplete to be actionable.

A third challenge is that there are not enough peacekeeping-intelligence experts deployed in the field to divide up tasks effectively, especially considering the difficulty of gathering intelligence in remote areas. Finally, there is no effective system in place to receive feedback on the adequacy of tasking or on the utility of the peacekeeping-intelligence received.

All of these challenges with tasking speak to how difficult it is for staff at headquarters to grasp the complexity of the peacekeeping-intelligence process in the field. This problem is especially severe because of the absence of adequate infrastructure and staff and restricted access to remote or unstable areas.

Missions also often have a blurred understanding of the distinction between analysis and peacekeeping-intelligence, resulting in the two not being systematically linked. Analysis is meant to be forward-looking and to guide senior leaders in deciding how to implement the mandate, while peacekeeping-intelligence is meant to focus on the safety and security of UN personnel and the protection of civilians. While the U2, the JMAC, the JOC, and DSS are involved in peacekeeping-intelligence, their overall objectives are not limited to these tasks. The JMAC, for example, is meant to develop integrated and forward-looking analysis in addition to doing peacekeeping-intelligence.

Similarly, the political affairs division, which is included in the peacekeeping-intelligence group in MINUSCA, is mandated to analyze the political situation to support the implementation of the mandate but is not expected to follow the intelligence cycle as such. Combined with the lack of coordination in tasking, the blurred distinction between analysis and peacekeeping-intelligence causes senior leaders to provide less effective support and fuels overlap and duplication of work among units.

### Managing Data: Limited Access, Delays, Mislabeled, and Duplication of Efforts

All analysts interviewed called for a more rigorous and standardized approach to managing the databases used to store the information acquired through peacekeeping-intelligence efforts. Most missions have two official database systems: I2 for the U2 force component and SAGE or Cosmos for the mission as a whole. Each system has its own logic, mechanisms, and level of access. Each mission also has different technical capacities to support these systems, including different digital bandwidths.

In addition to these official databases, almost every unit, including the U2, police, JMAC, JOC, and human rights division, has its own unofficial databases. This multiplication of databases results from a general lack of trust in the platforms. A civilian official explained,

We need to find a secure platform on which to store the information. At the moment in the mission, whether we are talking about civilians or uniformed personnel, people don't trust any platform enough to place any kind of information [on it].... A lot of work [has] to be done [to] make sure that all the components... [trust] the different technological platforms.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to these unofficial platforms, individuals often create their own databases using Excel sheets or even Word documents. These personalized databases create security issues and increase

<sup>49</sup> Interview with UN official, May 2019.



the risk of losing information when personnel leave the mission.

Due to this multiplicity of official, unofficial, and ad hoc databases, it is difficult for personnel to know what information has already been gathered by other units or personnel. In MINUSCA, one official complained that it was not possible for UN police, the JMAC, and the U2 to access each other's databases: "Combined [with] the absence of a distribution list, it was difficult to receive or coordinate products or analysis."<sup>50</sup> "If you are looking for information there is no coordination," according to another official. "We are not in a system with clear levels of confidential classification and clearance levels."<sup>51</sup> For unofficial databases, access to information is instead determined by the level of trust among staff. Any effort to improve access will need to address two questions: (1) who should be granted access, and why; and (2) does the information belong to the UN as a whole, to individual peace operations, or to specific units?

The lack of sufficient personnel dedicated to managing databases was also systematically raised. This lack of personnel delays the evaluation and collation of the information acquired. In some missions, a peacekeeping-intelligence analyst has to wait between five days and two weeks to obtain data after requesting it. Peacekeeping-intelligence analysts thus voiced the need to have access to databases so they can get the information they need whenever it is convenient for them. Moreover, those entering the data are often inadequately trained. This can lead to the mislabeling of information, causing delays or, in the worst case, causing personnel to operate with misinformation. In one mission, for example, a car crash and an accidental drowning had both been labeled as protection of civilians incidents. Such errors indicate that data produced by missions may not always be reliable.

"There are unhealthy competitions. Instead of competing with themselves to produce better products, [staff] compete with one another to attract attention from senior leadership."

Those interviewed had mixed views on whether having one common database would serve the interests of the mission. Many personnel, particularly civilians, deplored how the lack of a common database inhibits information sharing, delays access to information, and makes it difficult to know what information the mission already has, resulting in the duplication of efforts and wasting time and resources. But many police and military personnel said that a common database was neither realistic nor desirable, largely due to the need to control access to information for security reasons. Moreover, many saw I2 as too sophisticated for civilian substantive units. As one military official explained, "I2 is not a database. It would be like using a Ferrari when a bicycle is needed."<sup>52</sup> Many missions also lack the bandwidth necessary to use I2.

## Sharing Information: The Need to Know, Share, and Trust

Information sharing among units and personnel is essential to the production of timely, high-quality peacekeeping-intelligence. In UN peacekeeping missions, information and analysis are disseminated on a need-to-know basis and, in exceptional circumstances, on a need-to-share basis, as determined by the head of mission. In the case of the former, personnel have to request the information and justify why they need it, the goal being to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of sensitive information. The need-to-share principle applies when the head of mission considers information necessary for the safety of personnel. In both cases, the sharing of information is dependent on an additional need: the need to trust.

Trust is key to intelligence sharing and is, in turn, reinforced by the exchange of information between units and personnel. Frequent sharing of information can build trust both among substantive units

<sup>50</sup> Personal communication, 2019.

<sup>51</sup> Personal communication, 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Personal communication, July 2019.

of a mission and among individuals. Interpersonal trust among analysts can stem from similar intelligence cultures, long experience working together (especially in field locations), similar professional backgrounds, or common nationalities. “Intelligence at the UN is a personal business,” as one analyst stated.<sup>53</sup> Another estimated that the “intelligence community within a mission is so small that 90 percent of it is based on personal relations.”<sup>54</sup> Trust between units and between individuals is interrelated, and interpersonal trust can help compensate for a lack of trust between units at a higher level. For example, tensions between the heads of the political affairs division and the JMAC, two units expected to cooperate, can be palliated by informal networks between their analysts.

Informal networks often become a key driver of information flow due to a general lack of trust in the security of databases, particularly a lack of trust by the military in civilian systems. This lack of trust can drive analysts to privilege informal communication when sharing sensitive intelligence so they can more carefully select what to convey and to whom.<sup>55</sup> Informal networks can thus enable staff to overcome shortcomings in the peacekeeping-intelligence system. One challenge with such networks, however, is that the high turnover of personnel hampers the institutionalization of trust among staff members.

The organizational design of peacekeeping-intelligence structures is another obstacle to the sharing of information. All missions have put in place peacekeeping-intelligence coordination mechanisms to facilitate the flow of information, but many UN personnel still work in silos. While members of the core peacekeeping-intelligence group (JOC, JMAC, DSS, UN police, and U2) easily share information with each other, they have to negotiate similar exchanges with substantive units. Units working on their own reports tend to be

reluctant to share information, especially when they do not trust that the information will be secure.

This stove-piping of information prompts staff to be less oriented toward what they are accomplishing than toward meeting the expectations and requirements of the organization and maximizing the visibility and relevance of their work to their superiors. According to one analyst,

There are unhealthy competitions. Instead of competing with themselves to produce better products, they compete with one another to attract attention from the senior leadership, as if there was a fear that sharing leads to disappearing. It’s a structural and fundamental problem. There is a generalized trust problem.<sup>56</sup>

Analysts highlighted that this competition among a mission’s information-gathering units does not arise from differences in professional background. On the contrary, one military staff member highlighted that a similarity in professional background could increase competition. For example, military staff sometimes compete with each other “to look good in front of their superior in their chain of command.”<sup>57</sup>

The same was said to be true among civilians, who want information to be seen as coming from their unit—whether political affairs or UN police or DSS—and therefore do not share information or contribute it to joint analytic products.<sup>58</sup> According to one official, “Sharing on the regional [and] local level is a challenge because of the competition of the components [over] who reports first on the events.”<sup>59</sup> Analysts particularly highlighted the frequent competition between the JMAC and the political affairs section due to a lack of clarity in tasking and the resulting overlap in their work. According to three JMAC analysts interviewed, these tensions limit the sharing of information

53 Personal communication, November 2016.

54 Interview with UN official, November 2016.

55 Adel Ismail Al-Alawi, Nayla Yousif Al-Marzooqi, and Yasmeen Fraidoon Mohammed, “Organizational Culture and Knowledge Sharing: Critical Success Factors,” *Journal of Knowledge Management* 11, no. 2 (2007); Ryan Sinclair Cotter, “Police Intelligence: Connecting-the-Dots in a Network Society,” *Policing and Society* 27, no. 2 (2015).

56 Interviews with UN personnel, 2017.

57 Personal communications, 2015, 2017, 2019.

58 Personal communications, 2015, 2017, 2019.

59 Interview with UN official, 2019.

between these two units, and in one case blocked it altogether.<sup>60</sup>

Competition also stems from unequal access to resources among different units and their resulting unequal access to information. For example, before the development of the 2019 Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy, it was forbidden to pay sources, but the definition of “remuneration” had yet to be clarified. This allowed units with more discretionary funding to use prepaid phone cards to facilitate contact with locals who could then inform analysts. In other units, resources were so scarce that analysts barely had enough money to call informants themselves; some would even pay their work phone bill out of their personal account in order to stay in contact with locals to gain situational awareness and be kept updated. These differences in practices led to varying levels of access to information among different units and, in turn, to disparities in the timeliness and quality of intelligence produced.

Competition over intelligence can lead to the multiplication of intelligence products at mission headquarters.<sup>61</sup> Both personnel in substantive units and senior leaders decried this information overload. As more reports are produced with less crucial or relevant information, it becomes harder for senior leaders to trust and rely on the products delivered to them for forecasting and for making decisions.<sup>62</sup> Alex Bellamy and Charles Hunt warn how “the weight of information flowing in... can overwhelm the limited capacity of missions for the handling and analysis of that information which are necessary if early warning is to be translated into early response.”<sup>63</sup> The excess of information also contributes to a lack of systematic follow-up on the impact of intelligence reports and whether they actually lead to action or decisions by senior leaders. This information overload is another indicator of lack of experience in analysis and intelligence, as trained intelligence analysts have

the skills to produce more concise analysis with all the key information.

Information sharing was said to be less of a concern outside of mission headquarters. In MINUSMA, for example, information was deemed to be shared more efficiently in Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, and Mopti than in Bamako. “They are sharing information due to the situation: *Ce sont les mêmes obus qui leur tombent dessus* [they’re all under fire from the same shells]!” said one UN official referring to how, when faced with a common threat, staff had no choice but to cooperate.<sup>64</sup> The UN site in Mopti was presented as an example of best practices, which were remarkably simple: sharing information through a common discussion platform. The physical proximity of staff working in the same compound also facilitates the sharing of information in these field sites.

## Representation of Women and Incorporation of Gender Perspectives

It has been almost two decades since the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, urging all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives into all UN peace and security efforts. For peacekeeping-intelligence, one aspect of this is the composition of the personnel involved.

However, there is still no disaggregated data on the number of women and men involved in peacekeeping-intelligence and whether and how gender affects the recruitment of analysts. While some personnel in field offices referred to the dire living conditions to explain the relative lack of women deployed or assigned, women working in these offices downplayed this factor. For women interviewed, living conditions were a relatively minor issue compared to what they saw as the

60 Interviews with UN officials, 2016, 2017, 2018.

61 Personal communications, 2017, 2018.

62 Personal communication, 2015. According to one official, “One could imagine, for example, a systematized process of the senior leadership team going through a standard set of reports each morning and actively deciding on whether to take action on something, and that decision being recorded and communicated.” Personal communication, 2020.

63 Alex J. Bellamy and Charles Hunt, “Twenty-First Century UN Peace Operations: Protection, Force and the Changing Security Environment,” *International Affairs* 91, no. 6, (2015).

64 Interview with UN official, May 2019.

importance and necessity of their work. They also reported how even relatively minimal investments in some regional offices had significantly enhanced their security, quality of life, and working conditions.

The other main consideration is how gender is factored into UN peacekeeping-intelligence processes and products, which there is also little data on. Interviewees said they still needed guidance on how to adopt a gender perspective at each step of the intelligence cycle. They expressed the desire to better understand how gender shapes the information acquired and to what extent it influences the analysis and the final peacekeeping-intelligence products. Many saw questions related to gender as intersecting with a broader range of identity factors, such as culture, language, race, religion, age, marital status, income, education, occupation, and region of origin.

Finally, interviews revealed a need to gauge the extent to which gender is taken into account in the training of analysts and to look into how gender perspectives could be better integrated into this training. To this day, peacekeeping-intelligence-related trainings do not include any modules specifically focused on gender.

## Conclusion

The UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy is a stepping-stone to more effective and safer peacekeeping missions. It fulfills a dire and long overlooked need to link enhanced situational awareness to timely decisions and actions to ensure the safety and security of personnel and the protection of civilians. The policy provides a framework for missions to adapt to their own context and constraints. Developed in the wake of the Cruz Report and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, this policy represents a paradigm shift from intelligence conceived as an inherently sovereign matter to a rigorous approach to gathering information and making forward-looking assessments in the UN context. Through a consultative process, DPO accomplished a tour de force in forging agreement among member states on the urgency and necessity of institutionalizing methods for intelligence while adhering to the UN principles of impartiality, transparency, and efficiency.

Nonetheless, the UN has faced challenges in adapting and implementing the policy across missions operating in disparate contexts and under different constraints. Below are eight recommendations for UN headquarters, peace operations, and member states to address these challenges.

### 1. **Optimize tasking and information sharing within missions by focusing more on senior leaders' information needs rather than on substantive units' interpretation of the mission's mandate.**

Toward this end, peacekeeping-intelligence coordination mechanisms should focus on three things: (1) improving the awareness of special representatives of the secretary-general and senior leadership teams on how the range of substantive units in a mission can contribute to its overall information needs; (2) encouraging clearer tasking by senior leaders to avoid the duplication or overlap of reports and analysis produced and shared by different substantive units; and (3) encouraging substantive units involved in peacekeeping-intelligence to remain attuned to the needs of senior leaders in order to produce timely assessments that are useful to the decision-making process.

### 2. **Harmonize the content of the peacekeeping-intelligence handbooks with the standard operating procedures while ensuring the procedures are flexible enough to account for differences among missions and between missions' military, police, and civilian components.**

The publication of the handbooks enables missions to better align the practices of their military, police, and civilian components and improve collaboration and the flow of information. Such an approach presents a twofold advantage: (1) it helps ensure that peacekeeping-intelligence is relevant and useful for senior mission leaders in making decisions, conducting strategic reviews, and planning; and (2) it improves information flow within and between missions. UN headquarters and missions should use these handbooks to ensure standard operating procedures are consistent within and across missions while taking into account each mission's specific context and constraints.

- 3. Refine the criteria for recruiting civilian and uniformed personnel with intelligence expertise and better assign these personnel once they are deployed.** The UN should revise recruitment standards for personnel hired in peacekeeping-intelligence units and present peacekeeping-intelligence as a new niche to attract qualified and experienced personnel. This could include making peacekeeping-intelligence a dedicated subject-matter grouping in Inspira, akin to political affairs and human rights. The UN should also explore how to attract former military and police personnel who retire early from intelligence roles at the national level. Relatedly, it should look into partnering with member states to attract intelligence experts to work for the UN rather than the private sector, many of whom may not be aware of these opportunities or may not understand the process for applying. To expand the pool of recruitment, the UN should also have agreements with the human resources teams of member states' military, police, or civilian intelligence services to obtain information on those with expertise who could be approached in the future. In addition, DPO should review the procedures for assignment of personnel once they are recruited to ensure that they are placed where their skills are best suited.
- 4. Improve retention of peacekeeping-intelligence personnel and encourage member states to agree to longer-term deployments and to acknowledge and reward the work of their personnel.**<sup>65</sup> Missions should improve working conditions through better accommodations or more frequent rest-and-recuperation (R&R) time or provide financial incentives to incite qualified personnel to remain in the mission. By staying longer, these personnel will gain a more comprehensive knowledge of the context, develop their expertise, and be able to train and mentor their peers and colleagues. Member states should also acknowledge and reward the work of their personnel returning from deploy-

ment both to provide recognition and to incentivize their personnel to consider deploying to missions as part of their career advancement. These improvements in working conditions and incentives will differ from one mission and one member state to another.

- 5. Tailor peacekeeping-intelligence training to the needs of missions while clarifying a standard set of UN norms.** There should be obligatory pre-deployment and on-site training for personnel involved in peacekeeping-intelligence, including senior leaders. This training should emphasize how peacekeeping-intelligence differs from national intelligence, including the UN norms, principles, and standards that apply. It should also aim to reinforce consistency in practice throughout the organization while maintaining a context-specific understanding of peacekeeping-intelligence.

DPO should develop and maintain a pool of UN peacekeeping-intelligence experts within missions to provide on-site training and remain attuned to best practices that are consistent with the policy and adapted to the mission's context. These instructors should have UN experience and expertise so as to clearly put the intelligence cycle in the UN context. Trainings should also incentivize UN personnel within missions to specialize in peacekeeping-intelligence.

On-the-job training should be ongoing, notably through coaching and mentoring by senior staff. This has the advantage of allowing personnel to share challenges, hurdles, and best and worst practices with others. Regular training sessions should also be offered to update skills and practices and help personnel adapt to changes in the organization or context.

Training content should be adapted for a diverse audience with a broad range of needs. Particular attention should be given to balance organizational standards and expectations with

<sup>65</sup> This recommendation was also raised at a December 2019 roundtable at IPI. See International Peace Institute, "Priorities for the 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial: Reflections from an Expert Roundtable," February 2020.

the specificities of mission contexts in terms of material and human resources, geographic constraints, existing practices, relations with the host state, specific threat assessments, and time frame for deployment.

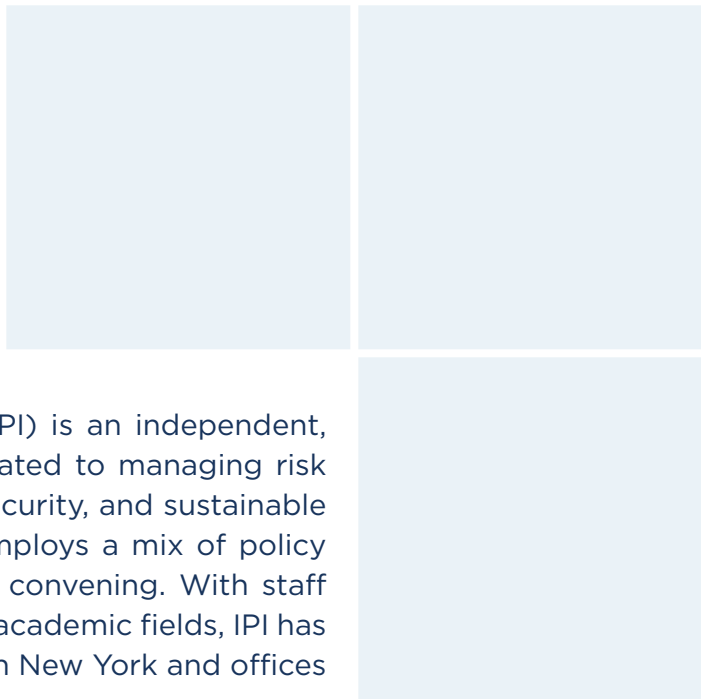
- 6. Apply a gender lens to UN peacekeeping-intelligence.** There is a need to understand the impact of gender on UN peacekeeping-intelligence from two angles. First, from the organizational point of view, there needs to be a clearer understanding of how gender plays a role in the recruitment of peacekeeping-intelligence analysts and the extent to which gender is taken into account in the training of analysts.

Second, there is a need to understand the extent to which information is, in itself, gendered. This requires more evidence on how information acquired by and from women is different than that acquired by and from men. It also requires an understanding of how gender intersects with a broad range of identity factors and to explore the impact of this intersection on the type of intelligence acquired and its effectiveness in informing operations. To ensure that personnel take these gender considerations into account, a training module focused on gender should be developed and incorporated into every peacekeeping-intelligence-related training (for

the JMAC, military, and police).

- 7. Improve coordination between headquarters and field sites within missions by adapting the tempo and timing of tasking and enabling the creation and maintenance of integrated information-sharing cells.** Missions should take a more flexible approach to tasking for peacekeeping-intelligence, adapting it to the challenges encountered in the field and the information required. This calls for both adjusting the tempo and timing of tasking to align with the actual amount of time needed and enabling the creation of information-sharing cells in field sites to improve collaboration between the military, police, and civilian components.
- 8. Establish common sharing platforms within missions.** Missions should recruit higher-ranked and more qualified personnel to manage databases. They should also facilitate access to databases and sharing of information among civilian, police, and military units engaged in peacekeeping-intelligence. If having one mission-wide database is neither realistic nor desirable, combining data on specific issues on a common sharing platform would allow senior leaders to have a more comprehensive situational awareness and understanding of potential threats.





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777 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017-3521  
USA  
TEL +1-212-687-4300  
FAX +1-212-983-8246

Freyung 3  
1010 Vienna  
Austria  
TEL +43-1-533-8881  
FAX +43-1-533-881-11

51-52 Harbour House  
Bahrain Financial Harbour  
P.O. Box 1467  
Manama, Bahrain  
TEL +973-1721-1344