



## **Standard Operating Procedure**

3 April 2006

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# **Public Information Activities on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

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Approved by: Jean Marie Guéhenno, USG/DPKO

Approval date: 3 April 2006

Contact: Chief of the Peace and Security Section, DPI and the External  
Relations/Media Affairs Office/OUSG/DPKO  
of DPKO.

Review date: 3 April 2007

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## **PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE**

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  - Ten Rules Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets
  - We are United Nations Peacekeepers
- F. BACKGROUND TO KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE
  - The Secretary-General's Bulletin "Special Measures For Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13)
  - Report to the Secretary-General on "A comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations" (A/59/710) or "Zeid Report"
  - United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel: Status And Rules Of Conduct and Discipline (Annex to "Zeid Report", A/59/710)
- G. PUBLIC INFORMATION STRATEGY ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

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## **A. PURPOSE**

1. This standard operating procedure (SOP) provides instructions for the planning, development and implementation of public information activities on sexual exploitation and abuse.

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## **B. SCOPE**

2. This SOP shall apply to all personnel in UN peacekeeping operations who are engaged in public information work related to sexual exploitation and abuse, including mission managers and commanders, spokespeople and public information officers, and conduct and discipline officers. All DPKO staff who are engaged in public information work shall be aware of this SOP. Compliance is mandatory for those briefing on issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse, according to the General Assembly's Resolution 59/300 that adopted the recommendations in the *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group on the 2005 resumed session, 4-8 April 2005 (A59/19/Rev.1)*.

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## **C. RATIONALE**

3. The United Nations, and all personnel associated with it, shall be held to the highest standards of conduct in their personal and professional behaviour. Any incident of sexual misconduct by UN personnel is unacceptable. Sexual misconduct affects mission mandates by undermining the confidence of the host population in the UN. Furthermore, it violates victims' human rights, poses a serious risk of spreading HIV/AIDS and other health risks and ultimately, threatens the safety and security of UN personnel and may constitute a criminal offence.
4. Reports of sexual misconduct by UN personnel present a serious public information challenge not only to field missions, but also to the United Nations as a whole. The negative publicity generated by cases of misconduct impugns the reputation of the United Nations in general and of peacekeeping in particular, in many cases overshadowing in the public consciousness the many successes and achievements of the missions themselves.
5. A coherent and systematic approach to conducting public information activities related to sexual exploitation and abuse will ensure that the United Nations delivers an accurate and consistent message on issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse. It will help prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping personnel by raising awareness on standards of behaviour and on mechanisms for reporting suspicions, rumours and allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, the host population's trust in the UN and related understanding of its accountability will be strengthened by raising awareness about: (a) the UN's measures aimed at preventing sexual exploitation and abuse; (b) UN standards on sexual exploitation and abuse; (c) mechanisms through which the UN is providing assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse; (d) and the outcomes of administrative/disciplinary action.
6. This SOP was developed following General Assembly Resolution 59/300 which adopted the recommendations in the *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group on the 2005 resumed session, 4-8 April 2005 (A59/19/Rev.1)*; and

the recommendations issued in the *Comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations* ("Zeid Report", A/59/710), which *inter alia* include the design of an effective programme of information and outreach on sexual exploitation and abuse and UN standards of conduct.

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## **D. PROCEDURES**

### **D.1 Knowing about and reporting on issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse**

(see Annexes A, B and C)

7. It is the responsibility of briefers to report on issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse in an open and transparent manner by releasing the relevant information to the public in both an accurate and timely fashion.
8. For this purpose, briefers shall be fully informed about issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse, including the latest available information and statistics related to allegations, investigations and outcomes (to be provided by missions and the Conduct and Discipline Team in HQ). However this information shall only be released whilst respecting the need for due process and confidentiality, in accordance with the procedures contained in the *Guidance on Reporting Allegations, Investigations and Outcomes of Cases of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* (Annex B).
9. In speaking about issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse to any types of audiences, briefers are responsible for being fully informed about all relevant UN rules and standards of behaviour, and of the measures taken by the UN to address sexual exploitation and abuse. These measures would include initiatives aimed at:
  - 9.1 Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (e.g. awareness raising and training activities, improvement of welfare and recreation facilities for DPKO personnel, etc.)
  - 9.2 Enforcing UN standards on sexual exploitation and abuse (e.g. complaints and investigation mechanisms, compliance measures, management responsibility and accountability, victims' assistance, public information etc.).
10. Briefers in missions are responsible for knowing the specific measures that their mission has taken to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and enforce UN standards of behaviour on sexual exploitation and abuse. As measures can vary for different categories of UN personnel, it is important that briefers know which measures apply to which category of personnel. Measures could include *inter alia* the establishment of off-limits sites or curfews for military contingents and/or civilian personnel, the setting up of Conduct and Discipline Teams, the appointment of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Focal Points, training activities related to sexual exploitation and abuse, and measures to assist victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.
11. Briefers shall explain the sexual exploitation and abuse complaints mechanisms and know and distribute as widely as possible the contact details of the person(s) responsible for receiving reports of rumours, concerns and suspicions regarding sexual exploitation and abuse in their respective missions and the responsible person(s) in the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).
12. Briefers shall be familiar with issues and vocabulary related to sexual exploitation and abuse, and with the standard answers to frequently asked questions on sexual exploitation and abuse. These can be found in *Frequently Asked Questions & Answers by and for UN Peacekeeping Personnel on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* (see Annex C).

## **D.2 Knowing and referring to UN standards of conduct and relevant key documents**

(see Annexes E and F)

13. Briefers are responsible for knowing the UN standards of conduct to which all peacekeeping personnel are bound. Briefers shall also be fully aware of the mission-specific rules and documents that are applicable in their particular mission. In presenting issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse, briefers shall refer to and quote from the UN standards of conduct as well as from official statements on sexual exploitation and abuse by senior UN leadership. Relevant key documents include:
  - o The UN Charter;
  - o The UN Staff Rules and Regulations;
  - o The Secretary-General's bulletin "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13);
  - o The Peacekeepers' Duty of Care;
  - o Ten Rules Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets;
  - o We are United Nations Peacekeepers;
  - o The Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group on the 2005 resumed session, 4-8 April 2005 (A/59/19/Rev.1);
  - o Report to the Secretary-General on "A comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/59/710);
  - o Mission-specific documents.

## **D.3 Targeting different audiences (see Annex A)**

14. Briefers are responsible for developing and delivering differentiated messages for both local and international audiences, in consultation with the Conduct and Discipline Teams and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Focal Points.
15. Similarly, briefers shall develop and deliver differentiated messages for both internal (UN) and external audiences.
16. To underline the seriousness with which the UN is addressing issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse, and for maximum effect, messages related to sexual exploitation and abuse shall be delivered when possible by the senior UN leadership such as the USG/DPKO or the ASGs/DPKO, or by senior managers in field missions such as the SRSG, Force Commander or Police Commissioner.
17. To ensure broad outreach amongst local audiences, briefings on issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse shall when possible be delivered to and by civil society organisations and/or local community leaders.
18. Briefers shall demonstrate sensitivity to the issues and attitudes surrounding sexual exploitation and abuse in their local environment that may arise out of political, cultural, religious and/or other factors.

#### **D.4 Creating Public Information products**

(see Annexes D, E and G)

19. In creating public information products related to sexual exploitation and abuse, due regard shall be paid to the principles contained in the Public Information Strategy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (see Annex G). As stated in the PI Strategy, efforts shall be made to differentiate between internal and external audiences, and between local and international audiences.
20. Themes and slogans for public information products related to sexual exploitation and abuse shall be derived from existing key products such as *The Peacekeeper's Duty of Care* points, the *Ten Rules Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets*, and the *We are United Nations Peacekeepers* pocket card (see Annex E).
21. The Department of Public Information and the External Relations/Media Affairs Office of DPKO shall be consulted for guidance and comments in the process of developing public information products related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

#### **D.5 Co-ordinating Public Information activities**

22. All PI activities shall be guided by the principles set forth in the PI Strategy (see Annex G).
23. The relevant mission's spokesperson's office shall be informed of all planned public information activities related to sexual exploitation and abuse and be consulted on key talking points in advance of PI events.
24. In order to ensure the uniformity of messages coming from different departments within missions, all public information activities related to sexual exploitation and abuse shall be co-ordinated with the various mission PIOs (including police and military PIOs).
25. PI activities shall also be co-ordinated with the Conduct and Discipline Teams, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Focal Points and Gender Advisors/Focal Points in the missions as well as in other relevant UN agencies, to ensure coherence and consistency of UN-wide messages on issues related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

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#### **E. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

26. Briefers: Persons authorised to make public statements (see Annex B, page 11).

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#### **F. SUPERIOR REFERENCES**

- The Secretary-General's Bulletin "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13)
- The Peacekeepers' Duty of Care
- Ten Rules Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets
- We are United Nations Peacekeepers
- Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group on the 2005 resumed session, 4-8 April 2005 (A59/19/Rev.1)

- Report to the Secretary-General on “A comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations” (A/59/710).

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#### **G. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

27. Compliance with this SOP shall be the responsibility of the relevant Head of Mission, who will receive compliance reports annually from the mission's Chief of Public Information, the head of the Conduct and Discipline Team, as well as from heads of relevant components (e.g. Police Commissioner and Force Commander). Copies of the compliance reports will be provided to the Chief of the Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public Information and the External Relations/Media Affairs Officer of DPKO.

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#### **H. DATES**

28. This SOP shall be effective 3 April 2006, and reviewed no later than 3 April 2007.

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#### **I. CONTACT**

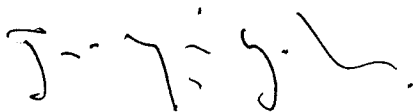
29. The Contact Officers for this SOP are the Chief of the Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public Information and the External Relations/Media Affairs Officer of DPKO.

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#### **J. HISTORY**

30. This SOP has not been amended.
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**SIGNED:**



**DATE:**

10 May 2006