



International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations 2010

The Challenges Forum and Protection – Objectives and Issues

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Excellencies, Dear Partners and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is through to the hard and focused work of our Australian partners concerning the protection of civilians in conflict that we are here today. Our host's strong commitment to the Protection of Civilians in peace operations has been demonstrated by Australia's comprehensive and systematic effort, involving Australian practitioners, policymakers and academics, and drawing on lessons learned from the field.

I really believe that the 2010 Challenges Forum will be an important and timely opportunity to generate concrete recommendations in order to tackle some of the key challenges concerning the protection of civilians facing the international community.

Development is driven by horrifying facts. An Oxfam study recently found that rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo had risen 17-fold in the past few years. About 56 percent of sexual assaults were committed by armed men in homes in the presence of the victim's families, including their children.

But, at the same time, 38 percent of rapes were committed by civilians, this compared with less than 1 percent in 2004. The Oxfam study reported that rape among the civilian population had become frighteningly common. The brutality of the conflict has influenced society as a whole, and further increased the problem. The relative safety in civilian life and society has almost disappeared.

A few months ago, I visited our seconded personnel posted in Goma in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was evident why the UN Security Council and MONUC have given highest priority to the task *protection of civilians*, and simultaneously how immensely difficult it is to fulfill this objective in practice.

It is now ten years since the milestone Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians and on Women and Peace and Security were adopted. Since then - ten UN peacekeeping operations have had protection of civilians explicitly in their mandates, starting with UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone.

In the last couple of years, though, important progress has been made. The UN's New Horizon non-paper and the DPKO/OCHA-commissioned independent study, *Protecting*

Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations, have both proved crucial to put the protection of civilians issue high on the international community's agenda.

The Challenges Forum in 2009 was held in the same week as the *Protecting civilians* study was presented. Focused on the recommendations in the *New Horizon's paper* - Pakistan, a top contributor to UN Peacekeeping, hosted an important and substantive session forwarding our common Challenges efforts. And this even at a time of great challenges at home. The need for the international community to take a closer look at effectively protecting civilians became evident during our deliberations.

Moreover and most recently, the C 34 in its 2010 draft report encouraged the UN Secretariat to continue develop guidance and a strategic framework for protecting civilians. In addition, the UN Secretary General has appointed a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Mrs. Margot Wallström, which should and could bring further and necessary attention to the issue.

Having said this, much remains to be done. Given the harsh realities manifested in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur, Somalia, Afghanistan and elsewhere, we still have a long way to go. Concepts and definitions are still at an early stage, and even more importantly, their effective implementation, will most likely prove to be the real challenge for the international community. And we must not forget that what the mandate is, however the task is formally defined, the legitimacy of a peace operation is in the eye of the beholder. Our ability to protect civilians is decisive for that legitimacy in the eyes of the local population as well as in the eyes of the public opinion in general.

Paragraph 147 of the 2010 draft report of the C 34 states that the committee:

"... appreciates the efforts of the Secretariat to provide Members States with the input to enhance common understanding regarding the implementation of protection of civilian mandates by relevant UN peacekeeping missions..."

The last sentence reads:

"The Special Committee encourages the Secretariat to engage with Member States, host countries, regional organizations and troop and police-contributing countries to further advance in this endeavor. "

These words underscores why the Challenges Partnership is heavily involved - and is one important reason why we have been invited by our Australian hosts to tackle these issues. Everyone here has important expertise to contribute with. We need insightful and complementary contributions from different countries, from academics, diplomats, the police, the military, the humanitarian community and, not least, from the political level.

As a former M.P. and Chair of the Committee on Defence of Swedish Parliament, I recognize how important it is to connect political determination and practical implementation – accurate words should be followed by appropriate action.

It is therefore particularly pleasing to have a senior political-military-humanitarian-academic peacekeeper like Dr Mike Kelly, first to establish a Centre for the purpose of strengthening

the civil-military peacekeeping agenda, and then to mobilize both national and international support for its endeavor.

His equally important decision was of course to recruit a senior military-humanitarian-diplomat - writer peacekeeper like – Mike Smith to run and develop the Centre for him. Congratulations to both of you for what you have achieved already in such a short time!

I would also like to raise another Challenges effort - the findings of which will be discussed on Wednesday. It is the independent Challenges Study on *Considerations for Mission Leadership in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*. Your conference material includes a copy of the draft document.

The process was initiated a year and a half ago, with workshops around the world, four involving the Partnership as a whole, and another three workshops for the co-chairs of the process, four civilian and three military chairs from different continents. In addition, extensive input and review have generously been provided by a significant number of SRSGs, Force Commanders and Police Commissioners.

The work is a genuine collaborative effort and in itself an example of the synergies and strengths of multidimensional cooperation. One clear message in the study is that personal leadership and ability to create a learning and inclusive environment within the mission leadership team is crucial. This includes constructive management of cultural and professional differences and the ability to critically assess the mandate and the changing interpretations and expectations of the international community and the host government. And - successful mandate implementation requires mastering the eternal challenge of limited and varying resources. This must always be at the heart of leadership deliberations. A more subtle aspect of peacekeeping leadership concerns the continuous balancing act – sometimes bordering on the impossible – between mandate, resources and political and practical realities. An insight shared by many, articulated by few.

The content of the study will hopefully be useful also regional organisations operating in similar or the same environments and with comparable leadership challenges.

We are very much looking forward to tomorrow's discussion on the study, including its substantive issues, format, and possible areas of application and implementation. With your active support, I am convinced that the final product will be a useful tool for current and future mission leaders.

In relation to the initiatives that I have mentioned, and to the Challenges Forum in general, it is essential to highlight the invaluable and close cooperation with the United Nations, including its senior-level participation in and active contribution to this week's activities. We are particularly grateful to Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Dmitri Titov, and the Director of the Division for Policy, Evaluation and Training, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, and to the Chief of Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Policy Development and Studies Branch Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, and their respective colleagues. Thank you, all of you, on behalf the Challenges partnership.

Our Challenges Forum Patron needs no introduction. I would, however, like to say that the Challenges partners are particularly grateful for Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno's active involvement in and valuable support to our work and various activities. Your unique expertise

and generous sharing of advice continues to be a critical and appreciated qualitative component in our joint endeavor.

Ladies and gentlemen, turning to our hosts, I would like to emphasize how grateful we are for your generous and professional hosting of this event. The scene is set, approximately 220 participants have registered, the background papers are of the highest standard, the venue is ideal for the occasion, the hospitality and warmth have overwhelmed us, including the gripping experience at the Anzac Day dawn service – I am certain that our week “down under” will be “above and beyond”.

Thank you for your attention.