

RECOMMENDATIONS ON TRAINING MILITARY TO COMBAT CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

25 November 2014
Life Guards Regiment, Sweden



Conflict-related sexual violence is a threat to the life, safety and the physical and mental well-being of women, men, girls and boys, a cause and consequence of conflict, a possible threat to peace and security and destructive to the stability of communities.

We, the participants of the Expert Meeting on Training Military to Combat Conflict-Related Sexual Violence¹, hosted by the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) at the Life Guards Regiment in Sweden, 24-25 November 2014, adopt the following recommendations;

Key principles for military action to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence which should be included in training

1. Military actors should undertake measures to prevent and respond to sexual violence in all operations, including but not limited to when they act within the mandates of protection of civilians, capacity building of national security forces and in monitoring cease-fires and peace agreements. Such measures may include the range of actions as exemplified in the UN publication “Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence - An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice”.
2. Military action to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence should be conducted within the framework of the comprehensive approach. This requires coordination, communication and understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of military, police and civilian actors.
3. Military actors should establish a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on conflict-related sexual violence as a regular aspect of analysis, security assessments and day-to-day operations and should share relevant information with other protection actors, as appropriate.

¹ The meeting takes note of the different concepts and definitions, including sexual and gender-based violence. These recommendations will focus on conflict-related sexual violence, as defined by the UN and framed in UN Security Council resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960 and 2106.

4. Military action should be based upon human rights principles including respect for survivors dignity, privacy and own will.
5. Military operational planning process² should consider measures to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence based on an analysis of the situational context and gender perspectives including; gender and age of victims, gender and age of perpetrators, high-risk situations, local services, coping and support mechanisms, capacity and responses of local formal and informal security and service providers.
6. Military actors should be prepared to address different forms of conflict-related sexual violence and to recognize that women, men, girls and boys can be victims, as well as perpetrators.
7. Where appropriate, military actors could facilitate contact with non-state actors to create an enabling environment for discussions on commitments to address conflict-relates sexual violence.
8. Military actors should be aware of its role in support of the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Creating an enabling environment

9. Military personnel, in particular those designated to be deployed to operations, should undergo mandatory training on identifying, preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence, including specialists' training, pre-deployment training and refresher training in theatre.
10. Key leaders and Commanding Officers should be accountable to ensure that troops are trained on preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence and take all possible measures to prevent it.
11. Training and education on preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence should be an integral part of an institutional framework including career development, coaching programs and criteria for promotion and staff assessment.
12. In-house capacity for training and education on conflict-related sexual violence within armed forces should be strengthened, at each level and branch, to improve professionalism, ownership, credibility and sustainability. Training needs analysis should be based on the mandate and military tasks that the training audience will perform in the area of operation.
13. All missions and troop contributing countries should be required to report publicly on what training their troops have received, including qualitative and quantitative data, and an accountability mechanism should be set up to ensure compliance.
14. Zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse must be enforced at all time as it causes harm to the local population and undermines mission credibility and operational effectiveness. Immediate action must be taken against personnel who have been found to violate codes of conduct or tolerate violations by subordinates. Signing pledges or code of conduct should be encouraged.
15. There is a need to develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact of training military to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence.

Training design and development

16. Training for military on conflict-related sexual violence and gender perspectives should give clear examples of appropriate courses of action, set within the military mandate, operational considerations and rules of engagement.

² Applicable on strategic, operational and tactical levels.

17. Training should be scenario-based, including but not limited to a diversity of situations such as protection of civilians, capacity-building programs, ceasefire monitoring and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and provide the context military operate within such as mandate, rules of engagement, concept of operations and commanders' intent.
18. Interactive training techniques should be used to re-create the situation for which the soldier prepares, for example syndicate work, role play, online training, virtual reality simulators, theatre groups and locally available training methods.
19. Training on conflict-related sexual violence should be coordinated among actors, particularly training provided to the same nations or within the same region. In this spirit, all information on training programs and the training materials should be accessible.
20. There should be specific training and coaching programs designed for key leaders and commanders, including Force Commanders, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and their deputies, with guidance on the responsibilities and accountability of decision-makers and leaders.
21. Target audience analysis should consider military staffs' attitudes, motivation and specific interests, such as national pride and military ethos. It should also take note of cultural, religious and historical considerations concerning the target audience and how these affect training.
22. Trainers should consider the psychological effects of training on participants who may have own experiences related to sexual violence, sexual assault and sexual exploitation and abuse and prepare support accordingly.

The following organizations participated in the Expert Meeting:

UN Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict
NATO International Military Staff (IMS)
NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE)
Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)
Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSOTC), Bosnia and Herzegovina
Refugee Law Project
The Nordic Africa Institute
US Joint Staff J7
Swedish Armed Forces Centre for Defence Medicine
Prevention of Sexual Violence Initiative, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
UK Stabilization Support Group
Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations