

What is civil-military coordination in a humanitarian context?

UN-CMCoord: “the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals”.

In Central African Republic (CAR), there are specific guidelines dated 3 October 2017, which provide a framework for UN-CMCOORD activities. These guidelines are based on global rules and principles but are more operational and specific to the CAR context. They refer not only to the coordination with the military component of MINUSCA, but also with the police and civilian components. They were validated by the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), the Force Commander of the MINUSCA and the Humanitarian Coordinator.

General objectives of the guidelines

- ✓ **Provide clear operational guidance** and a well-defined liaison framework on the relationship between humanitarian partners and MINUSCA
- ✓ **Ensure efficiency** by coordinating activities, eliminating duplication of tasks and minimizing inconsistencies
- ✓ **Ensure that humanitarian principles are respected**, and that access and humanitarian space are protected.

Specific objectives of the guidelines

- ✓ **Provide operational guidance** for constructive interaction and coordination between humanitarian actors and MINUSCA through a specific framework and clearly identified mechanisms by area of convergence
- ✓ **Promote a consistent and constructive approach for coexistence** between humanitarian actors and MINUSCA
- ✓ **Establish information-sharing and liaison arrangements.**
- ✓ **Identify clear criteria to request use of military, police, and civil defence assets (MCDA)**
- ✓ **Enhance understanding of humanitarian principles (humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence) by all parties**, adherence to these principles by humanitarian actors and their respect by MINUSCA, to facilitate immediate, full, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance

DIALOGUE AND ORIENTATION



@OCHA. Training session for the Central African Republic Armed Forces (FACA) in Obo in July 2020.

Within the framework of CMCOORD activities, OCHA organizes training sessions on humanitarian principles, humanitarian action and civil-military coordination for the different security forces deployed in CAR.

- ✓ **Enhance understanding** of MINUSCA institutions, protocols, modus operandi, and constraints by humanitarian actors
- ✓ **Maintain clear distinction between humanitarian actors and MINUSCA** so that humanitarian actors can deliver assistance to save lives and alleviate human suffering in accordance with humanitarian principles
- ✓ **Outline the parameters of MINUSCA engagement in direct and indirect assistance**, as well as infrastructure support

activities, Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and CIMIC activities

- ✓ **Establish a mechanism to monitor the application of the guidelines** and to ensure the commitments taken by all parties are respected and any issues that may arise are resolved constructively
- ✓ **Strengthen CMCOORD capacities** through targeted training in the field, in Bangui and also online

Scope and applicability of the guidelines

- ✓ **The guidelines apply to humanitarian actors** in CAR as well as MINUSCA
- ✓ **Foreign military forces deployed** under bilateral arrangements with the Government of CAR (for example the French Operational Support Detachment, EUTM) **and internal security forces** (Central African Armed Forces, Gendarmerie, National Police) **are encouraged to apply the guidelines**
- ✓ Do not apply to **non-state armed groups** (specific rules of engagement with armed groups as agreed by the Humanitarian Country Team are in place)

Civil-military coordination represents:

- ✓ A coherent approach to the use of armed escorts
- ✓ Alternative solutions to armed escorts
- ✓ A common understanding of the principle of last resort (i.e., use of military assets or resources when no other realistic civilian option is available at that time to meet a critical and urgent humanitarian need)
- ✓ Clear and commonly understood processes for the use of military assets in support of the humanitarian response
- ✓ Complementarity of CIMIC activities and humanitarian response
- ✓ Strengthen local civil-military-police coordination and interaction

Operational principles

- ✓ Humanitarian action in accordance with humanitarian principles (neutrality, impartiality, humanity and operational independence). Therefore, independence at both operational and political levels

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO ARMED ESCORTS



@MINUSCA – Hervé Sereffo, 13 April 2019
Blue Helmets and FACA mixed patrol

Through the CMCOORD mechanism, humanitarian partners share their movement planning in advance to enable MINUSCA to organize patrols on the sensitive routes they plan to use

- ✓ Distinction between humanitarian actors and military/police actors (including assets and equipment)
- ✓ Commit to “do no harm”
- ✓ Option of last resort should guide decisions
- ✓ Coexistence strategy to minimize competition and inconsistencies
- ✓ Enable the different actors to work in the same geographical area with the least possible disruption to each other's activities
- ✓ Humanitarian actors are not mandated by MINUSCA and vice versa
- ✓ Separate assessment missions from humanitarian and military or police actors
- ✓ Build on lessons learned and recommended practices

Recommended approaches

- ✓ Humanitarian assessment missions to only have a humanitarian agenda (separate from MINUSCA civilian, police or military missions)
- ✓ Confidentiality with regards to sensitive information: do not expose affected individuals or humanitarian actors (consent of individuals)

and organizations required). Information sharing must not compromise neutrality, independence, or security of humanitarian actors

- ✓ Avoid co-location with military actors
- ✓ No weapons in the offices or premises of humanitarian actors
- ✓ Clear distinction between uniformed/civilian clothing
- ✓ Relief supplies, premises, vehicles, aircrafts should be clearly marked to identify civilian or military assets
- ✓ Distinct and separate communication strategies and equipment

Use of assets and resources

Humanitarian actors:

- ✓ Humanitarian actors should not use MINUSCA assets or resources except as a **last resort**

If mobilised:

- ✓ MINUSCA assets should be used only for humanitarian purposes
- ✓ Civilian and humanitarian character must be preserved
- ✓ It should respond to an immediate, urgent humanitarian need
- ✓ Decision to request the use of military assets must be made by humanitarian partners
- ✓ Use of assets should be restricted in area of operation and time-bound
- ✓ A request to use MINUSCA assets must be approved by the Humanitarian Coordinator via OCHA

LAST RESORT



@OCHA. Type of MINUSCA helicopter used for the rescue operation

On 15th August 2020, MINUSCA organized a rescue mission to evacuate members of a humanitarian mission who were stranded in Nzacko because of mechanical issue of their helicopter

MINUSCA:

- ✓ Use of humanitarian assets by MINUSCA decided on a case-by-case basis
- ✓ If it is to support a humanitarian objective, validation by the Humanitarian Coordinator is required
- ✓ Under no circumstances should weapons, military equipment or uniformed personnel be transported with humanitarian means
- ✓ QIPs (Quick Impact Projects): not intended to be humanitarian aid or long-term development projects
- ✓ QIPs must not duplicate or negatively impact humanitarian actions
- ✓ Use of QIPs for infrastructure projects should be regulated by DPKO-MINUSCA guidelines
- ✓ CIMIC activities, not to be confused with humanitarian activities, must be carried out in close coordination with CMCOORD

Coordination mechanisms

Civil-military humanitarian coordination must take place as close as possible to humanitarian response activities and therefore at the field level. CMCOORD cells in Alindao, Bambari, Bangassou, Bangui, Batangafo, Bocaranga, Bossangoa, Bouar, Birao, Bria, Kaga-Bandoro, Obo, Paoua help build and strengthen dialogue, address immediate issues, and find solutions locally. OCHA engages daily with MINUSCA's military and police components.

These cells are co-chaired by OCHA (or its designate) and MINUSCA (Head of Operations G3, U3/U35). They bring together humanitarian partners (Heads of Mission of INGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, UN Agencies, Funds and Programs, UNHAS, INSO, INGO Coordination Committee, Logistics and Protection clusters), MINUSCA military and police actors (UNPOL, FPU) - in Bangui also EUTM and the French Operation Support Detachment - MINUSCA civilian entities (JMAC, POC), humanitarian donors and UNDSS.

In certain locations internal security forces and local authorities also participate in CMCOORD cell meetings.

These cells meet weekly or twice a month, according to the location. Ad-hoc meetings may be held as needed.

Strategic coordination between humanitarian actors and MINUSCA is done through the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Head of the OCHA Office, in consultation with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the inter-cluster coordination group (ICCG).

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UN-CMCOORD e-Course :

<https://sites.google.com/dialoguing.org/home/training-and-partnership/un-cmcoord-ecourse>

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