



## Australian Government

# PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS



*Australia has been a long-standing supporter of United Nations (UN) and other multilateral peacekeeping and peace-related operations. Australia continues that tradition today as an active contributor of personnel and financial support to global peace operations. These demonstrate our commitment to the UN Charter and efforts to constructively resolve disputes through the international system. The Australian Government draws attention to the plight of civilian populations affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, and efforts to protect them, known as 'protection of civilians' (POC). We believe in the importance of peacekeepers having the right tools (guidance, training and resources) and clarity regarding what is expected of them, to fulfil their responsibilities on the ground.*

### **Australia's Engagement on Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping Operations**

Increasingly in the last decade, the UN Security Council has mandated POC in peacekeeping operations and frequently reaffirmed its commitment to POC through a wide range of resolutions, presidential statements and directions. However, significant challenges remain to ensure this progress is translated into tangible results on the ground.

Australia remains a consistent supporter of efforts to ensure better protection of civilians in peacekeeping operations by : (1) developing practical tools for training peacekeepers; (2) engaging with other Member States to build a common understanding on POC in the context of peacekeeping operations; and (3) working to support regional organisations in the area (in particular Africa).



### Practical tools for training peacekeepers

Australia provided support to key UN agencies to develop an inventory of best practice in preventing sexual violence during conflict entitled *Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence—An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice*. This was produced under the auspices of UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and UN Women (formerly UNIFEM). The inventory provides practical examples of peacekeeping tactics to reduce sexual violence and improve the safety of women during conflict. Australia continues to support the development and rollout of scenario based training materials, to assist peacekeepers combat sexual violence.

The Australian Government, in partnership with the United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR), has produced a 40 minute documentary titled *Mandated to Protect: Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping Operations*. The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon introduces the documentary in which interviewees provide insights on POC in peacekeeping missions, both past and present. DPKO was consulted in its development. Australia also provided support for a pilot training course on DPKO scenario-based training materials - an important step for the UN. Efforts are also being undertaken within Australia, with the development of POC doctrine for the Australian Defence Force and Australian Federal Police.

### Engaging with Member states

Australia has actively engaged Member States in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34), advocating for the development of guidelines and training for peacekeepers on POC. In 2009–2010, Australia co-hosted three POC workshops with Uruguay in New York, to provide a forum for the peacekeeping community, particularly troop and police contributing countries, to share their experiences and lessons learnt on POC and examine efforts to improve the implementation of POC mandates. As one of the 19 partner countries of the International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, Australia also contributed to the global dialogue by hosting the 3rd International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations in Queanbeyan, Australia in April 2010 on the theme “Challenges of Protecting Civilians in Multidimensional Peace Operations”.

### Working to support regional organisations

The Australian Government supported the drafting of *Guidelines for the Protection of Civilians in African Union Peace Support Operations*. This was one of the first initiatives by a regional peace and security organisation to create strategic and operational-level guidance on POC for peace operations. In 2010, the Australian Government hosted the International Symposium on the Protection of Civilians in Conflict Zones held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where the proposed Guidelines were considered. The AU Commission has recently established a special working group to develop a comprehensive approach towards POC.