



Protection of Civilians (PoC)

FACT SHEET

The mandate of PoC

UNMIS Protection of Civilians (PoC) section is mandated to coordinate international efforts towards the protection of civilians, with particular attention to vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), returning refugees and women and children.

Without prejudice to the responsibility of the Government of Sudan, and within its capacity, UNMIS works to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.

Main objectives

PoC enhances the protection of civilians against abuses of power and violations of their rights by concentrating efforts on:

- Assisting with the development of strategic work plans relating to protection needs, chairing and/or servicing a number of inter-agency protection working groups, and organizing coordinated response to situations where civilians are subject to or at risk of abuse, such as communities threatened by the Abyei conflict or tribal disputes in Southern Sudan, or those at risk from attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army.
- Advocating timely responses to address protection needs based on analysis of violation trends, including harassment of civilians by armed forces; recruitment of child soldiers; gender based violence; forced displacement; impunity and lack of access to justice, as well as alerts of impending protection situations in areas of potential conflicts, such as those around nomadic migration routes in Southern Korodofan and Bahr El-Gazal states.
- In order to reduce risks to civilians, PoC disseminates information as well as promotes measures to partners, including UNMIS staff, UN agencies, non-governmental

organizations, government authorities and local communities, to address risks and violations. These measures include provision of water to avert conflict between nomads and farmers; support to justice mechanisms, including the police; advocacy command and control of armed forces elements; capacity building of government authorities; UNMIS patrols; and high level political and military discussions.

- PoC pays particular attention to children's rights in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, relevant international humanitarian and human rights law, and applicable regional standards.

Child Protection Unit (CPU)

The Child Protection Unit (CPU) has its own independent mandate but is structurally placed within PoC.

It supports the implementation of those parts of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that require special measures for children by:

- Advising the mission on the risks that children face in Sudan.
- Monitoring and reporting on grave violations of children's rights to ensure that the protection of children remains a priority throughout all UNMIS operations.
- Closely working with relevant UN agencies and international organisations to address grave violations of children's rights in accordance with the Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005).

Achievements of PoC

- Monitoring, reporting and responding to protection of civilians issues within UNMIS' area of operations.

- Mobilization of support to PoC issues within the United Nations and raising the profile of PoC issues within the mission and with communities as well as government authorities.
- Capacity building of UNMIS staff, government authorities and communities on protection and child protection issues.

Main challenges

- UNMIS PoC is a pilot unit and the only protection section within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.
- Mandate and capacity limitations.
- Adequate response requires common understanding and coordinated action within the mission, the United Nations and the government at various levels.
- Political, military and social sensitivity to some protection issues.

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