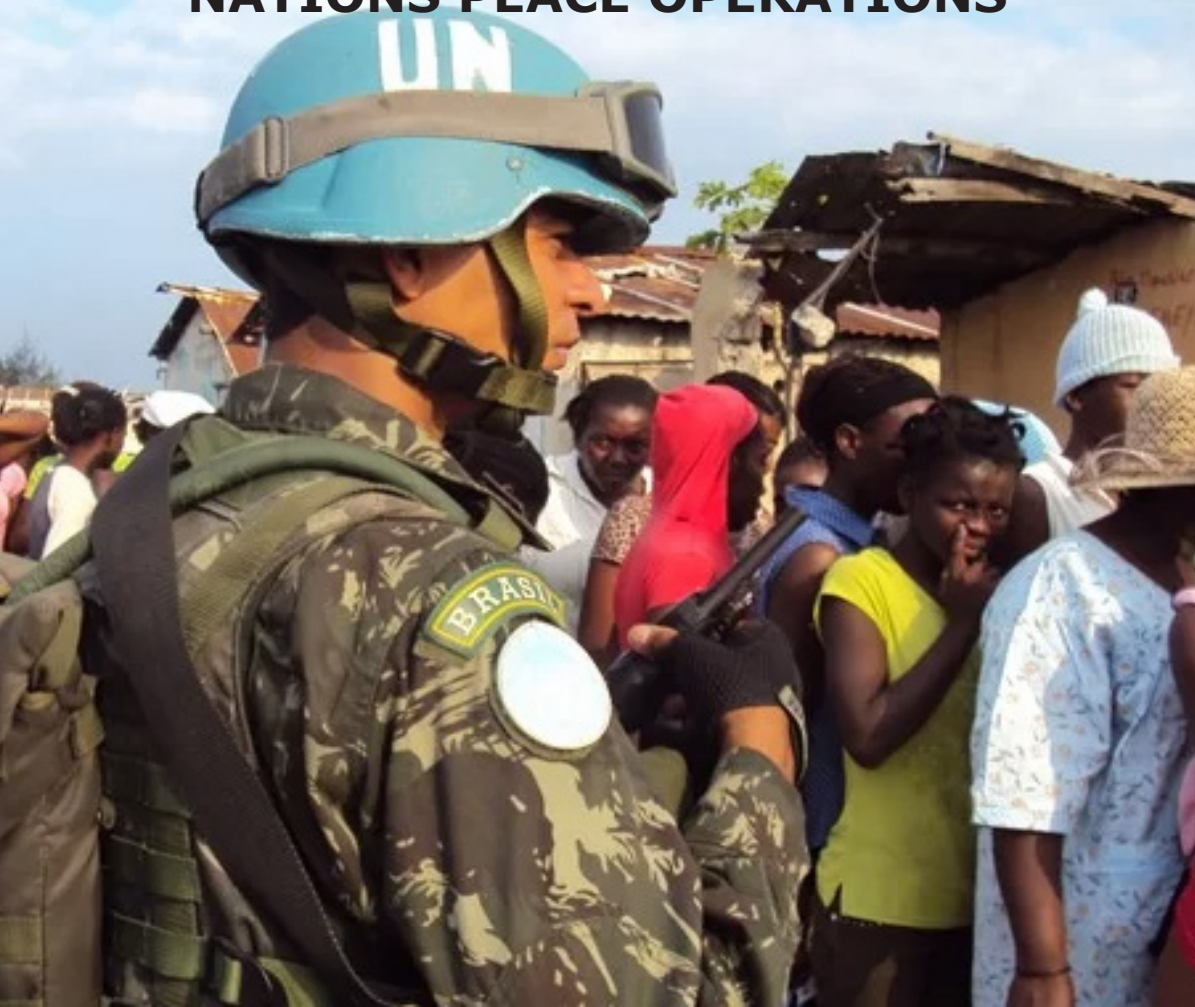




HANDBOOK ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS



MINISTRY OF DEFENSE
BRAZILIAN ARMY



LAND OPERATIONS COMMAND

**HANDBOOK ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
AND ABUSE IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS**

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HANDBOOK ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS

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LAND OPERATIONS COMMAND





“Indeed, the vast majority of UN troops and personnel serve with pride, dignity and respect for the people they assist and protect, very often in dangerous and difficult conditions and at great personal sacrifice. Yet our Organization continues to grapple with the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse, despite great efforts over many years to address it. We need a new approach.”

Let us declare in one voice: We will not tolerate anyone committing or condoning sexual exploitation and abuse. We will not let anyone cover up these crimes with the UN flag. All victims deserve justice and our full support. Together, we will fulfill this promise.”

*António Guterres
Secretary-General of The United Nations*



“The Brazilian Army, a national, permanent, and regular institution of the Brazilian state has a long history of participating in United Nations peace operations. Since 1947, the Brazilian Army has deployed its members to serve under the UN flag. In 1956, an infantry battalion joined the United Nations Emergency Force in the Suez Canal, and, from 2004 to 2017, Brazil continuously commanded the military component of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). In addition to these, every year, dozens of military personnel are deployed worldwide, either individually or as part of contingents, and sometimes even commanding military components.”

Throughout all these participations, the Blue Helmets of the Brazilian Army - men and women dedicated to the cause of peace - have accompanied the evolution of the peace operations’ agenda, integrating into the communities where they were deployed, without ever tarnishing the image of the UN, Brazil, and the Brazilian Army. Thus, once again aligned with the UN doctrine, COTER launches this handbook on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations, another tool aimed to train our military personnel.”

*General André Luis Novaes Miranda
Land Operations Commander*

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PRESENTATION

Combating cases of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) in United Nations peace operations is one of the challenges faced by the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO). Currently, with a total of 11 (eleven) peacekeeping operations^[1], the number of military personnel, police officers, and civilians deployed on the ground, either as troops or in individual missions, is significant^[2]. Decision-makers at all levels of peace operations — strategic, operational, and tactical — are aware that this large number of peacekeepers need to preserve the reputation and the image of the United Nations in the field and in the world.

More than 70,000 men and women represent UN values on the ground. Given this considerable number of peacekeepers, SEA allegations are something that needs to be prevented and remedied in both contingents and individual deployments.

The UN database allows tracking the number of cases by mission (<https://conduct.unmissions.org/data>). The Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSCSEA), and the Conduct and Discipline Service (CDS) of the UN play an increasing role in raising awareness, preventing and charging those who may tarnish the work carried out by peacekeepers.

The Brazilian Army has significantly participated in UN peacekeeping operations. It has deployed troops in several missions, many with nearly 1,000 (one thousand) military personnel, such as in the case of MINUSTAH. The Brazilian blue helmets also represent the country in the territory where they are deployed. Therefore, all commanders pay close attention to strict adherence not only to UN rules but, above all, to human rights and humanitarian law. In some peace missions, Brazilian Army officers hold prominent positions, responsible for implementing preventive measures and detecting any misconduct, initiating corresponding investigations, and making necessary corrections.

In this context, training on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is one of the tools the UN tends to use to mitigate possible cases that may occur on the ground. Clarifying and taking responsibility for preventing, reporting, and taking coercive measures are actions included in the preparation of future peacekeepers. Similarly, maintaining standards of conduct is expected from those already in the field.

The Brazilian Peace Operations Joint Training Center (CCOPAB), a military organization responsible for training Armed Forces personnel, state police and civilian personnel for peace operations, plays a fundamental role in promoting and implementing a culture of prevention against sexual exploitation and abuse during the preparation of military personnel assigned to peace missions.

CCOPAB has been teaching this subject in its courses and training programs for several years. Therefore, this handbook aims to standardize information on the topic so that professionals trained at the Center become a vector in combating cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peace operations in which they participate in.

****[1]**** United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

****[2]**** According to recent DPO data (reference - November 2023), the total number of military, police, and civilians deployed on the ground, per mission, is: MINURSO – 468; UNDOF – 1,331; UNISFA – 3,388; UNMOGIP – 104; MINUSCA – 18,448; UNFICYP – 1,017; UNMIK – 353; UNTSO – 375; MONUSCO – 17,971; UNIFIL – 10,385; UNMISS – 18,142. (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en>)

1. UNDERSTANDING WHAT SEA IS



1.1. DEFINITION

According to the United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the following definitions are considered:

"Sexual Abuse" means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. (ST/SGB/2003/13)

"Sexual Exploitation" means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting, monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. (ST/SGB/2003/13)

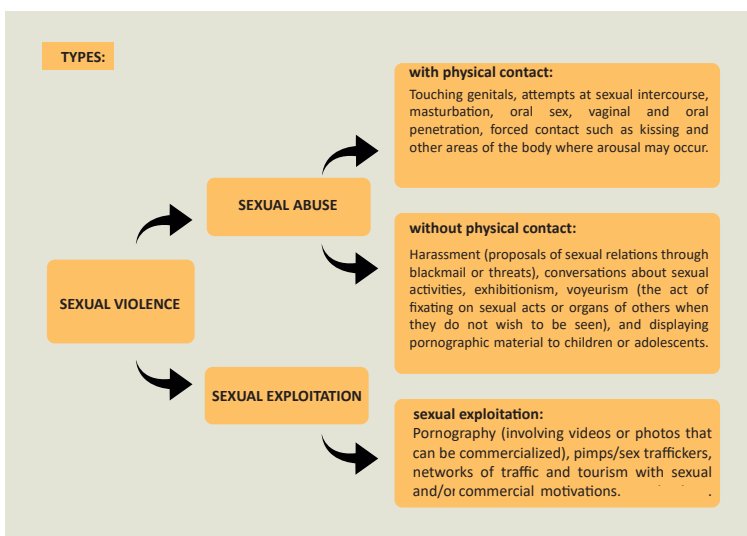
IMPORTANT INSIGHTS!

Beneficiaries and peacekeepers – observations based on the social and economic situation of the host country			
VULNERABILITY	DIFFERENTIAL POWER	ABUSE OF TRUST	BENEFICIARIES OF ASSISTANCE
- The assisted population struggles for survival in desperate circumstances. - The population is unaware of their rights and obligations, not perceiving that their human rights are being denied. - There is a power imbalance that can be misused in the relationship between peacekeepers and beneficiaries. - High occurrence of cases of sexual and gender-based violence.	- There is an economic, social, educational and professional imbalance in the host country. - A person is often dependent on another to maintain family and economic support. - There is a position of authority of one person over another.	- The loss of trust tends to victimize vulnerable people even more. - Violates the human rights of victims. - Lack of trust disrupts families and communities and undermines peace.	- Assistance is interpreted broadly to cover the local population. - Peacekeeping missions' mandated is to protect civilians.

1.2. HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE CRSV AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT FROM SEA?

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence - CRSV refers to incidents or patterns of sexual violence in conflict or post-conflict situations that include: rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls, boys. (S/2014/181)

Sexual Harassment: any unwelcome sexual advance, request for a sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that may reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. (Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority). (ST/SGB/2008/5)



SITUATION	CRSV	SEXUAL HARASSMENT	SEA
WHO COMMITS THE ACTION?	• civilians, military and police from the host country; • national or international armed groups and organized criminal groups; • former combatants associated with the armed forces or armed groups; • young people brutalized by conflict	PEACEKEEPER and AGENCIES' WORKERS	PEACEKEEPER and AGENCIES' WORKERS
WHO SUFFERS FROM IT (VICTIM)?	MISSION BENEFICIARY	PEACEKEEPER	MISSION BENEFICIARY
		AGENCIES' WORKERS	PEACEKEEPER
CONSIDERATIONS	WAR TACTICS	If sexual harassment involves abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power and trust, and actual physical intrusion or threat of a sexual nature, it becomes SEA.	

1.3. UN ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

"Sexual relationships between United Nations staff and beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics, undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of the United Nations and are strongly discouraged." Bulletin of the Secretary General ST/ SGB / 2003 / 13 (2003).

UN has a **Zero Tolerance** Policy for sexual exploitation and abuse.

The rules of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse apply to everyone.

There is no impunity for UN professionals who commit such abuses. It is expected that entities associated with the UN take decisive measures when their professionals engage in sexual exploitation and abuse.

1.4. WHO SHOULD FOLLOW UN STANDARDS OF CONDUCT?

All professionals working or acting under the UN flag **must adhere to the Code of Conduct**, including professionals from entities associated with the UN.

All professionals, whether uniformed or not, must follow the UN Standards of Conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes all categories of employees, consultants, individual contractors, support staff, UN volunteers, interns and others.

In the case of uniformed peacekeepers, these include:

1. Members of contingents and units of national and foreign military troops (in the case of a soldier who is deployed in a contingent of another nationality);
2. Members of the Formed Police Units (FPU);
3. Members of the general staff (UNSO);
4. Members acting as mission advisors;
5. Members with the legal status of experts on mission (EOM), which include:
 - a. UN Police officers (UNPOL);
 - b. Corrections officers;
 - c. Military observers (UNMO);
 - d. Military Liaison Officers.

Professionals from entities associated with the UN must also follow the UN Standards of Conduct. This includes vendors, institutional contractors, and implementation partners.

1.5. WHERE AND WHEN SHOULD THE RULES OF CONDUCT BE FOLLOWED?

UN standards of conduct must be followed at all times, **24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on or off working time.**

The Code of Conduct applies everywhere and at all times, whether **during UN work, vacation periods, or leisure time.**

2. UN STANDARDS OF CONDUCT



2.1. BEHAVIORS EXPECTED FROM PEACEKEEPERS

You are a United Nations ambassador

You are a representative of your country

You are a representative of your institution

Your conduct should be guided by the UN core values:



Three principles underpin the peacekeeper's standards of conduct in the mission:

1. The highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity;
2. Zero Tolerance Policy for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA);
3. Responsibility of those who are in command or who respond in the exercise of authority and fail to enforce standards of conduct.

2.2. PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS

a.

Sexual activity with children under 18

Even if the child is in a country where the majority or age of consent is under 18, they must follow the stricter UN standards of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse that prohibit sexual activity with anyone under 18 years old.

b.

Exchange for sex or sexual favors

It is prohibited to exchange money, food, employment, goods, assistance or services for sex or sexual favors.

c.

Sex with sex workers

It is prohibited to have sexual relations with sex workers or any form of sex as bargaining chip, even if prostitution is accepted or legal in the country.

d.

Forced sexual activity

Sexual activity imposed on another individual is prohibited.

e.

Using children or adults to obtain sexual favors for other people.

It is prohibited to use children or adults to bring individuals into sexual activities in exchange for money.

The UN considers cases of SEA to be serious misconduct, including criminal acts, that result or may result in loss, damage or serious injury to an individual or to a mission.

REINFORCING!



EVERY PERSON UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS FLAG MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING PROHIBITIONS:

! It is **strictly prohibited** to have any sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 years (regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally or in my home country). Mistaken belief as to the age of the person is no excuse;

! It is **strictly prohibited** to have sex with anyone, in exchange for money, employment, preferential treatment, goods or services, whether or not prostitution is legal in my country or the host country;

! It is **strictly prohibited** to engage in any other form of sexually humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior;

■ Involvement in any act of sexual exploitation and abuse will be investigated and prosecuted if justified;

■ Any proven act of sexual exploitation and abuse will result in measures that can include but are not limited to: suspension, immediate repatriation, dismissal, imprisonment and a ban from future United Nations employment;

■ If I witness sexual exploitation and abuse behavior by others, regardless of their position or seniority, I have a responsibility to take all reasonable measures to stop the misconduct and report the incident immediately to my commander or manager;

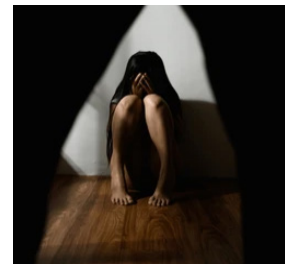
! Failure to respond or report misconduct is a breach of the United Nations standards of conduct.

There is no excuse!

2.3. CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT

For the victim:

1. The victim's human rights are violated.
2. Sexual exploitation and abuse can cause physical, emotional, psychological and social harm to victims, such as rejection or beatings by their families.
3. SEA cases can affect the family and local community.
4. A child born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers may suffer disadvantage and discrimination throughout his or her life.



For the peacekeeper:

1. The act perpetrated by the peacekeeper is classified as serious misconduct - disciplinary area.
2. Those who commit SEA will suffer losses in their professional lives, may be prosecuted, their safety and health may be at risk, and their personal life will likely be affected.
3. In the case of criminal offenses, everyone, except military personnel from international contingents, may be tried in the host country.
4. Military members of international contingents may be subject to their own national military justice.
5. Military members of an international contingent may be repatriated as recommended by the UN, subject to sanctions under their own national criminal laws/military law.
6. Social destruction of your family and friends. The allegations generate worldwide repercussions and will reach the attention of your family and friends.



⚠ UN professionals are not above the law and **can be prosecuted if they commit crimes.**

For the UN mission:

1. Human rights of those assisted are not preserved by the members of the mission.
2. The integrity and impartiality of the mission are not maintained.
3. SEA acts denigrate the image and credibility of the UN, which consequently undermine the UN's ability to implement its mandate.
4. The safety of peacekeepers may be threatened due to retaliation from the local community.



IN SHORT....

CONSEQUENCES OF TRANSGRESSIONS FOR THOSE INVOLVED			
Victims	Host country	*TCC	UN
Post-traumatic sequelae	Threat to peace and security		
Unwanted pregnancy	Reinforcement for groups that question the presence of foreigners in the country	Weakened discipline and integrity	
Need for medical and psychological assistance		Degradation of the image of the contributing country	Negative impact on the image and credibility of the mission
Social stigmatization	Spread of communicable diseases	Discrediting efficiency in mandatory tasks	

***TCC** – *Troop-Contributing Countries*

3. IDENTIFYING CASES OF SEA



3.1. REPORT IT!

 **Report any suspicion, complaint, or observed incident involving UN uniformed personnel or colleagues who have committed sexual exploitation and abuse.**

3.2. WHY REPORT?

All United Nations professionals are obliged to report cases of sexual exploitation and abuse whenever there is suspicion of the act by a co-worker, whether in uniform or not, and inside or outside the United Nations system.

As United Nations uniformed personnel, we have an obligation to be aware of the UN standards of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse, comply with the UN standards of conduct on the matter, report sexual exploitation and abuse, and cooperate with investigations.

Report allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN professionals or co-workers immediately! **Do not wait!!!**

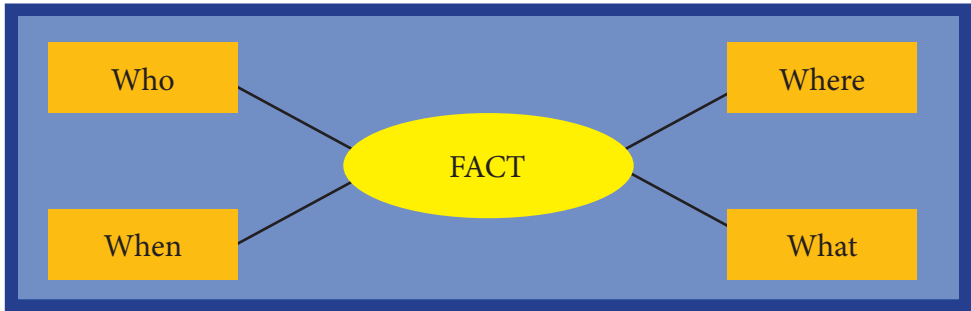
If you are unsure whether you are violating the UN standards of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse, ask your Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Focal Point, if applicable, or the Ethics, before engaging in any intimate act or relationship.

The UN will make a preliminary assessment before referring the matter to the appropriate Member State for criminal investigation. This is because UN investigations are administrative in nature.

The investigation is for that. And you can write down any facts that may be relevant to the investigation.

3.3. HOW TO REPORT?

Sometimes you will only be able to report a slight suspicion. However, if possible, be specific and inform:



The complaints can be anonymous, but identified complaints tend to be investigated more quickly as the investigation of the facts is possible through the detailed personal statement of those who report.

Be aware that unsubstantiated, or not in good faith, allegations can cause embarrassment to those involved.

The website of the Conduct and Discipline Service in UN field missions provides an online form to report.



Ref: <https://conduct.unmissions.org/report-now>

3.4. WHOM TO REPORT TO?

peacekeeper in Contingent

Immediate superior

Battalion legal advisor

Gender Focal Point

Battalion commander
or deputy commander

Conduct and Discipline Team in the field

OIOS*

Ethics Office

UN Ombudsman**

peacekeeper on individual mission

Immediate superior

Legal advisor to the Military
Component of the Force

Gender advisor

Commander or deputy commander of the
Military Component of the Force

Conduct and Discipline Team in the field

OIOS*

Ethics Office

UN Ombudsman**

***OIOS** - Office of Internal Oversight Services

****Ombudsman** - one that investigates, reports on, and helps to settle complaints

4. PREVENTION



4.1. PREVENTION MEASURES

UN peacekeepers must take measures to reduce stress in their daily lives and maintain a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives. These actions can help military personnel and their colleagues comply with UN standards of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse. Some of the measures are:

- Socialize with your co-workers to avoid feeling alone. Participating in social activities helps you relax and integrate into your work group.
- Play sports regularly and have hobbies. Look for alternatives that allow you to relieve stress in the work field.
- Talk to your family and friends often. Maintaining contact with family members helps reduce homesickness.
- Participate in SEA training and instructions. Always being aware of and up to date with peacekeepers' standards of conduct prevents cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Seek professional support. Sharing your feelings and concerns with psychologists or therapists can relieve stress and anxiety.

4.2. TRAINING AND INSTRUCTIONS



MANDATORY TRAINING

The prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse is an essential component of training for all categories of personnel, both before deployment and after arrival in the mission.



- ✓ DFS/DPKO provide T/PCCs with training materials on conduct and discipline, including sexual exploitation and abuse, for their pre-deployment training.

It is expected that **every peacekeeper** receives training on SEA before and during their deployment on the mission. Furthermore, it is your responsibility to be aware of periodic updates carried out by the mission's training cells. Reviving your knowledge on the subject and then sharing the doctrine and guidance from the Force Commander are part of the activity to prevent SEA cases.

4.3. LECTURES AND POSTER CAMPAIGN

Information and public dissemination about the prevention of SEA within the UN, troops, units and individuals, comprising the 3 components of the mission, in addition to agencies and those working under the UN flag, is a fundamental strategy to prevent cases of SEA:



- poster campaigns;
- awareness lectures and meetings;
- dissemination of campaigns on the intranet;
- newsletters; and
- radio broadcasts.



4.4. SPORTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

- a. Championships and internal activities.
- b. Sports competitions among UN troops.
- c. Diverse cultural programming.
- d. Cinema and theater rooms.
- e. Musical events on UN premises.

4.5. STRUCTURAL AND BEHAVIORAL ASPECTS

- a. Internal accommodations such as lodging and bathrooms separated by gender.
- b. Accommodations that are fenced and isolated from the local population.
- c. Restricted access to the accommodations area.
- d. Availability of sports areas.
- e. Adequate lighting during nighttime in the base.
- f. Respect for curfew hours.
- g. Entry and exit control of military personnel and civilians at the base.
- h. Restriction or prohibition of visiting entertainment venues in the local community.
- i. Excessive alcohol consumption should be avoided.



5. LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES



5.1. POSSIBLE REASONS FOR SEA CASES

Some of the reasons for the occurrence of SEA cases are related to:

- Lack of situational awareness of the operational environment and SEA risks.
- Insufficient/deficient pre-deployment and in-mission trainings.
- Non-compliance with UN Policies.
- Commander's inaction (administrative, corrective, educational).
- Failures to report SEA cases.
- Encouragement of behavior not tolerated by the UN.
- Lack or insufficient recreational activities for military personnel.
- Lack of planning for frequent leave (or time off).

5.2. RESPONSES TO SEA CASES

Actions that guarantee an immediate response to SEA cases:

- Guarantee the confidentiality of the report.
- Publicize channels for reporting.
- Adopt appropriate treatment for complaints.
- Carry out investigations quickly.
- Cooperate with investigations.

5.3. LEADERSHIP AWARENESS

THE LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITIES ARE AT ALL LEVELS

Every peacekeeper has the responsibility to follow the rules of conduct and ensure that they are complied with by their subordinates. As a leader or head of subordinates, you can take some measures to support the work to prevent SEA cases:

- Establish partnerships with religious leaders.
- Propose focal points in the community.
- Promote UN values of conduct.
- Hold meetings among TCC Commanders.
- Carry out unannounced inspections on the ground.
- Plan scheduled instructions for the troop.
- Use preventive measures.
- Increase the employment of uniformed women.
- Discourage circulation in sensitive areas.
- Call the UN police.
- Control the military personnel in civilian clothing's movement outside the base.
- Ensure regular rotations in remote areas.
- Prevent civilian access to the base.

As a leader, you cannot refrain from taking preventive measures!

6. MYTHS or TRUTHS



6. MYTHS or TRUTHS

1. IT'S SEA. When a peacekeeper goes to any other location (country, cities, communities, etc.) on his/her vacation or leave, even when he/she is carrying out mission activities and decides to have sexual relations with prostitutes because he/she thinks it is outside the place where he/she is assigned in the mission. **During the mission, the peacekeeper will always be a representative of the UN and his country.**

2. IT'S SEA. When a peacekeeper believes that he/she will be able to have sexual relations while carrying out the mission with beneficiaries of assistance. The UN discourages sex between adults in this situation even if it is consensual. **During the mission, the peacekeeper must maintain the standards of conduct expected by the UN.**

3. IT'S SEA. When a peacekeeper engages in a consensual sexual relationship with a person who claims to be over 18 years of age, but who does not have documents confirming the information, and physically appears to be a minor. In this case, it is recommended that you avoid having sexual relations with the person. **During the mission, the peacekeeper must not use his/her functional power to obtain advantages over the assisted population.**

4. IT'S SEA. When a peacekeeper considers that he/she is imputable and unattainable for violating the UN Zero Tolerance standards of Conduct. UN privileges and immunities do not mean that a peacekeeper can get away with violating norms. If he commits a crime like rape, he will be prosecuted. The peacekeeper only has functional immunity, which allows him/her to perform his/her work-related functions. **During the mission, the peacekeeper will be investigated and prosecuted for the crimes committed.**

5. IT'S SEA. When a peacekeeper considers that only the military and police fall within the UN Zero Tolerance Standards of Conduct. All categories of employees, consultants, individual contractors, support staff, UN volunteers, interns and other persons working for the UN under an individual contract are subject to these regulations. The standards also apply to professionals from entities associated with the UN, that is, suppliers, institutional contractors and implementation partners. **During the mission, any peacekeeper and associates, that is, civilians, police and military must follow the UN Standards of Conduct.**

6. IT'S SEA. When a peacekeeper decides not to take necessary measures upon realizing that his/her colleague has transgressed the UN Zero Tolerance Standards of Conduct. **During the mission, the peacekeeper has the obligation to immediately report any act of sexual exploitation and abuse because he/she is co-responsible for maintaining the standards of conduct.**

7. IT'S SEA. When a peacekeeper considers that informal gatherings (Fraternization), such as organizing parties or establishing intimate relationships with the assisted population at the mission location, are acceptable under the UN Zero Tolerance Standards of Conduct. Only activities planned and formalized by the mission command are tolerated. **During the mission, the peacekeeper must participate in internal and restricted activities that have been authorized to take place in UN installations.**

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**BRAZILIAN ARMY,
ALWAYS READY FOR PEACE!**

