



Government of Canada
Embassy of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada
Ambassade du Canada

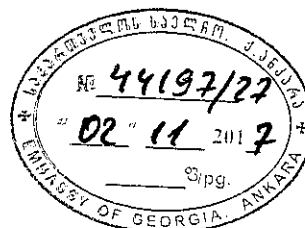
NOTE NUMBER 1455

The Embassy of Canada presents its compliments to the Embassy of Georgia and has the honour to request the onward transmission of the enclosed documentation with respect to the 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial and the Vancouver Principles.

Canada will host the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver from November 14-15, 2017. We are pleased that your delegation will be joining us in Vancouver and we thank you for your support in making this conference a success. This Ministerial is important to UN peacekeeping and is a real reflection of what we can do, when we come together as Member States.

The objective of the Vancouver Ministerial is to secure new pledges to close key capability gaps in UN peacekeeping and advance pledges from previous high level conferences in London (2016) and New York (2015). The key outcome document of the Vancouver Ministerial will take the form of a Communiqué. It is important that Ministerial participants endorse the Communiqué so that we collectively affirm our commitment to further strengthen UN peacekeeping. Please find enclosed the latest version of the Vancouver Communiqué and Concept Note for the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial. Please note that an outline of the Communiqué was circulated to all Permanent Missions in New York following a technical brief on October 16.

Canada



Canada is also leading on a policy initiative called the Vancouver Principles on the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers (Vancouver Principles). The Vancouver Principles are a set of political commitments endorsed by states regarding the prevention of recruitment and use of child soldiers in a peacekeeping context. The purpose of the Vancouver Principles is to prioritize and further operationalize child protection within UN peacekeeping, with a focus on preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The principles were developed by Canada in cooperation with the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative and in consultation with the UN and the child protection community.

The Vancouver Principles will be officially launched on November 14 on the margins of the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver. Canada invites endorsement of these Vancouver Principles as concrete demonstration of your country's commitment to UN peacekeeping, the plight of children in situations of armed conflict, and to breaking the cycle of conflict caused by the recruitment and use of children. Please find enclosed the Vancouver Principles, a backgrounder on the Vancouver Principles, a question and answer sheet on the Vancouver Principles, and a model note verbale for endorsement of the Vancouver Principles. Please note that the Vancouver Principles and supporting material were circulated to all UN Member States on October 23.

The Embassy of Canada avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of Georgia the assurances of its highest consideration.

Ankara, November 02, 2017

Canada



2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial: Vancouver Communiqué

From 14-15 November 2017, delegations from ~~XX~~ countries met in Vancouver, Canada, to reaffirm their commitment to United Nations peacekeeping.

For over sixty years, UN peacekeeping has served as the standard bearer of the world's shared commitment to international peace and security, proving to be one of the most effective tools available to assist host countries and their populations, in navigating the difficult path from conflict to peace.

We salute the brave women and men who serve in peacekeeping operations around the world, and pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of peace.

As these operations grow in complexity, the UN too must evolve; not just to keep pace, but to anticipate, to adapt, and to respond – differently and better – to the challenges before us. As Members of the United Nations, whether as host nations or as troop, police, financial, or equipment contributors, we have an essential role in this evolution. We recognise that ours can only be a shared success, achieved in partnership with the UN Secretariat, regional organisations, and with each other.

Moving Forward in UN Peacekeeping: Working Differently and Better, Together

To this end, we must work together to reform our shared institutions, enhance operational effectiveness, and to make a sustained and collective effort to address capability gaps in UN peacekeeping. It also requires us to integrate gender perspectives in defining and delivering these capabilities, if we are to truly do things differently and better.

We are therefore encouraged by the Secretary-General's efforts to pursue comprehensive reform in the areas of management, development, peace and security, and gender. We take note of the 2015 Peace Operations Review¹, and the complementary focus of these processes in orienting UN peacekeeping towards a greater field-focus, and in placing people at the centre of our efforts. The UN must evolve to better address critical challenges in the design, planning, resourcing, execution and oversight of peacekeeping operations.

We welcome the pledges made by XX Member States at the Vancouver Ministerial, and the progress these pledging conferences have achieved in meeting persistent capability gaps and improving the performance and capabilities of uniformed and civilian personnel. As a result of collective efforts— planning, pledges, performance, together with the primacy of politics and partnerships — have come to underpin our approach to strategic force generation and are integral to the success of UN peacekeeping.

As we continue to improve strategic force generation, we must broaden our planning horizons, moving beyond short-term operational gaps or troop and police ceilings as drivers for capability discussions; systematically and transparently build longer-term solutions for force generation, including through better data-driven mission analytics; and pro-actively address gender, police and francophone capacities, which remain in short supply and are important to the success of UN peacekeeping. We should also consider, from the start, exit strategies for peacekeeping operations.

¹ The report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/95-S/2015/446) and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Panel's recommendations (A/70/357-S/2015/682).

In line with these objectives, in Vancouver, we identified concrete ways to move forward in UN peacekeeping, working differently and better, together, by:

- Re-affirming our commitment to UN peacekeeping, through the next generation of *smart* pledges;
- Improving our ability to deliver on this commitment, through innovations in training and capacity-building;
- Aligning our corresponding capabilities to where they are most needed in the field, through concerted and integrated strategies in order to protect those most at risk, and
- Enhancing the effectiveness of how we deliver these capabilities, through improved approaches to partnering and planning in early warning and rapid deployment.

We further affirmed that integrating gender perspectives, increased knowledge of local language and culture, including the continuing need to focus on operating in francophone environments, and strengthening UN Police are key to the long-term success of these objectives.

Smart Pledges

First and foremost, we affirmed the necessity of moving beyond traditional models of pledging and deploying to consider ways that multiple countries could share the burden of providing the capabilities that are in highest demand. *Smart* pledges serve as an enabler in their own right and provide the predictability of supply that is needed to enhance a mission's chance of long-term success. We encourage Member States to identify where they can jointly implement *smart* pledges and commend initiatives underway, such as efforts amongst Member States and the UN Secretariat to establish rotation plans for military transport aircraft in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali. [placeholder for any notable joint pledges]

From the very beginning, strategic force generation pushes us to consider the capabilities that are needed to fulfil mandates and ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the field. *Smart* pledges are a means of meeting the most critical capability gaps in UN peacekeeping, particularly in areas such as aviation, engineering, and medical.

In this regard, we encourage the UN Secretariat to work closely with Member States, and particularly troop, police, financial and equipment contributing countries, to strengthen the capabilities of UN peacekeeping missions. We reiterate our call for the Secretary-General to ensure that the UN – in particular those offices overseeing peacekeeping, field support and management – has the systems in place to deploy, absorb and sustain newly pledged assets rapidly and in accordance with the specific needs of individual missions, including in areas as airlift, rapid engineering support, force headquarters and police and civilian recruitment.

Effective mandate implementation also requires sustained focus on addressing chronic gaps, in relation to policing, francophone and gender capacities. These capacities are critical to mission objectives, maintaining meaningful dialogue with local populations, as well as helping to build the foundation for host nation success. Thus, we welcome [placeholder for key smart pledges and any notable police, francophone and gender related pledges].

We further recognise that greater women's participation in peacekeeping is directly linked to improved operational effectiveness. Women's participation broadens the skills and capacities among all categories of personnel and improves the mission's image, accessibility, and credibility vis-à-vis the local population. We therefore call on Member States to realise commitments made at the London UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference to double the number of female peacekeepers in missions by 2020, including deploying, at minimum, 15% (military staff officers and observers) and 20% (police) female personnel. We welcome the launch of the Global Network of Military Gender Champions, which will contribute to these goals, and encourage Member States to appoint Champions and join the network.

We acknowledge that in order to address structural barriers preventing the full involvement of women in national militaries and UN peacekeeping, these objectives should be backed by targeted female recruitment, training, and promotion initiatives; retention strategies; reviews of restrictions on military occupations; regular reporting on the proportion of female and male participation; and implementation of gender-responsive budgeting tools. We further note the importance of empowering women peacekeepers in order to ensure their equal access to relevant senior leadership positions.

Innovation in Training and Capacity Building

Second, we called for a renewed global training partnership for UN peacekeeping and we encouraged Member State pledges for peacekeeping capacity-building. The complexities of today's operations require coordinated and cross-cutting action to enhance the equipping and training of peacekeepers, including UN police. Notwithstanding that troop and police contributing countries remain responsible for the delivery of training, Member States, regional organisations, and the UN Secretariat bring a collective wealth of knowledge and experience that is unparalleled to that of any single effort.

Thus, we encourage this renewed relationship to be built on sustainable training and capacity building and peer-to-peer learning, supported by expanded triangular partnerships between donors, troop and police contributing countries and the UN Secretariat. This would include frameworks driven by long-term force and police generation needs, informed by data-driven performance assessments, and ensuring continuity between peacekeepers receiving equipment and training and those being deployed.

[Placeholder for training and capacity building pledges]

We welcome the development of the train-the-trainer centre in Entebbe and encourage greater innovative practices such as the use of mobile training teams. Similarly, in recognising the value of training and support for mission leadership, we further welcome the move towards in-mission scenario-based training and leadership partnering initiatives.

We acknowledge the need to strengthen pre-deployment training for UN police, including through the use of the Strategic Guidance Framework as the basis for operational guidance and training tools to ensure coherence across all police-contributing countries.

We recognise the existence of barriers to the development and deployment of qualified women peacekeepers and peacekeeping instructors, and commit to creating mechanisms to overcome these obstacles, in order to provide greater opportunities for women in peacekeeping.

We further acknowledge that a number of large-scale UN peacekeeping operations are taking place in francophone environments. We must continue to address linguistic gaps and enhance operational capabilities in all missions, including those in francophone areas, by leveraging innovative partnership opportunities. We therefore welcome Ministerial Conference on Peacekeeping in the Francophone Area convened in Paris (October 2016), appreciate the support of the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*, and encourage follow-on initiatives to build the capacity of francophone partners to deploy in UN peacekeeping missions.

We also encourage continued efforts to evaluate and improve contingent performance. We agree that high performing peacekeepers are critical to mission success. We strongly emphasise the role of Member States in ensuring operational readiness and certification of their peacekeepers. We recognise the need for the UN to engage earlier and more consistently with troop and police contributing countries in order to identify training gaps and remediation mechanisms to address these gaps where possible.

Protecting Those at Risk

Third, we underlined that protecting those at risk lies at the heart of modern-day multi-dimensional UN peacekeeping operations. For two decades, the international community has turned to the UN and regional peace operations to respond to conflicts marked by egregious violence toward civilian populations. Today, more than 95% of UN peacekeeping personnel serve in missions with a protection of civilians mandate.

To this end, we emphasise the importance of supporting comprehensive protection of civilians' strategies. This includes training deployed peacekeepers on the protection of civilians and strengthening accountability for the implementation of protection of civilian mandates. We note initiatives by Member States to implement best practices as set out in the Kigali Principles for missions with a protection of civilians mandate.

We note that integrating gender perspectives at all levels of peacekeeping is essential for the protection of civilians. Personnel must be adequately trained to prevent, recognise, and respond to incidents of conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence. This requires recognition of the unique vulnerabilities faced by women, men, girls and boys, in the peacekeeping setting. Gender considerations must be integrated into all military doctrine and planning, women peacekeepers deployed to engage with certain segments of the local population, and victims' rights advocates and protection officers appointed, where appropriate.

We recognise that an equally important component to protecting those at risk includes building the capacity of host states. Where mandated, UN Police play an important role in building the confidence and capacity of the host nation to develop its police and justice services, allowing the UN to reduce and eventually withdraw its peacekeeping operations. Thus, we call on UN Police to put greater focus on fielding and supporting specialised teams that can better support host-state driven needs, as appropriate, and for UN Police to integrate specialised teams into the full range of peacekeeping operations in line with mission mandates.

Moreover, we condemn in the strongest terms sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN peacekeepers and staff, and call on Member States and the UN Secretariat to redouble efforts on prevention, accountability, and victim assistance. We appreciate the Secretary-General's latest efforts to establish a high-level Circle of Leadership and to develop voluntary compacts with Member States on the elimination of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which we urge all Members to pursue with the UN and implement fully.

We welcome the UN's recent adoption of a victim-centered approach, including the appointment of the Victim's Advocate, and in this regard, will strive to clearly identify policies and adequate standards to assist the victims of such heinous acts.

We also recall that peacekeeping can play a role in preventing Grave Violations against children and armed conflict², recognising that the primary responsibility lies with the host nation. We note the initiative by Member States to develop, as relevant, the best practices as set out in the Vancouver Principles.

We further recognise the importance of deploying peacekeeping missions that contribute positively and operate at minimum risk to people, societies and ecosystems, and achieve maximum efficiency in their use of natural resources, wherever possible.

Early Warning and Rapid Deployment

Fourth, we reiterated that effective early warning and rapid deployment are essential to building confidence amongst civilian populations, and to preventing and interrupting escalations of violence.

Fragmentation across the United Nations remains a major impediment for early and effective engagement in peace and security challenges. We urge the UN Secretariat to bring greater coherency across the UN system and to operate as one, to help strengthen early warning, assessment, analysis and situational awareness, including peacekeeping intelligence capacities.

We further encourage the Secretariat to place greater focus on integrated approaches, including planning mechanisms, to support contingency crisis planning. We emphasise that policing is an integral component of UN peacekeeping where mandated, and we therefore underline the critical importance of fully integrating police planning into the overall mission planning process.

Placeholder for RDL pledges.

Cooperation and partnership amongst the host state, Security Council Members, troop, police, financial and equipment contributing countries, regional organisations, and the UN Secretariat, are fundamental to leveraging these key pledges, as well as to identifying and removing bureaucratic obstacles that continue to impede rapid deployment to and within the field. The development of a roster of military and police units available to deploy from their home country within 60 days is an important step forward.

We continue to acknowledge the critical role played by regional and sub-regional organisations in confronting some of the world's most difficult peace and security challenges. In particular, we recognise the efforts being made by the African Union and its sub-regional mechanisms to operationalise the Rapid Deployment Capability of the African Standby Force. We appreciate the potential for innovative practices and partnerships to further develop the Force's operational capability and to enhance the planning capacities of both the AU and the UN.

² Grave Violations refer to the six grave violations identified by the United Nations Security Council, namely: killing and maiming of children; recruitment or use of children as soldiers; sexual violence against children; abduction of children; attacks against schools or hospitals; denial of humanitarian access for children.

AS OF 31 OCT 2017

Finally, we note that UN peacekeeping must be ready to respond to a vast array of challenges and that no advantage should be withheld for those working for peace. We therefore encourage the UN to pursue the trial and use of innovative and modern technology in the field, as appropriate and consistent with the basic principles of peacekeeping

* * * *

Taken together, and in working differently and better, these efforts will improve UN peacekeeping; building on the strength of our partnerships and common purpose to ensure that UN peacekeeping is fit for purpose in the 21st century.

We recognise this common purpose as the driving force behind our successful discussions at the 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial. We appreciate the support of Member States, regional organisations, and the UN Secretariat in the lead up to the Vancouver Ministerial, including the three preparatory conferences convened in Bangladesh, Japan and Rwanda. We further appreciate the steadfast support of the co-hosts of the Vancouver Ministerial, including Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, Pakistan, Rwanda, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay.

Lastly, we commend the efforts of Member States in advancing their pledges since 2014, and we encourage all Member States to ensure that their pledges are registered in the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System. We note that pledges made at these high-level conferences are making a difference on the ground, saving lives, and improving UN peacekeeping.

UN PEACEKEEPING DEFENCE MINISTERIAL: VANCOUVER 2017 CONCEPT NOTE

With approximately 100,000 uniformed and civilian personnel from 124 Member States deployed in 16 peacekeeping operations under the United Nations flag, there are currently more peacekeepers on the ground than ever before. When properly mandated, resourced and supported, UN peacekeeping continues to be one of the most flexible and effective tools available to the international community in responding to crises around the world. However, a recent series of reports and reviews have highlighted that UN peacekeeping operations must address a range of challenges in order to remain fit for purpose in responding to 21st century conflicts.

Annual high-level discussions on UN peacekeeping have become an important part of the international community's effort to support UN peacekeeping operations. The 2015 Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping generated significant new pledges of military and police capabilities. The 2016 London Defence Ministerial, attended by 70 Member States, reviewed progress on implementing pledges and announced additional pledges. At London, Ministers endorsed ways to improve the planning and performance of UN peacekeeping operations, by increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping, tackling sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as improving rapid deployment and training and evaluation.

Building on these successful discussions, Canada's Minister of National Defence will host the 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial on 14-15 November 2017 in Vancouver. The event will take stock of strategic force generation efforts to date and will encourage new **pledges** from Member States to close key capability gaps for UN peacekeeping operations. It will also advance peacekeeping reform through the efforts of Member States and the UN to improve the UN's capacity to deliver better **planning** and **performance** of peacekeeping operations. The event will foster pragmatic and innovative solutions to make peacekeeping operations more effective, by building on the "3Ps" (pledges, planning, performance) with a new focus on **partnerships**.

Canada will bring the UN and Member States together to engage in a wide-ranging discussion on UN peacekeeping. Recognizing that **integrating gender perspectives** and **empowering women** are integral to improving the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, these cross-cutting issues will be integrated into all aspects of the event, including in discussions on improving peacekeeping planning and performance. As Secretary-General Guterres has stated that conflict prevention is a key priority for the UN, discussions in Vancouver will highlight the importance of **integrated approaches to preventing conflicts**.

The 2017 Ministerial will advance these objectives through panel sessions on the following themes:

1. **SMART PLEDGES** – To take stock of the progress of pledges as well as to showcase new “smart” pledges (i.e. pledges in partnership with other countries). This session will focus on pledges of enablers including key force multipliers such as helicopters. Anticipated outcomes include: reviewing progress on efforts to date to fill the UN’s significant capability needs from the perspective of both Member States and the UN Secretariat; highlighting new pledges to close outstanding capability gaps and the need for francophone capacities; and sharing best practices on rotations of enablers. This first session will also take stock of progress on reaching targets set out in 2016 to increase rates of female participation in UN peacekeeping, feature new gender-related pledges, and share approaches on how to meet those targets in the coming years.
2. **INNOVATION IN TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING** – To explore avenues to encourage effective partnerships between the UN, troop/police contributing countries (T/PCCs), and other actors involved in peacekeeping capacity building. Anticipated outcomes include fostering cooperation among military, civilian and police force mentors and trainers in pre-deployment and capacity building training, with specific reference to enablers in short supply; identifying further opportunities for the development of female peacekeepers; and initiatives to address linguistic gaps and enhance operational capabilities in francophone contexts.
3. **PROTECTING THOSE AT RISK** – The success of UN peacekeeping should be ultimately measured by its impact on those that UN peacekeepers seek to protect. This session will look at protection issues at both the strategic and operational levels, including the use of force in protection mandates and engaging with local populations. Anticipated outcomes include highlighting how some T/PCCs are operationalizing gender perspectives (such as the use of mixed engagement teams); identifying practical ways to further the Kigali Principles and encouraging more Member States to formally join; outlining new approaches to addressing sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers and civilian employees through accountability and prevention efforts; and inviting contributions to the Trust Fund for Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation.
4. **EARLY WARNING AND RAPID DEPLOYMENT** – This session will be an opportunity for the UN to provide an update on the reforms it is implementing to improve its approach to rapid deployment and to outline remaining gaps in this area. Member States will also be encouraged to provide new pledges to meet the UN’s rapid deployment requirement for 2017-18 of an integrated brigade. Other potential outcomes include identifying innovative approaches, capacities and technologies to improve early warning, rapid analysis and planning capabilities and to shorten new mission start-up timelines. Gender perspectives will also be incorporated, such as the importance of the role of women in improving community engagement and early warning to better protect civilians in peacekeeping operations.

The formal program for the Ministerial will begin with an evening reception and dinner on 14 November. In keeping with past practice, the UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award will be awarded at that time. Further, the Minister of National Defence will invite all participants to attend *Focus on Peacekeeping* events earlier on 14 November, in advance of the formal Ministerial program. These events will focus on broader issues related to peacekeeping and include stakeholders that might not otherwise participate in the Ministerial. The themes for these events will be *Youth as Peacebuilders* and *The Role of the Private Sector in Conflict Prevention*. All events will take place in the Vancouver Convention Centre.

Defence ministers from all Member States which have already pledged capabilities or personnel to UN peacekeeping through the annual UN peacekeeping conference process, or any Member States which are ready to make a new pledge, are welcome to participate at the 2017 Ministerial. The UN's *Uniformed Capability Requirements for UN Peacekeeping* paper provides regularly updated detailed information on the types of pledges that are being sought.

There are high expectations that countries which have made pledges will have advanced their pledges by the time of the Ministerial. In Vancouver, the UN will report on the status of all previous pledges and their readiness for deployment.

Co-hosts

In addition to the UN, the co-hosts for the 2017 Ministerial will include Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, Pakistan, Rwanda, Uruguay, USA, and the UK. Co-hosts will have the opportunity, in coordination with the UN and Canada, to chair preparatory meetings aimed at preparing key deliverables for the 2017 Ministerial.

Civil Society Engagement

Civil society representatives will be invited to Ottawa to take part in an engagement event in the lead up to the 2017 Ministerial. Engagement with civil society representatives will be undertaken to take into account the substantive knowledge and valuable networks that many civil society organizations possess with respect to UN peacekeeping.

Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers

We, the Member States endorsing the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers,

Deeply concerned by the widespread recruitment and use of children in situations of armed conflict by armed forces and armed groups, including as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies, or for sexual purposes, as well as other Grave Violations¹ against children in situations of armed conflict,

Reiterating our strong commitment to the protection of children affected by armed conflict and to ending and preventing Grave Violations against children,

Recognizing that the recruitment and use of children are prevalent in areas of contemporary peacekeeping operations, and recalling that peacekeeping can play a role in preventing Grave Violations against children in armed conflict,

Recognizing the important steps taken by the United Nations, Member States, civil society, and other relevant actors to address the recruitment and use of child soldiers,

Recalling United Nations Security Council resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2013), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014), and 2225 (2015).

Building upon the success of the Paris Principles on their 10th anniversary and seeking to further articulate their guidance to the peacekeeping context,

Emphasizing the need to prioritize and operationalize the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers in areas of operation of peacekeeping, noting the critical role of such prevention to the achievement of peace and security, and taking into account the differential impact of conflict on girls and boys,

Hereby pledge:

Mandates

1. To strongly encourage the inclusion of appropriate child protection provisions, including the prevention of recruitment and use of child soldiers, in all United Nations peacekeeping mandates, including for regional peacekeeping operations,

Planning

2. To prioritize the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the strategic and operational planning of all peacekeeping operations,

Early warning

¹ Grave Violations refer to the six grave violations identified by the United Nations Security Council, namely: killing and maiming of children; recruitment or use of children as soldiers; sexual violence against children; abduction of children; attacks against schools or hospitals; denial of humanitarian access for children.

3. To support United Nations efforts to monitor, report, identify, and address early warning signs of the recruitment and use of child soldiers, recognizing that such acts can amount to war crimes and can be a precursor of other war crimes, including attacks on civilians and civilian objects, crimes against humanity, and genocide,

Child protection focal points

4. To appoint child protection focal points throughout our mission command structures, both military and police, to support the development of a common international standard endorsed by participating nations and the United Nations for training and certification of such focal points, and to enable and encourage active communication, coordination, and cooperation between such focal points and civilian Child Protection Advisors as well as other child protection actors,

Training

5. To ensure that all our peacekeepers receive training on child protection prior to their deployment to peacekeeping operations and to integrate the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers, as well as clear guidance regarding interactions with children associated with armed forces or armed groups, within our peacekeepers' training, education, and doctrine to a common agreed international standard endorsed by the United Nations, and to undertake regular reviews of such training and doctrine to ensure its effectiveness,

Monitoring and reporting

6. To take steps to ensure our peacekeepers report incidents of Grave Violations against children in situations of armed conflict, including the recruitment and use of children, to United Nations Child Protection Advisors or through the appropriate channels established in peacekeeping operations, and to include such monitoring and accountability measures within our national mission mandate and peacekeeping training,

Protection and care of children

7. To take proactive measures to ensure that all children, including those associated with armed forces and armed groups, who come into contact with our peacekeepers during peacekeeping operations are treated in accordance with international humanitarian law and applicable international human rights law, with special consideration of their status as children, and are protected against violations of international humanitarian law and applicable international human rights law, and that any requirements for the care and aid of such children are appropriately addressed and communicated to Heads of Missions and the military chain of command in the most expeditious manner possible in the circumstances,

Prevention

8. To act effectively in response to credible information, and where authorized by the mission mandate and our rules of engagement, to protect children at risk of recruitment or use as child soldiers and other Grave Violations,

Detention

9. To ensure that all children apprehended and/or temporarily detained in accordance with mission-specific military rules of engagement are treated in a manner consistent with international norms and standards, as well as the special status, needs, and rights of children and to ensure that detention is used as a measure of last resort, for the shortest possible period of time, and with the best interests of the child as a primary consideration, and that they are handed over expeditiously to child protection actors and civilian authorities in line with the established policies and guidance,

Conduct and discipline

10. To hold our own personnel to the highest standard of conduct, and to vigorously and transparently investigate and prosecute, where appropriate and in accordance with applicable national law, or otherwise fully cooperate with the competent authority, any incidents of alleged abuse against children– including sexual exploitation and abuse – by our peacekeepers,

Contribution of women

11. To recognize the essential contribution of women to peacekeeping operational effectiveness, and the distinct and critical roles of both men and women in the protection of children and the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers,

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

12. To ensure that child soldiers are included as a priority in the planning and execution of all United Nations supported disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and, where appropriate, repatriation efforts, taking into account their specific needs, including those based on gender, age, and other identity factors, to assist in their successful transition to normal life, and to prevent their re-recruitment,

Mental health

13. To actively promote and support research on the trauma experienced by personnel confronting child soldiers and interacting with children affected by armed conflict, and to provide appropriate pre-deployment preparation, as well as mental health support during and post-deployment,

Peace processes

14. To support the inclusion of child protection provisions within the terms of peace processes, peace agreements, and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction efforts, noting the unique vulnerability and protection needs of children, the importance of their rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities, and the urgent need to prevent and end the recruitment and use of child soldiers to achieve lasting and sustainable peace,

Sanctions

15. To support the inclusion of child recruitment and use as a designation criterion in United Nations sanctions regimes aimed at supporting the political settlement of conflicts in the context of peace operations,

Best practices

16. To share with other Member States and the United Nations best practices and lessons learned on the prevention of the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the context of peacekeeping,

Further guidance

And in this regard look forward to the development, in consultation with Member States, the United Nations, and child protection actors, of operational guidance for the implementation of these Principles.

Vancouver, Canada, 14 November 2017

Backgrounder: Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers

“The purpose of the Vancouver Principles is to prioritize and further operationalize child protection within UN peacekeeping, with a focus on tackling the recruitment and use of child soldiers.”

Issue

There are an estimated 245 million children living in countries and territories affected by armed conflicts worldwide. Conflict disproportionately affects children and there has been an alarming increase in Grave Violations against children in situations of armed conflict, including killing, maiming, recruitment and use of children, sexual violence, unlawful attacks against schools or hospitals, denial of humanitarian access, and abduction of children.

Among those affected, thousands of children – both boys and girls – are serving as soldiers in situations of armed conflict, as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies, or for sexual purposes. Many have been recruited by force, though some may have joined as a result of economic, social, or security pressures. Situations of displacement and poverty make children even more vulnerable to recruitment.

Children associated with armed forces or armed groups are often exposed to horrific violence – often forced both to witness and commit violence, while themselves being abused, exploited, injured, or even killed as a result. Their condition deprives them of their rights and educational opportunities, often with severe physical and emotional consequences. Such consequences not only impact their personal development but can also have a dramatic impact on long term peace and security in a country. The recruitment of child soldiers is also often tied to other Grave Violations. Former UN Special Representative to the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict Leila Zerrougui stated that “We must put priority of effort on the prevention of the recruitment and use of children as soldiers, if we are to successfully tackle the remaining five Grave Violations against children in armed conflict.”

The recruitment and use of children are prevalent in areas of contemporary peacekeeping operations. Security Council Resolution 1261 (1999) formally acknowledged that the protection of children in armed conflict is a fundamental peace and security concern. The Security Council has also tasked specific peacekeeping missions to undertake child protection since 2001. Peacekeepers can and do play a critical role in addressing Grave Violations against children in armed conflict, including recruitment and use, but there is still much more to be done.

Existing framework

Over the past 40 years, international law has developed to better protect children from military recruitment and exploitation, including the Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions (1977), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000). In recent years, states have spearheaded a number of initiatives outside the UN including the Paris Commitments and associated Paris Principles (2007) which lay out detailed guidelines for protecting children from recruitment and for providing assistance to those already involved with armed groups or forces. The Safe Schools Declaration (2015) called on states to protect schools and universities from military use during armed conflict. The Kigali Principles (2015) established a set of commitments on how to better protect civilians in peacekeeping operations.

These instruments have been buttressed by a series of UN Security Council resolutions¹ which determined that child protection is a concern for international peace and security; that mission-specific resolutions should include child protection provisions; that peacekeeping missions must monitor and report Grave Violations against children; that the UN should deploy child protection advisors; and that all peacekeepers must be trained on child protection. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has operationalized many of these provisions through its internal Child Protection Policy (2017) as well as its UN Infantry Battalion Manual (2012).

Despite this framework, there remains a critical gap in policies and military and police doctrine for preventing the recruitment of children and responding to child soldiers encountered in the course of peacekeeping.

Vancouver Principles

The Vancouver Principles were developed to build on and complement the existing framework. They are a set of non-binding pledges by Member States for preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the context of UN peacekeeping, covering all stages of the conflict cycle. While some of the elements draw from the existing framework, the Vancouver Principles take a more **pro-active stance** on preventing child recruitment in the context of **peacekeeping operations**, specifically with regard to early warning and the active prevention of recruitment. Moreover, whereas other documents are internal to the UN, the Vancouver Principles put forth political commitments **by member states** regarding training, planning, and the conduct of their **own** forces.

Endorsing states of the Vancouver Principles pledge to the following:

- Encouraging the inclusion of appropriate child protection provisions in peacekeeping operation mandates;
- Prioritizing the prevention of the recruitment and use of children during the planning of peacekeeping operations;
- Addressing the early warning signs of child recruitment and use;
- Conducting field-focused training on interacting with child soldiers and preventing child recruitment and use;
- Appointing child protection focal points, both military and police;
- Implementing special measures for the detention of children;
- Acting effectively to prevent child recruitment as permitted by mission mandates and rules of engagement;
- Systematically reporting on abuses and Grave Violations against children in armed conflict;
- Investigating and disciplining any abuse of children by peacekeepers;
- Providing psychological support for peacekeepers faced by child soldiers;
- Recognizing the critical roles of men and women in child protection in peacekeeping operations;
- Ensuring child soldiers are included in DDR efforts;
- Including child protection in peace agreements;
- Sharing best practices;

Operationalizing the Vancouver Principles can take a number of forms. These can include developing rules of engagement tailored to areas of operations where child soldiers are known

¹ UN Security Council Resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2013), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014), and 2225 (2015).

to be present; conducting child protection training for military and police focal points and dedicated child protection advisors; developing aide-memoires and scenario-based training on interacting with child soldiers; tasking intelligence assets to analyze child recruitment patterns and linkages; adjusting patrol base locations and patrol routes to deter exploitation of at-risk children; pro-actively liaising with schools and orphanages at risk of attack and child abduction; building bridges with community-based service providers to facilitate access for child soldiers and at-risk children to needed resources, and deploying deterrent forces when presented with credible information of imminent threat to children.

The Vancouver Principles take their name from the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference in Vancouver, on the margins of which they are to be formally adopted. The Principles are directly linked to the priorities of the Ministerial, namely: innovation in training and capacity-building, early warning, and protecting those at risk. Fundamentally, the Vancouver Principles contribute to the overall effectiveness of UN peacekeeping.

Next steps

The Vancouver Principles will be formally adopted on the margins of the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference in Vancouver on 14 November 2017. However, the Principles will continue to welcome new endorsements thereafter. The Principles also call for the development of specific operational guidance, in consultation with Member States, the UN and child protection actors, for their implementation.

Frequently Asked Questions: Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers

What are the Vancouver Principles?

The Vancouver Principles are a set of political commitments endorsed by Member States regarding the prevention of recruitment and use of child soldiers in a peacekeeping context.

Why are they called the Vancouver Principles?

The Vancouver Principles will be formally adopted on 14 November 2017 on the margins of the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver, Canada.

What is the purpose of the Vancouver Principles?

The purpose of the Vancouver Principles is to prioritize and further operationalize child protection within UN peacekeeping with a focus on preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Who are the Vancouver Principles aimed at?

The Vancouver Principles are geared toward troop and police contributors operating under a UN peacekeeping mandates. However, many of the themes underlying the principles can be applicable military and police operating outside a UN peacekeeping context.

Who can endorse the Vancouver Principles?

The Vancouver Principles are open to all UN Member States, regardless if they are currently troop or police contributing countries.

What do countries who endorse the Vancouver Principles agree to?

By endorsing the Vancouver Principles Member States commit to undertake several common-sense steps to prevent children from being used as soldiers. These include planning and training; addressing early warning signs and reporting abuses and Grave Violations; sharing best practices; acting effectively to prevent child recruitment; appointing child protection focal points; ensuring proper conduct of peacekeepers; and including child protection in peacekeeping mandates, peace agreements, and DDR efforts. Endorsing states are encouraged to implement the Vancouver Principles through their respective roles in authorizing peacekeeping mandates as members of the UN Security Council, approving aspects of peacekeeping budget that support the Principles' implementation, contributing to the development of peacekeeping policies through the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping, contributing personnel directly to peacekeeping operations, and/or providing training and equipment to countries that contribute troops or police to peacekeeping operations.

How are the Vancouver Principles different from other child protection and peacekeeping commitments?

Building upon the existing child protection framework, the Vancouver Principles take a more pro-active stance on preventing child recruitment in the context of peacekeeping operations, specifically with regard to early warning and the active prevention of recruitment. Moreover, the Vancouver Principles put forth political commitments by Member States regarding training, planning, and the conduct of their own peacekeepers in regards to child soldiers in the context of UN operations.

How were the Vancouver Principles developed?

The Vancouver Principles were conceived by the Government of Canada in partnership with the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative, and developed in consultation with the UN Department

of Peacekeeping Operations, UNICEF, the Special Representative to the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, child protection actors and civil society partners, and UN Member States.

What are the benefits of endorsing the Vancouver Principles?

By endorsing the Vancouver Principles Member States acknowledge the unique challenges posed by child soldiers and help ensure that their peacekeepers are prepared to prevent their recruitment and use in the context of peacekeeping operations. In so doing, they help ensure that children are kept off the battlefield and out of harm's way; enhance operational effectiveness of peacekeepers thereby increasing the likelihood that they will fulfill their mandates; and reduce the incidence of mental trauma among their peacekeepers.

How do Member States endorse to the Vancouver Principles?

Member States can endorse to the Vancouver Principles by sending a *note verbale* to the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations.

Can Member States endorse the Vancouver Principles after the Vancouver Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial?

Yes, Member States may join the Vancouver Principles any time after their adoption; however, they will not be listed as founding states if they join after 14 November 2017.

Can Member States join the Vancouver Principles if they do not participate in the Vancouver Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial?

Yes.

Are the Vancouver Principles legally binding?

No. They are a set of non-binding pledges aimed at preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers in context of UN peacekeeping.

How do the Vancouver Principles relate to the existing framework on peacekeeping, the protection of civilians, and child protection?

The Vancouver Principles are designed to build upon and complement the existing framework on peacekeeping and child protection, most notably the Paris Principles and relevant Security Council resolutions, among others. First, and above all, the Vancouver Principles specify actions that Member States will undertake regarding training, planning, and the conduct of their own national forces, be they police or military, in a peacekeeping context. The Vancouver Principles therefore cover critical gap in policies and military and police doctrine for preventing the recruitment of children and responding to child soldiers encountered in the course of peacekeeping.

Do the Vancouver Principles apply to humanitarian actors and child protection actors?

No. While the Vancouver Principles recognize and complement the valuable work carried out by various child protection actors, they are intended for police and military forces operating in a peacekeeping context.

What are examples of Member States implementing the Vancouver Principles?

There are many examples of Member States implementing elements of the Vancouver Principles. Canada has developed a joint doctrine note on child soldiers which includes guidance for the planning and execution of operations, including specialized pre-deployment training. Jordan's Public Security Directorate has included training on child soldiers to prepare

their police for peacekeeping operations. Sierra Leone has begun to integrate child soldiers into training for armed forces, police, and corrections with a view of further developing doctrine.

What are the next steps after the Vancouver Principles are adopted?

The Vancouver Principles establish a common political framework among Member States for preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers in a peacekeeping context. The Vancouver Principles envisage more detailed operational guidance for their implementation in training and operations. This guidance is to be developed in consultation with Member States, the UN and child protection actors.

Who can I contact for additional information?

Further queries can be directed to Mr. Simon Collard-Wexler, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations in New York (simon.collard-wexler@international.gc.ca).

Note Verbale Template for Endorsement of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers

Note: #

The Permanent Mission of **COUNTRY NAME** to the United Nations in New York presents its compliments to the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations and has the honour of referring to Note Verbale n.5000 regarding the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers (Vancouver Principles).

In this regard, the Permanent Mission of **COUNTRY NAME** has the honour of confirming its endorsement of the Vancouver Principles in advance of their launch on 14 November 2017.

The Permanent Mission of **COUNTRY NAME** avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Mission of Canada the assurances of its highest consideration.

NEW YORK
Day Month Year