

- Check against delivery -

Dear Madam President,  
High Commissioner,  
Briefers and colleagues

Human rights and peace and security are closely intertwined throughout the whole conflict cycle:

Indeed, human rights violations and abuses can be both root causes and consequences of conflict. As such, respect for human rights and guaranteed protection of civilians are cornerstones of sustainable peace;

We therefore warmly welcome this initiative by Germany to underscore the role of peace missions in protecting human rights. The missions have important added value because they can 1. identify violations and abuses, 2. they can prevent them and 3. they help build capacity in their operational contexts:

**[Identifying violations]**

1. Firstly, human rights components in peacekeeping operations play a crucial role in **monitoring and reporting** of violations of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. They serve as eyes and ears on the ground, exposing the gravity and scale of threats that escape the attention of other actors;

**[Preventing violations]**

2. Peace missions also have the ability to make **context-sensitive and forward-looking threat assessments**, enabling them to prevent atrocities or mitigate their impact, in line with the protection mandate most have. Comprehensive threat assessment is only possible with trained staff, though, and good cooperation between the mission and the human rights office and UN Country Team.

**[Capacity building/supporting host security forces]**

3. The **Human rights Due Diligence policy** is an essential tool for missions to support host country security forces in their respect for human rights. A few years of practice, have learned us that the due diligence policy is also relevant in terms of transition planning and exit strategy. So, when for example the UN and the DRC authorities define benchmarks for a responsible exit of MONUSCO, surely lessons can be drawn from the HRDDP on security sector reform.

Madame President,

Human rights are not an add-on for the missions – they are core business. If we are serious about this business, 1. we must mandate the missions accordingly; 2. we must staff them accordingly; 3. we must budget accordingly. That is part of our “Action For Peacekeeping” commitment.

**Human rights components are key in engaging communities** and local stakeholders in support of mandate implementation and **increase mission credibility** across the board *e.g. Afghanistan where UNAMA’s human rights components’ work contributed to building confidence between parties of the conflict, a condition for inclusive Intra-Afghan negotiations*

**Dedicated women protection advisers and child protection advisers** are indispensable to fulfill important protection mandates. Consolidation of human rights components in mandates and in resource negotiations cannot come at the expense of such capacity.

We have learned from experience that mandates, guidance and policy briefs do not automatically translate into operational “**human rights readiness**” for military personnel. We must train blue helmets before and during deployment with due attention for methodologies applicable in a mission context. Close cooperation between the military, police and civilian components as well as the sharing of best practices between missions could improve human rights readiness.

We also advocate for **adequate regional attention** to human rights. The European Union has extensive human rights components in civilian and military missions. The African Union has its human rights missions as well. We would like to encourage the G5 Joint Force to strengthen the implementation of the Human Rights Compliance Framework supported by the Office of the High Commissioner through national presence

Dear Madam President,

we would like to seize the opportunity to **honor the men and women who tirelessly work to advance human rights in the field**, despite numerous risks including new challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in MONUSCO, the human rights office has continued its work in support of national authorities to improve respect for human rights and the fight against impunity. Its COVID-19 response entailed adequate attention to cope with domestic violence or overcrowding in prisons. It is an example of UN peacekeepers’ and civilian personnel’s dedication that we are grateful for.

Thank you.