PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS (POC)
Guidance Summary of the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Policy (2023.05)

Protection of Civilians (POC) in UN Peacekeeping is a whole-of-mission mandate implemented through a comprehensive and integrated approach.

WHAT IS POC?
States have the primary responsibility to protect civilians. In peacekeeping missions with a POC mandate, the civilian and uniformed components of the mission should work in an integrated and coordinated way to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians. They should do this within the mission’s capabilities and areas of deployment, through the use of all necessary means, up to and including deadly force.

WHY IT MATTERS?
POC is a priority mandate of UN multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations since 1999 (S/RES/1265, 1999; S/RES/1270, 1999) and over 96% of peacekeepers serve in missions with POC mandates. UN peacekeeping operations are confronted with a broad range of threats to civilians and increasingly complex operational environments.

Guiding Principles of POC
- International law
- Priority in resource allocation
- Principles of peacekeeping
- Active duty to protect
- Duty to do no harm
- Community-based approach
- Gender-responsive approaches to POC
- Respect of humanitarian principles
- Enabled by technology and informed by data

Related Documents: POC Policy 2023 & POC Handbook 2020 (Translations available)
Any questions? Contact the Protection of Civilians Team in DPO at PBPS-POC-UNHQ@un.org