



Accountability System for the Protection of Civilians

Office of Military Affairs Evaluations

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SUMMARY

Military components of peace operations are regularly evaluated at different levels to monitor and support operational performance. The UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) defines evaluation as “the structured process of examining activities, capabilities and performance against defined standards or criteria.”¹

Under the Mission Evaluation Policy, a wide range of evaluations is carried out each year by the Evaluations Unit in DPO’s Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET).² The Office for Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership (OPSP) also has the broader responsibility to assess the gaps, systemic issues, and challenges affecting the implementation of mandated tasks by peacekeeping personnel.

In addition to DPET and OPSP, systematic evaluations are conducted along the military reporting chain, from the military adviser in DPO’s Office of Military Affairs (OMA) down to sub-units in the field. OMA evaluates force commanders and force headquarters, while force commanders and headquarters evaluate sub-units in the field. This factsheet examines the evaluation of force commanders and headquarters by OMA.

The OMA evaluation aims at identifying the strengths and weaknesses of force headquarters to inform remedial action and support required by UN headquarters.³ The process involves an OMA-led team visiting the force headquarters of different peacekeeping operations. Evaluations provide OMA’s military adviser with in-depth knowledge of mission-specific challenges. However, official standard operating procedures describe these evaluations as being primarily for the benefit of the force.

The evaluation process has therefore been designed as a collaborative exercise between UN headquarters and the force, based on a partnership between the force commander, OMA, OPSP, DPET, and the Department of Operations Support (DOS). As stressed in the standard operating procedures, “The emphasis in evaluating Force Headquarters is not on giving the headquarters an overall grade or rating.” Instead, it is a dynamic process aimed at identifying performance issues of concern to the force

¹ UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support (DFS), “Policy: Operational Readiness Assurance and Performance Improvement,” December 2015.

² UN DPKO and DFS, “Mission Evaluation Policy,” February 2013.

³ The branches of force headquarters include: U1 (personnel and administration), U2 (military information), U3 (operations), U4 (logistics), U5 (plans and policy), U6 (communications), U7 (training), U8 (military engineering), and U9 (civil-military cooperation), as well as the military public information office, the provost marshal, the force medical office, the military legal adviser, and the military gender adviser.

commander, with ratings being used as internal indicators “only to prioritize any required remedial action and support.”⁴

Although the standard operating procedures exist, these evaluations have not been fully implemented. The Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework refers to the upcoming development of a new system for OMA to evaluate military and sector headquarters. Military Performance Evaluation Taskforce is developing standards for military force and sector headquarters, which should lead to the revision of the standard operating procedures and the rollout of new evaluations in 2021.

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RELEVANCE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

The current standard operating procedures offer generic sample questions for the evaluation of force headquarters. As per the evaluation checklist, certain military branches are asked specific questions on the protection of civilians (POC). Questions are ranked on a scale of 1–5, 1 being unsatisfactory and 5 being excellent. POC-related questions are asked to these specific military branches:

- **Operations (U3):**
 1. Is there a plan for Protection of Civilians?
 2. Does the POC plan take into account the different security needs of men and women?
 3. Is the POC plan known by the staff officers?
 4. Is there a matrix of significant actors and NGOs working on gender and [conflict-related sexual violence]?
- **Training (U7):**
 1. Is the Branch identifying the needed training requirements based on Mandate, the situation and the training status of the units (including training on gender, POC, Child Protection, and [conflict-related sexual violence] as required)?
 2. Is U7 providing the required guidance on training and is it reflecting the conditions and standards of the UN ([Force Headquarters] Handbook, UNIBAM, UNMUM, POC implementing guidelines, gender guidelines, etc.)?
- **Military Engineering (U8):**
 1. Is there a plan for POC (how will ENGR support the plan)?
 2. Is the plan known by the staff officers?
- **Civil-Military Coordination (U9):**
 1. Is there a plan for POC (how will CIMIC support the plan)?
 2. Is the plan known by the staff officers?
 3. Is coordination conducted with neighboring entities and Missions?
 4. Is coordination conducted with the military gender adviser?

⁴ UN DPKO and DFS, “Standard Operating Procedures: Evaluation of Force Headquarters in Peacekeeping Operations,” June 2016.

Governing rules

The Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support (DFS) issued standard operating procedures for the evaluation of force headquarters in peacekeeping operations in June 2016. These describe the evaluation process for monitoring and supporting the operational performance of force headquarters and apply to all force headquarters staff, as well as UN headquarters staff supporting forces in the field.

Process and functioning

Timelines and performance topics are discussed and mutually agreed upon by the force commander and UN headquarters. Evaluations include four phases:

1. **Preparation:** The military adviser discusses the evaluation program with force commanders during the annual Heads of Military Components Conference, and OMA coordinates the schedule with force commanders.
2. **Pre-evaluation:** OMA's evaluation team collaborates with force commanders and headquarters staff to produce an evaluation plan, and force commanders provide their pre-evaluation of force headquarters.
3. **Evaluation:** OMA's evaluation team visits the field.
4. **Reporting and implementation:** The evaluation team briefs the force leadership on preliminary findings and prepares the final evaluation in coordination with the force headquarters being evaluated, which then develops an internal performance-improvement plan and provides OMA regular updates on the progress made. The evaluation report presents recommendations for improvement, including any resources needed from troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and UN headquarters.

The performance-improvement plan is sent to OMA's Current Military Operations Service for retention. Copies of the plan are provided to OPSP and other headquarters entities as appropriate, such as those that coordinate with TCCs.

Evaluations of force headquarters are organized regularly. OMA can use them to hold force headquarters accountable for their performance, though the whole process is collaborative and done in close cooperation with the force commander.

Evaluations allow OMA to gather best practices, identify systemic issues, monitor performance, and provide evidence-based ratings to identify lessons learned and inform corrective measures.

OMA evaluations are internal processes for the Secretariat with limited transparency. Outcomes can vary but are mostly based on cooperative actions to strengthen training, support, and resources for force headquarters. They are mainly designed to incentivize force commanders to identify gaps and implement corrective actions.


Timing

Evaluations are scheduled annually during the annual Heads of Military Components Conference in May or June.

Regular process	X	Evaluations are conducted annually.
Extraordinary measure after incident		

Actors and answerability structure

Evaluations of force headquarters are led by DPO's OMA and conducted by OMA's evaluation team. The evaluation team generally includes OMA's assessment team, the military planning service, and the force-generation service and can also include specialists from UN headquarters as needed. While they are a process for holding missions' military component accountable to the Secretariat at UN headquarters, OMA evaluations are also collaborative and are done in consultation with the force commander.

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

Scope and objective

These evaluations aim at identifying gaps, challenges, and systemic issues affecting the performance of force headquarters, as well as collecting best practices and lessons learned.

Collect best practices and lessons learned	X	The primary purpose of evaluations is to strengthen the ability of DPO, DOS, and missions "to accumulate and utilize experience, thus enhancing peacekeeping operations." ⁵
Track performance	X	Evaluations provide evidence-based analysis of the performance of force headquarters.
Establish facts and circumstances		
Establish responsibility		
Identify structural and systemic issues	X	Evaluations provide evidence-based analysis of the performance of force headquarters.

Type of accountability

OMA's evaluations of force headquarters are a tool for ensuring performance accountability for force headquarters. As an internal process, they also offer opportunities for organizational accountability.

Outcome

The evaluation report presents recommendations for improvement, including any resources needed from TCCs and UN headquarters. Force headquarters use the final report to develop their own plan for improving performance. The performance-improvement plan is sent to OMA's Current Military Operations Service for retention. Copies of the plan are provided to OPSP and other headquarters entities as appropriate, such as those providing resources or assistance or coordinating with TCCs.

Learn	Disseminate and integrate internally	X	Force headquarters are expected to develop a plan to improve performance based on the evaluation.
	Account for publicly		
Correct	Improve internal processes	X	Recommendations for improvement can include resources needed from TCCs or UN headquarters or structural changes.

⁵ Ibid.

	Inform the selection of personnel	X	Although it is not formally mentioned in the standard operations procedures, assessments can be discussed with TCCs at headquarters, and performance gaps can ultimately inform personnel selection.
Sanction	Recommend sanctions		Although the evaluation may “reveal and correct mission-specific problems before they negatively affect Force operations,” recommendations focus on collaborative corrective measures, and the standard operating procedures do not mention the possibility of sanctions. ⁶
	Establish incentives		

Independence and impartiality

The standard operating procedures stress the precise and evidence-based character of evaluations and establish “impartiality and transparency” as well as “objective rather than subjective performance measures whenever possible” as guiding principles for the evaluations.⁷

However, force commanders are actively involved in the evaluation process and have a say in developing the evaluation plan (which cannot be changed without their agreement), identifying the performance areas to be assessed, and formulating recommendations.

Inclusivity

The evaluation process is consultative and done in close cooperation with the force commander. The evaluation plan and recommendations are developed in collaboration with the force commander.

While these evaluations only focus on the performance of the force headquarters, the standard operating procedures recognize that the military component does not operate in isolation but is an integral part of the mission structure, which comprises various components synchronizing their efforts to accomplish the mandate. It further recognizes that this complex environment can affect military performance. The evaluation may also “reveal and correct mission-specific problems before they negatively affect Force operations.”⁸

⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid.

Transparency

“Impartiality and transparency” are defined as guiding principles for the evaluations. Copies of the performance-improvement plan are sent to OPSP and other headquarters entities “as appropriate,” particularly to those providing resources or assistance or coordinating with TCCs.⁹

However, the report remains internal and is not distributed outside of UN headquarters. It is not circulated to TCCs.

Follow-up mechanisms

Possible follow-up mechanisms	X	A performance-improvement plan has to be developed in response to the recommendations made in the assessment, and force headquarters are invited to provide OMA regular updates on the progress made.
Available enforcement measures		
Transmissibility to other mechanisms	X	The report can be transmitted to OPSP and other UN headquarters entities for further action.

⁹ Ibid.