HUMANITARIAN ACADEMY · HUMANITAIRES JOBS

Mini MBA Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord): preserving access and principles with armed actors

Course handout · Week 10 : Protecting people: camps, sexual violence, children and aid delivered by armies

A programme of exactly 3 months (12 weeks, 144 hours) to coordinate humanitarian action with armed actors: principles, armed actors and their culture, the Oslo and MCDA Guidelines, foreign military assets in disasters, complex emergencies and integrated missions, armed escorts, humanitarian notification and information sharing, access negotiation, liaison and forums, protection, country-specific guidelines and dilemmas. Based on the public texts of OCHA and the IASC. Corrected numerical exercises, three monthly exams with case studies, and a verifiable diploma from the Humanitarian Academy. Independent course: it is not OCHA's official UN-CMCoord course, to which it refers, and it does not award any United Nations certification.

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Week 10 : Protecting people: camps, sexual violence, children and aid delivered by armies

Objectives

- Defend the civilian and humanitarian character of camps and displacement sites.
- Integrate protection, gender, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and child protection into dialogue with armed actors.
- Analyse aid projects carried out by armed forces and limit their negative effects.

The civilian and humanitarian character of camps

Camps and sites for displaced people or refugees must keep a **civilian and humanitarian character**: no weapons, no recruitment, no military presence inside, separation of combatants. Primary responsibility lies with the host State; UNHCR and camp coordination actors support it.

Security forces can provide **security around** the sites (patrols outside, response to attacks), in ways discussed with humanitarians and residents' committees. Their presence inside is limited to specific, agreed situations.

Sexual violence, gender and PSEA

Women, girls, men and boys do not face the same risks. Dialogue with armed actors can cover:

- risks linked to movements (collecting firewood and water, checkpoints) and measures to reduce them;
- respect, by the forces, of the prohibition of **sexual exploitation and abuse**: peace missions apply a zero-tolerance policy, with reporting mechanisms;
- referral of survivors of violence to safe and confidential services, **never passing on** their identity to the forces without their informed consent.

Individual cases of sexual violence are handled by specialised actors, according to their protocols, not in civil-military meetings.

Children and armed conflict

Humanitarian dialogue can support child protection: prevention of recruitment, release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups, protection of schools. The Security Council has set up a monitoring and reporting mechanism on six grave violations against children (killing and maiming, recruitment and use, sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, denial of humanitarian access).

The **Safe Schools Declaration** (2015), endorsed by many States, encourages not using schools for military purposes. Humanitarians can remind forces of these commitments.

When the army delivers aid

Armed forces sometimes carry out aid projects: free medical care, distribution of goods, school rehabilitation, quick impact projects of peace missions. Their aim is often to win the support of the population or to facilitate the mission.

Risks for humanitarian action: **confusion** between humanitarian aid and military operations; **targeting** of places where the army has built; projects that are **not sustainable** or not coordinated with clusters; aid guided by military priorities rather than needs.

What humanitarians can ask: that these projects **are not presented as humanitarian**, that they are coordinated with clusters to avoid duplication and contradictions, that they respect technical standards, and that they do not concern places where humanitarians already work, when this creates a risk.

Private security companies and guards

Humanitarian organisations sometimes employ unarmed guards for their premises. Using **armed guards** or armed private security companies is an exceptional deterrence measure, subject to an analysis similar to that for escorts: last resort, effect on acceptance, control of the rules on the use of force.

The **International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers** and the **Montreux Document** provide useful benchmarks for choosing and overseeing a provider.

Exercise: the patrol in the camp

After several thefts and two assaults at night in a site of 15,000 displaced people, the national army proposes setting up an armed post in the middle of the site. Women's committees mainly ask for lighting and patrols around the latrines.

Propose a response that protects residents and the civilian character of the site.

Model answer. Refuse an armed post inside; propose police patrols outside and at the entrances, at agreed times; install lighting and separate lockable latrines; strengthen unarmed community security with the committees, including women; set up a confidential reporting channel; monitor incidents with the camp coordination cluster and protection actors.

Key takeaways

- Camps: civilian and humanitarian character, no weapons or military presence inside, security provided around them.
- Protection and gender: discuss risks and PSEA, never pass on survivors' identity without consent.
- Children: six grave violations monitored by the Security Council; do not use schools for military purposes.
- Military aid: do not present it as humanitarian, coordinate it with clusters, avoid targeting effects.
- Armed guards and private companies: an exceptional measure, analysed like an escort.

Quiz

1. In a displacement camp, security forces should preferably operate:
   A. Around the site, under a written agreement
   B. Inside the site, permanently
   C. In the registration of residents
   D. In distributions, to keep order

2. The identity of a survivor of sexual violence may be passed on to the forces:
   A. Never without her consent
   B. Always, to speed up the investigation
   C. If the army officially asks for it
   D. If the NGO judges the case serious

3. How many grave violations against children does the Security Council mechanism monitor?
   A. Four
   B. Ten
   C. Three
   D. Six

4. An aid project carried out by an army must:
   A. Be presented as humanitarian aid
   B. Be coordinated, without calling itself humanitarian
   C. Use white vehicles to reassure people
   D. Replace clusters in front-line areas

5. The Montreux Document concerns:
   A. Data protection
   B. Private military and security companies
   C. UN escorts
   D. Disasters in peacetime and foreign military assets

Quiz answers : 1. B · 2. C · 3. A · 4. D · 5. B