



IMPACT STORY



# SETTING THE SCENE: USING AUDIOVISUAL TOOLS TO TRAIN PEACEKEEPERS

Photo © DPKO/Ben Zakour Man.

“There were six soldiers; they came into my house,” recalls one Congolese woman, her gaze fixed and sad. “Immediately they pointed their guns at me,” says another survivor, holding her infant son in her arms. “They asked me ‘do you want to live or die?’ ” “Then he began to rape me,” says a third woman, adding her story to the series of testimonies that give a devastating human account of the impact of rape used as a weapon of war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

These stories are part of a teaching video that is being used in an innovative scenario-based training programme for UN peacekeepers piloted by UN Women and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) on behalf of UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict and with the support of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Scenario-based training uses context-setting video clips, photos and other audiovisual tools to set the scene for troops and officers and ignite the discussion on sexual violence in armed conflict. After watching the videos, participants are presented with hypothetical scenarios based on real-life cases. They are given detailed information about the potential threats, the national and international assistance agencies involved, the geography of the area, etc., and asked how each actor should respond to that scenario.

“Attending the courses and seminars ... I deepened my knowledge, restructuring and consolidating my perspective,” says Army Captain Alexandre Shoji, Chief of the Civil Affairs

Section of the Brazilian Peacekeeping Operations Joint Centre (CCOPAB), who first took part in a scenario-based training course on sexual violence in Brazil in July 2011. “I realized that this would be the first step in a series of changes in my perception, whether as a peacekeeper or as an instructor.”

The scenario-based training approach aims to provide current and prospective peacekeeping unit commanders with an understanding of sexual violence in conflict as well as the dilemmas military and civilian decision-makers face in the field. The courses highlight best practices aimed at preventing or responding to sexual violence and explain the roles that various actors in UN missions play in addressing human rights violations, including crimes related to sexual violence.

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“This has very practical and operational implications,” stresses retired Major General Patrick Cammaert, who has previously served as a Military Advisor to the UN Secretary-General and led UN peacekeepers in Bosnia, Cambodia, Eritrea-Ethiopia, and Eastern DRC. He now leads these training exercises.

“Gender issues should be taken into account in everything the UN does to prepare for tactical operations or field deployments, ranging from patrol composition, to information and intelligence-gathering to special measures in the construction of camps to accommodate women’s needs.”

The presentations and discussions in these training modules stress peacekeepers' obligation to protect civilians and explain how mandate and rules of engagement apply to sexual violence. They teach preventive or responsive tactics, and the appropriate protocols to follow when encountering survivors.

At a series of trainings from 29-30 July 2013 at Pretoria's Peace Mission Training Centre in South Africa and from 14-15 August 2013 at the Rwanda Peace Academy in Musanze, UN Women and DPKO trained 100 high-ranking military officers on how to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence in peacekeeping missions.

At the end of the courses, participants reported having a greater understanding of their mandate to protect civilians, the rules of engagement and ways of enhancing the protection of women.

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“There are many things I can do as a peacekeeper that would protect women and girls, from targeted patrols to community outreach, intelligence gathering and quick impact projects devoted to the urgent needs of women and girls,” said one participant in the anonymous feedback survey in Rwanda. “We need continuous training and sensitization of peacekeepers about these issues and more women in our troops.”

Since April 2011, when UN Women and DPKO piloted these new modules in Bangladesh, more than 500 military officers have been trained in seven of the top UN troop-contributing countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Nepal, South Africa and Rwanda), as well as in two multi-country regional trainings



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

UN Women website:  
[www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security)

UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict:  
[www.stoprapenow.org](http://www.stoprapenow.org)

Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO):  
[www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/about/dpko](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/about/dpko)

(for Argentina and Uruguay as well as for Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro). Hundreds more have been trained in over a dozen other countries, as these trainings have been incorporated into courses on gender and peace operations and protection of civilians, as well as regular courses for contingent commanders and mission leadership.

Currently, peacekeepers rarely receive even one day of practical training on prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence. Both the Secretary-General and the Security Council have encouraged troop-contributing countries to incorporate the scenario-based training module, which has been embedded in DPKO's standard training on protection of civilians and will be disseminated to all peacekeeping training academies and staff colleges.

Back in Brazil, Captain Shoji has since incorporated the scenario-based exercises into all of his pre-deployment exercises and the CCOPAB requested permanent technical assistance so as to mainstream gender in all of its training, which UN Women has been providing.

Such ongoing relationships have flowed from trainings in many countries, with UN Women country offices providing ongoing support to several national peacekeeping training colleges. In India, UN Women and the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping have facilitated more than 20 training sessions on gender and sexual violence prevention and response over the past two years, for both national and international troops, while Nepal has hosted 33 workshops over the last three years.