



Accountability System for the Protection of Civilians

Compacts for Senior UN Leaders

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SUMMARY

Monitoring individual performance is key to ensuring optimal organizational performance and to linking institutional and individual accountability. As defined by the UN secretary-general in 2010, “accountability will be in direct proportion to the responsibility assigned and the authority delegated.”¹

There are two types of tools to track and monitor the individual performance of staff at the UN Secretariat: (1) compacts with senior officials (assistant secretaries-general and above); and (2) a performance-appraisal system for staff below the level of assistant secretary-general, called e-Performance (formerly e-PAS).

Compacts are annual agreements signed by the secretary-general and his senior officials (including heads of departments and offices, heads of missions, and special representatives). Compacts identify strategic goals shared by all departments, missions, and offices (such as the efficient management of financial resources; specific programmatic objectives related to the mandate of their department, office, or mission; and objectives included in budget documents). They include progress toward standardized objectives common to all senior UN leaders and objectives specific to the mission and mandate.

The senior leader is expected to report on the objectives agreed upon in the compact on an annual basis.

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RELEVANCE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

In 2018, the UN Secretariat issued an addendum on accountability to the 2015 Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support's (DFS) Policy on Protection of Civilians (POC). This addendum broke down the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders and required the inclusion of POC in the compacts of heads of missions, deputy heads of mission, and force commanders in missions mandated to protect civilians. The recently updated 2019 Policy on POC consolidates and adds to these provisions, as follows:

The individual accountability of any senior mission leader at the level of Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) and above (normally Special Representatives of the Secretary-General

¹ UN General Assembly, *Towards an Accountability System in the United Nations Secretariat—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/64/640, January 29, 2010; and UN General Assembly, *Review of the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations: Establishment of a Transparent and Effective System of Accountability and Responsibility—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/C.5/49/1*, August 5, 1994.

(SRSGs), Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (DSRSGs) and Force Commanders, is enshrined in a senior managers' compact, and their performance is managed and evaluated through this instrument, which reflects mandate priorities. Senior leaders in missions with POC mandates who have a Compact shall include a strategic objective on POC in their Compact aligned with mandate priorities, the mission's strategic objectives and their oversight role.

In submitting their self-evaluation on the achievement of their strategic objective, senior leaders should identify any impediments to the effective implementation of the POC mandate. The review of their performance should also consider the outcomes of any investigation mechanism including board of inquiry report, or any other special or general report, which contains information relevant to [the performance of the senior officials] as it relates to his or her POC responsibilities.²

The 2019/2020 compacts for the seven heads of missions mandated to protect civilians all consequently include the following standardized special objective: "Fulfil leadership responsibilities to implement the Mission's protection of civilians' mandate." Performance measures include "compliance of the Mission with organizational and [Department of Peace Operations (DPO)/Department of Operational Support (DOS)] policies and guidance on the protection of civilians in United Nations peacekeeping, including minimum requirements to implement the POC mandate (POC strategy established, POC coordination and joint operations mechanisms established, quarterly POC threat assessment conducted, POC contingency plans prepared, POC military and police orders issued)."

Some SRSGs have also included additional language related to POC in the section dedicated to "programmatic objectives" and "delivering my responsibilities as a senior manager of the United Nations."

Examples

The heads of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, UNAMID, and UNIFIL have made POC a dedicated program objective, with related expected accomplishments and performance measures.

For example, the head of MONUSCO included "effective, dynamic and integrated protection of civilians under threat of physical violence" as her first program objective. She also committed to "base [her] engagements at all levels on four principles, namely (i) the primacy of politics, (ii) partnerships and sustainability, (iii) human rights and protection first, and (iv) delivering as one as defined in the Mission Concept." She also included an extensive list of related expected accomplishments on the reduction of the risk of violence, the prevention of the expansion of armed groups, the support of further professionalization of national security forces to foster their ability to protect; the promotion of human rights; and support to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. Multiple performance measures are also listed, from the implementation of

² UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), "Policy: The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping," November 1, 2019.

prevention and response plans based on forward-looking POC threat assessments, good offices, comprehensive strategies to neutralize armed groups, capacity building, monitoring of abuses, and support to the fight against impunity.

The head of MINUSCA included “[enhancing] security, protection of civilians and human rights” in his program objectives. His performance measures include a decrease in the number of attacks and clashes, no major outbreaks of violence, the establishment of special mixed units, proactive measures by the mission to prevent gross human rights violations and abuses against the civilian populations, robust posturing to protect civilians, and improved early warning and community-based protection mechanisms.³ He also specifically mentioned the use of communication and technology systems for POC.⁴

The head of UNAMID also specifically made “protection of civilians through [the] strengthening of institutions and respect for fundamental human rights across Darfur” a program objective, in addition to the standard “special objective.” Expected accomplishments encompass strengthened judicial and penal institutions, increased capacity for state police forces to support the provision of policing services, strengthened national human rights commission and transitional justice mechanisms, and protection monitoring of areas where the operations team has withdrawn. Performance measures include the increased number of state police trained, the establishment of state administrations, the strengthened capacity of civil society to promote human rights, the monitoring of human rights, and human rights and transitional justice mechanisms being functional in Darfur. In his commitments related to leadership, he also added that he “will continue to prioritize the Mission’s core mandate of protection of civilians in Darfur by ensuring that the military, police and substantive sections are proactively deployed to the areas of highest risk to [internally displaced persons] and other civilians [and] will also continue to place emphasis on enhanced early warning mechanisms to ensure prompt and effective responses to threats of violence against civilians.”

The head of UNIFIL included a program objective on “[maintaining] legitimacy and popular support of UNIFIL’s activities with the local civilian population and [using] all necessary means within UNIFIL’s capabilities to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.” His expected accomplishments include the implementation of a mission-wide strategy on POC and the mainstreaming of this strategy into the planning of

³ The head of MINUSCA’s program objectives also include the establishment of implementation committees and technical security committees; enhanced coherence and coordination by the government in the deployment of security and defense forces; improved early-warning and community-based protection mechanisms; the strengthening of participation in decision making by marginalized and minority groups; an increase in the number of cases of violations that are resolved; an increase in the number of parties that have issued clear orders to prohibit sexual violence and in the number of children released from armed groups; an increase in the number of security forces trained in human rights, POC, the protection of children, sexual and gender-based violence, and civil-military relations; and the tracking and monitoring of violations of the peace agreement and reductions in violations.

⁴ Specifically, he committed to “enhance decision making relating to the protection of civilians in Bangui in the Force Protection and Security Technology Services by leveraging state of the art technologies. This will include installation of smart city sensors, night vision, and video walls.”

activities and contingencies across the mission. Performance measures encompass engagement initiatives, de-mining operations, the regular review of the POC strategy and related contingency plans, and exercises to ensure that mission personnel understand their responsibilities and properly perform their tasks.

The heads of UNMISS, MINUSMA, and UNISFA have identified broader program objectives on contributing to the establishment of a protective environment (maintaining a secure environment, supporting national authorities, and ensuring accountability for human rights abuses) and included specific “expected accomplishments” and performance measures related to POC.

The head of UNMISS added program objectives that contribute to the protection of civilians, such as “accountability for serious human rights violations,” “voluntary and dignified returns and integration of [internally displaced persons] and refugees,” and progress in the implementation of the peace process. He also specifically committed to “ensure the safety of my staff, both uniformed and civilian, as well as those under the protection of the Organization.”

The compact of the head of MINUSMA includes a program objective to “support, with effective mobilization of the international community, the Malian authorities for the stabilization of areas where civilians are at risk in central Mali, particularly by providing assistance to the Government’s efforts in the Centre and the Government’s *cadre politique* for the Center.” While the commitment remains focused on assisting the host state in protecting civilians, one of the “expected accomplishments” listed in the compact is for “MINUSMA [to strengthen] its efforts to protect civilians in Central Mali [by implementing] its Protection of Civilians (POC) strategy and relevant operational plans in complementarity with the Malian Government and its international partners.” Performance measures include the reinforcement of military and police components’ capacities, the strengthening of the Malian administration and security forces, and the sustained implementation of “initiatives providing basic services..., focusing on POC, monitoring of human rights and humanitarian or development actions.

The head of UNISFA mentioned POC in his compact as an expected accomplishment related to the program objective on maintaining a secure environment in Abyei: “Mission’s civilian-protection mandate is implemented including taking necessary actions to protect those under imminent threat of physical violence, irrespective of its source.” Performance measures include patrolling and engagement with communities.

Governing rules

UN human resources rules include provisions related to the performance of staff, including senior managers:

- (a) Staff members shall be evaluated for their efficiency, competence and integrity through performance appraisal mechanisms that shall assess the staff member's compliance with the standards set out in the Staff Regulations and Rules for purposes of accountability.
- (b) The Secretary-General shall seek to ensure that appropriate learning and development programmes are available for the benefit of staff.
- (c) Performance reports shall be prepared regularly for all staff members, including at the Assistant Secretary-General level and above, in accordance with procedures promulgated by the Secretary-General.⁵

Process and functioning

Senior managers sign an annual agreement with the secretary-general called a compact. Compacts are also in place between heads of mission and their deputies in peacekeeping operations.⁶

The 2019/2020 compact includes two sections. The first section focuses on delivering results, which encompasses:

- Achieving program objectives: Program objectives are closely related to the mandate given to the mission or department.
- Achieving special objectives: Special objectives are defined in the standardized template for field missions and include:
 - Managing the operational security, occupational safety, and health and organizational resilience risks that threaten mandate implementation;
 - Strengthening the integration of the UN system through the implementation of the Integrated Assessment and Planning Policy (for integrated missions only);
 - Ensuring that mission support to non-UN security forces complies with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy;
 - Ensuring maximum efficiency in the use of natural resources and minimal environmental risk to people, society, and ecosystems in the area of operation;
 - Ensuring the implementation of gender equality and women, peace, and security mandates; and
 - Fulfilling leadership responsibilities to implement the mission's protection of civilians' mandate (for peacekeeping missions only).
- Delivering reform: This includes reform initiatives related to the delegation of authority, transparency, benefits of reform initiatives, results-based management and enterprise risk management, Umoja, the information and communication

technology strategy, and the responsibility to “lead the change” by collaborating with other entities to support the reform agenda.

The second section focuses on “delivering... responsibilities as a senior manager of the United Nations” and includes commitments related to:

- Demonstrating leadership;
- Complying with regulations, rules, and ethical standards; preventing, addressing, and reporting allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse; preventing and ensuring a rapid response to allegations of sexual harassment; protecting staff who report misconduct or cooperate with audits or investigations; preventing fraud; and ensuring dignity through civility);
- Effectively using resources;
- Committing to diversity (gender parity, geographic diversity, and multilingualism);
- Committing to sustainability;
- Implementing oversight body recommendations; and
- Contributing to the broader interests of the UN.

Compacts are reviewed annually by the Management Performance Board, which advises the secretary-general on issues related to the performance of his senior managers.⁷ The board monitors and assesses each senior manager's performance against the targets set in their compact and presents its findings and recommendations to the secretary-general, who takes action as necessary. In an effort to ensure the utility of compacts as an instrument for accountability, transparency, and performance, the board sends a letter to senior managers noting their accomplishments and shortcomings, with a detailed assessment published on iSeek, the UN intranet. The senior managers then have to submit an action plan to address the results of the assessment.

Over the years, compacts have been increasingly streamlined and refined by the Management Performance Board to shift from compliance to more strategic, results-oriented approaches.⁸ The most recent change to the compacts mandated the inclusion of the results of performance dashboards, which require program managers to be responsible for conducting self-evaluations and incorporating lessons learned from program implementation; 360-degree evaluation for senior managers, with respect to

⁵ United Nations, “HR Portal: Staff Rules,” available at <https://hr.un.org/handbook/staff-rules#Rule%201.3>.

⁶ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General: Fifth Progress Report on the Accountability System in the United Nations Secretariat*, UN Doc. A/70/668, December 30, 2015.

⁷ UN Secretariat, “Secretary-General's Bulletin: Management Performance Board,” UN Doc. ST/SGB/2010/4, April 15, 2010. The board also reviews the administration of justice proceedings in the Secretariat for management performance and accountability purposes and can make recommendations to address systemic problems. In particular, it conducts yearly reviews of the performance-appraisal system within the UN Secretariat.

⁸ See: the secretary-general's reports on “Progress towards an Accountability System in the UN Secretariat.” including UN Docs. A/66/692, February 10, 2012; A/67/714, January 29, 2013; A/68/697, January 8, 2014; A/69/676, December 18, 2014; A/70/668, December 30, 2015; A/71/283, August 3, 2016; A/72/773, March 1, 2018; and A/73/688, December 28, 2018. The fifth report (UN Doc. A/70/668) reports that progress in performance management for senior leaders serving in field missions has been made through the continuous refinement of compacts.

the nine leadership characteristics determined by the Chief Executives Board and the secretary-general; and the monitoring of staff perceptions of leadership and managers through surveys.⁹

4 ANALYSIS

Compacts are a regular evaluation tool based on answerability to the secretary-general, at least in theory. In practice, however, they are mostly used as a self-evaluation tool, with minimal consequences for the performance results being reported. There is also little room for the secretary-general to provide a truly frank and objective assessment due to his remote position in New York and the lack of independent insight into the everyday performance and attitude of his SRSGs.

Many interlocutors reported that the way compacts are being reported on does not create the opportunity for real accountability. Head of mission are supposed to report on their commitments as detailed in the compact but generally assign the task of drafting the self-evaluation report to the mission components, with each contributing relevant paragraphs.

A common criticism of compacts is that they only reflect the language of the peacekeeping mission's mandate without providing useful insight into the specific individual contribution of the senior leader to the implementation of POC. As a consequence, compacts can easily become general reports on what the mission has broadly accomplished, as reported by the mission components. Mission leaders usually summarize and take credit for all the activities undertaken by the mission as a whole rather than their individual activities.


Timing

Regular process	X	Compacts are filled, signed, and monitored on an annual basis.
Extraordinary measure after incident		

⁹ The UN template for compacts includes the following language: "Leadership in the UN Secretariat should be: (a) principled, defending the Organization's values, norms and standards; (b) norm-based, grounded in UN values and standards; (c) inclusive; (d) accountable, demonstrating 360-degree accountability within the UN, across the UN System, to Member States and to those served by the Organization; (e) multidimensional, integrating across organizational boundaries and functions; (f) transformational, achieving positive change; (g) collaborative; (h) self-applied, exhibiting the principles in all interactions; and (i) pragmatic and action-oriented, taking principled and practical action to deliver on mandates, balancing administrative and operational risks and erring on the side of action to prevent and address human suffering."

Actors and answerability structure

Compacts make senior leaders accountable to the secretary-general (and DSRSGs accountable to SRSGs). In practice, the Management Performance Board assists the secretary-general in monitoring performance.

 Held accountable by	Individuals	Unit			Mission	Secretariat	Contributing countries	Security Council/ 5 th Committee	Member states	Population	Other
		Military	Police	Civilian							
Individuals	X					X					
Unit/ section/ component	Military										
	Police										
	Civilian										
Mission											
Secretariat											
Contributing countries											
Member states											
Security Council/ 5th Committee											

Scope and objective

Compacts aim to ensure accountability for senior officials (assistant secretary-generals and above), including heads of missions and their deputies.

Collect best practices and lessons learned		
Track performance	X	Senior officials commit to a set of objectives and performance measures and report on them on an annual basis.
Establish facts and circumstances		
Establish responsibility		
Identify structural and systemic issues		

Type of accountability

Compacts relate to organizational accountability and seek to ensure performance accountability for senior leaders.

Outcome

Learn	Disseminate and integrate internally	X	Compacts are supposed to guide senior leaders in their performance and can in theory provide a basis for corrective measures to address shortcomings.
	Account for publicly		To a certain extent, compacts are supposed to ensure transparency for the performance of senior leaders. In practice, however, they are not made readily available to the public.
Correct	Improve internal processes	X	Compacts are supposed to guide senior leaders in their performance and can in theory provide a basis for corrective measures to address shortcomings.
	Inform the selection of personnel	X	Compacts are supposed to guide senior leaders in their performance and can in theory inform decisions on the retention of senior leaders, depending on their performance results.
Sanction	Recommend sanctions		
	Establish incentives		

Independence and impartiality

Compacts are an internal tool for performance and are discussed and jointly assessed by the secretary-general and senior UN leaders. They are based on the head of mission's commitments and self-evaluation, which is in turn based on inputs from the mission. As internal and self-evaluation tools, compacts tend to lack independence and impartiality and are often perceived as a minimal internal control system.

Inclusivity

Mission components are generally consulted to provide their inputs on compacts' follow-up reports.

On top of compacts, UN leadership is meant to be "accountable, demonstrating 360-degree accountability within the UN, across the UN System, to Member States and to those served by the Organization." However, the 360-evaluation system, based on a multi-actor assessment by oneself and by one's supervisors, supervisees, and peers, remains optional for senior leaders. It also remains a learning tool rather than an accountability tool that would inform decisions on the retention or sanctioning of a UN manager.

Transparency

Although compacts are meant to improve transparency on the commitments and performance of senior UN leaders, they are difficult to access and not made readily available to the public. However, UN staff can find compacts for SRSGs and under-secretaries-general on iSeek, the UN intranet. The documents are not classified as "UN confidential."

Follow-up mechanisms

Possible follow-up mechanisms		
Available enforcement measures	X	The board can recommend measures to address shortcomings. The way recommendations are subsequently enforced remains unclear.
Transmissibility to other mechanisms		