

# Mission-Wide Strategies for the Protection of Civilians

A Comparison of MONUC, UNAMID and UNMIS

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# **Mission-Wide Strategies for the Protection of Civilians**

**A Comparison of MONUC, UNAMID and UNMIS**

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## Introduction

The protection of civilians (PoC) has received increasing levels of attention in United Nations (UN) mandated peacekeeping operations over the course of the past decade. Since 1999, eleven UN peacekeeping operations have been provided with increasingly robust protection of civilians mandates, and the UN System has over the past years focussed increasing levels of attention on the protection of civilians, not only in peacekeeping operations, but indeed across the range of activities undertaken by the UN in support of conflict management, resolution and transformation efforts. Although the wording of the clauses that address the protection of civilians in UN Security Council resolutions has been quite similar to date, the ways in which different missions have implemented these mandates have varied. Because missions operate within differing contexts, each mission is required to develop a unique strategy through which to achieve the common principles and aims of protecting civilians in conflict situations according to the unique setting in which it operates.

This paper compares the protection of civilians strategies of three different UN peacekeeping operations: the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC, since 2010 the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the DRC – MONUSCO); the hybrid African Union - United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID); and the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) that was drawn down in early 2010 and replaced by a new UN mission in Southern Sudan).<sup>2</sup> This comparison of strategies is intended to inform efforts to bring more coherence to the protection of civilians work in UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>3</sup> The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) and the UN Department of Field Services (UN DFS), together with the Global Protection Cluster in New York, continues to develop guidelines for the drafting of mission-wide PoC strategies, as well as developing further guidance for peacekeeping operations, and this paper aims to contribute to the process.

## Comparison of Protection Strategies

It is to be expected that mission-specific protection of civilians (PoC) strategies will differ in approach and form, given the distinct challenges faced by each mission. However, this paper commences from the premise that there may also be shared experiences, challenges and best practises, that can inform future refinements in mission PoC strategies, the development of similar strategies in other missions, as

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<sup>2</sup> The UNMIS strategy was updated in October 2010 to prepare for the specific challenges facing the mission in the final months of the transition period. Our comparison includes this version of the strategy.

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of practical approaches to the protection of civilians in MONUC, see Stian Kjeksrud and Jacob Aasland Ravndal, *Protection of civilians in practice – emerging lessons from the UN mission in the DR Congo, FFI Rapport*, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment 2010.

well as the development of strategic level guidance. This comparison is intended to inform such an analysis. In order to meaningfully compare the three mission-wide strategies of MONUC, UNAMID and UNMIS, this paper has opted to use the following five levels of consideration: (1) conceptualization, (2) operationalization, (3) prioritization, (4) capabilities and constraints, and (5) integration and coordination.

### **Conceptualization of Protection**

The UN System-wide Strategy for the Protection of Civilians in the DRC places the role of the UN in the DRC in the context of the new emerging norm of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’, and notes that the World Summit (2005) outcome document placed a responsibility on the UN to support Member States in protecting their populations. The Strategy refers back to the definition of ‘protection’ that was formulated in MONUC’s Protection of Civilians Strategy of March 2009, namely ‘all activities aimed at ensuring the safety and physical integrity of civilian populations, particularly children, women, and other vulnerable groups, including IDPs; preventing the perpetration of war crimes and other deliberate acts of violence against civilians; securing humanitarian access; and ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual, in accordance with relevant national and international bodies of law, i.e. human rights law and international humanitarian law’. The Strategy provides for a notion of protection that covers a wide range of relationships and stages. It first notes that the UN mission and agencies should integrate protection into their work so as to ensure that their activities do not lead to, or perpetuate, protection risks for the communities they serve. The strategy then builds on UN Security Council Resolution 1856, which mandates the mission with both immediate protection responsibilities, as well as the responsibility to work with national authorities to develop an environment conducive to the protections of civilians.

The UNAMID Mission Directive of January 2009 on the Protection of Civilians in Darfur defines protection as ‘all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies’, as specified in Human Rights law, International Humanitarian Law (IHL), refugee law, etc. While this definition corresponds with that of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee,<sup>4</sup> and resounds well with the notion of protection within the humanitarian community, it is perhaps too wide for peacekeepers to operationalize and implement in practise. This broad definition is then however limited by the Directive, and the 2010 Darfur Protection Strategy, to physical protection and the protection of humanitarian

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<sup>4</sup> IASC, *Growing the Sheltering Tree - Protecting Rights through Humanitarian Action*, Geneva: UNICEF 2002.

space. Whilst the UNAMID Directive and Strategy recognize that protection requires the cooperation of a wide range of actors, starting with the local authorities and communities, and including the whole range of humanitarian and other actors, the Directive is focused on the role of the respective components of UNAMID, and especially those with direct responsibility for protection, i.e. the military, police, the Humanitarian, Recovery and Development Unit (HRDU) and the Child Protection unit.

The UNMIS Protection of Civilians Strategy and the separate Security Concept make extensive reference to UN Security Council statements on protection, and the specific protection responsibilities that UNMIS has been tasked with by the UNSC. The Strategy's overall goal is to reduce and prevent systematic patterns of violence, and it aims to do so through a combination of preventive, remedial and environment-building actions. The strategy identifies three core objectives, namely: security-focused protection of civilians under imminent threat; securing access to humanitarian and relief activities; and longer-term conflict prevention and management and the implementation of human rights. The UNMIS strategy conceptualizes 'civilians' as non-combatants, but makes special provision for vulnerable groups that require specific protection measures; namely children, women, the disabled, the elderly, the displaced, refugees and returnees.

The most recent UNMIS PoC strategy (October 2010) must be seen in relation to the particular security concerns arising as the interim period of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) came to an end in July 2011. As such, the strategy has a clear expiry date. A new strategy will be drafted when the new peacekeeping operation in Southern Sudan is mandated. In the new strategy, the Security Concept from 2009 is still the reference document with regard to guidance and details on all aspects of the 'use of force'. One of the provisions of the strategy, however, is to update this document to identify the precise roles and responsibilities of the Mission sections, pillars and Senior Mission Leadership in supporting 'protection through political prevention'. The strategy states that the UNMIS' mandate articulates three core responsibilities: to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, to facilitate coordination within its capabilities of the voluntary return of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance; and to assist the CPA parties in promoting the rule of law and the protection of human rights for all people of Sudan. The overall goal of the strategy is to: prevent, reduce and when necessary stop violence against civilian populations in the Mission area, within mandate and capabilities; ensure humanitarian access to vulnerable populations; and assist the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) to assume their primary responsibility to protect civilian populations.

Apart from conceptual nuances at the meta-level, all three mission strategies have conceptualised protection around three dimensions, namely (1) security-focused, or direct, protection, (2) securing humanitarian access, and (3) building an environment conducive to longer-term protection. All three mission strategies recognize that protection can only be achieved through cooperation with local and national authorities, as well as through concerted action across the political, security, rule of law, humanitarian, development and social reconciliation dimensions.

### **Operationalization**

The UN System-wide Strategy for the Protection of Civilians in the DRC has a clear set of measurable results as well as a detailed set of critical tasks, each with associated actions, namely: the (1) harmonization of data gathering and analysis at a system-wide level, (2) anticipation, mitigation and prevention of protection risks, (3) contribution to remedial actions, and (4) provision of support to the establishment of a protective environment.

In order to enhance protection, the UNAMID Directive and Strategy focuses on three core activities: preventive protection (humanitarian space), immediate response protection (responses to grave violations against civilians) and follow-up protection (reporting incidents, not investigation). Due to the mission's context, the Directive and Strategy do not include long-term protection activities, and the immediate response protection pillar receives most attention. The Directive includes a detailed list of potential scenarios that may threaten the well-being of civilians, as well as the appropriate responses and responsibilities of the various UNAMID components and units. This very concrete description of possible scenarios and responses provide clear guidance to all mission components on how they should act when faced with various scenarios. However, the Strategy is not as clear in identifying measurable results that can be benchmarked to monitor impact.

The UNMIS Protection of Civilians Strategy provides for three levels of implementation. The strategic level engages the Government of National Unity and the Government of South Sudan at the state-level (in Sudan the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier of Government are called states) using UN & Government Protection Committees. The operational level engages UNMIS, UN agencies, NGOs and state and county-level government line ministries using Protection Working Groups. The grass-root level engages UN and INGO actors that target community representatives in high-risk areas to build awareness of basic rights through Community-based Protection Networks. Whilst the stakeholders and mechanisms are identified, the activities related to these levels are not as well developed in the strategy. The strategy argues that because



UNMIS is an integrated mission the implementation of the strategy is a combined responsibility of UNMIS and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). The strategy highlights some of the key enablers that need to be in place, such as strong coordination mechanisms, and the ability to identify, analyse and share information that can result in joint planning and proactive engagement with the Government of Sudan at all levels of engagement. UNMIS was the only mission with a dedicated PoC section, and the strategy provides a useful overview of the potential role of such a section. The separate Security Concept also contains useful guidance on the operationalization of the security component, including sections dealing with potential threats and aggressors, thresholds and consequences and a four phased security concept (1-Assurance, 2-Pre-emption, 3-Intervention and 4-Consolidation).

The most prominent change in the operationalization of the new UNMIS PoC strategy is the disbandment of the Protection of Civilians Section and the mainstreaming of PoC across large parts of the mission entities<sup>5</sup> in consultation and coordination with the UNCT. This mainstreaming also implies decentralization in the sense that State and Sector Coordinators take on a more prominent place in the implementation of PoC. Above them, there will be PoC focal points at the regional and mission level. Due to the constraints on use of force against the CPA parties, the strategy focuses on advance identification of vulnerable communities and individuals at risk of conflict or at risk of not benefitting from the protection of the State as well as political engagement at all levels. Direct intervention is viewed as being undesirable. Nevertheless, the strategy envisions the establishment of three complementary and ‘mutually reinforcing’ lines of operations, consistent with the DPKO/DFS Operational Concept on PoC: Protection through political prevention,<sup>6</sup> protection from physical violence and establishment of a protective environment. These lines of operation combine preventive, remedial and environment-building activities destined to achieve ‘maximum efficiency and impact in the short and medium – long term.’ However, like its precursor, the renewed strategy is open-ended in terms of concrete activities at the three lines of operations.<sup>7</sup>

All three strategies address aspects of operationalization, but there is a lack of clear direction as to how the goals and objectives can be trans-

<sup>5</sup> These include military, police, Human Rights, Political Affairs, Civil Affairs, Rule of Law, DDR, Child Protection and Public Information

<sup>6</sup> The operational concept wording is ‘Protection through political *process*’, which does have a slightly different meaning.

<sup>7</sup> This, however, should be seen in relation to the recent policy developments on PoC training, tasks and requirements, which could be seen as resource and referral documents for the strategy. However, these documents are scarcely mentioned and seldom referred to. For an overview of developments on PoC training, see: Gustavo de Carvalho and Andreas Stensland, *Training to Protect Civilians: Recent Developments and Recommendations, Accord Policy & Practice Brief*, Durban: ACCORD 2011.

formed into measurable results. The system-wide strategy for the DRC makes a good attempt at formulating measurable results, but more detailed benchmarks would be necessary to meaningfully monitor impact. The UNAMID Directive is very clear about how the different components should react to possible scenarios, and the UNMIS Strategy addresses the mechanisms that need to be established, at each level, to ensure that predictable coordination structures have been established to ensure a holistic protection system.

### **Prioritization**

The UN System-wide Strategy for the Protection of Civilians in the DRC is based on the mandate derived from UN Security Council Resolution 1856 that defines Protection of Civilians, and in particular the protection of women, children and IDPs, as the highest priority for MONUC. However, the strategy takes into account the need to reconcile and integrate MONUC's responsibility to protect civilians with its mandate to support the operations of the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique de la Congo (FARDC) integrated brigades. Whilst the Security Council has explicitly prioritized the protection of civilian populations, the successful operations of the FARDC against armed movements operating in the DRC remains a priority for the national Government, and thus the forceful disarmament of the Forces Démocratique de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) has become a prerequisite for sustained protection in the Eastern DRC for the national Government. As the strategy is aimed at supporting the Government of the DRC, and as it cannot be successfully achieved without the support of the Government of the DRC, at times a discrepancy between the prioritization of the Security Council and of the Government of the DRC has emerged.

According to the UNAMID Directive, protection is one of four major priorities. However, the Directive does not give further information as to the hierarchy of objectives and the relation between them. Based on the importance that protection holds for the mission it is assumed that these four major priorities enjoy equal status, and that protection is thus one of the top priorities of UNAMID. Based on the information in the Directive and the Strategy, it would appear as if protection is indeed mainstreamed as one of the core principles, objectives and activities of the mission.

The UNMIS Protection of Civilians Strategy recognizes that the primary responsibility for protection lies with the Sudanese authorities. UNMIS has a mandate from the UN Security Council to support the Government of National Unit and the Government of South Sudan with the implementation of the CPA. However, it also has the responsibility to take direct action when necessary, utilising forceful means if required, to protect civilians under imminent threat. It would appear

as if UNMIS regards the implementation of the peace agreement between North and South Sudan as its overriding mandate, and protection as an important, but secondary priority. For example, the UNMIS PoC Security Concept asserts that: ‘the threshold for deciding on UNMIS’ armed intervention will increase in view of the expected seriousness of consequences for UNMIS’ overall mandate’. The Security Concept frames the use of force to protect civilians as an extraordinary act of last resort, and one that requires such ‘utmost caution’ that it could have potentially dissuaded initiative on the part of the tactical level commanders. In the new UNMIS strategy, the mission’s hesitancy to act against the CPA parties is more clearly formulated. The strategy explicitly states that UNMIS ‘does not have the capabilities to use force against the lawfully constituted Sudanese authorities’ (i.e. the GoS and GoSS) to stop them from using violence against civilians.’

All three mission strategies place a high priority on protection, and all three recognize that national authorities retain the primary responsibility for protection. However, all three also have a direct protection mandate. This dual role of supporting the local authorities and potentially acting directly, if warranted, is very complex to manage and none of the strategies give enough attention to how these, at times conflicting, roles can be managed. All three strategies mention, some more explicitly than others, that in some cases agents of local authorities may also be placing civilians at risk, and the mandate may thus result in the mission having to act, potentially with force, against the very local counterparts that the mission is also meant to support. It is not inconceivable that these missions may have to choose, at times, between maintaining consent and thus being able to continue to invest in building an environment conducive to protection, and acting forcefully in specific cases. The UNMIS Security Concept and its new strategy seems to be the most cautious when it comes to the potential use of force, whereas the UNAMID Directive, recognising that no credible peace process is in place, seems the most willing to act decisively, including with the use of force, to deter or respond to threats to the civilian population. All three strategies, and the guidance note, could be more upfront about how to manage this most delicate aspect of the protection mandate. The latest UNMIS strategy ‘solves’ this problem by, in practice, ruling out the possibility of using force against the parties to the peace agreement, and in so doing, places the primary responsibility for protection on its preventive and environment-building activities.

### **Capabilities and Constraints**

The UN System-wide Strategy for the Protection of Civilians in the DRC contains a clear appraisal of the implications for the strategy on the limited resources at the disposal of the UN mission, the UN agen-

cies and the local and national authorities in the DRC. The strategy argues that effective protection must combine humanitarian, human rights, political and military protection strategies. The strategy recognizes that MONUC does not have the operational capacity to cover all potential risk areas. Instead, it has to rely on its ability to intervene decisively through a balance of concentration of forces in high risk areas and strategic and tactical reserves, to be deployed when required. The strategy emphasizes MONUC's ability to identify patterns of abuse and high risk areas to better anticipate and plan for protection risks.

The UNAMID Directive states that high levels of uncertainty and insecurity persist in areas of Darfur, and that UNAMID is obliged to 'restrict interventions to areas accessible in terms of safety and security'. The strategy recognizes that around four of the eight million inhabitants in Darfur are unreachable by UNAMID forces and partners. UNAMID focuses on 'protection by presence' in key areas where they have access, seeking regular contact with the maximum number of persons. Moreover, the strategy lists several climatic and geographical constraints. It also states that it will not initiate action beyond its mandate or operational capacity. The boundaries of these are however not further elaborated upon.

The UNMIS Protection of Civilians Strategy mentions several complicating factors in Sudan's operational environment, but fails to go into more detail or to suggest how these can be managed, other than through increased coordination and exchange of information with partners. The strategy could be more explicit on the limits of the missions' ability to project force as well as the many caveats of troop contributing countries. The strategy could also address how it is constrained by the limitations placed on it by the Government of National Unity, and the lack of capacity of both the Government of National Unity and the Government of South Sudan to prioritize protection.

The most recent UNMIS PoC strategy improves upon this by taking into consideration the challenges and constraints on the mission in two ways. Firstly, through explicit presentation of the protection risks, threats and vulnerabilities with reference to the specific challenges in Sudan as the CPA comes to an end. Particularly vulnerable groups, such as Southerners living in the North, Northerners in the South, and populations living in border areas are mentioned. Secondly, the strategy refers to the standard caveats 'within capabilities' and without prejudice to the host government. However, it does not explicitly mention how the challenges rising from these latter constraints might be met.

In order to develop a protection strategy, awareness of capabilities as well as the constraints that can enable or hinder the achievement of

key objectives is important. All three strategies mention various constraints, and the system-wide strategy of the UN in the DRC is the most advanced in terms of how the strategy has been specifically designed to overcome these. The recognition of the importance of information gathering, analysis and sharing with a view to inform protection planning aimed at prevention and pre-emption, as well as the concentration of limited capabilities in specific high risk areas, could be of interest to other missions in future. Although the UNAMID and UNMIS strategies also recognise the importance of information and coordination, they do not seem to have internalized it into the operationalization of the strategy to the same degree as MONUC. The stabilization strategy in the Eastern DRC is also an interesting example of how it is possible to invest in building an environment conducive to protection whilst still in a stabilization phase.

### **Integration and Coordination**

The UN System-wide Strategy for the Protection of Civilians in the DRC is a product of the close cooperation established between the UN peacekeeping mission and the Protection Cluster (the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - OHCHR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR, and the United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF, among others) of the UNCT in the DRC. MONUC is an integrated mission and the leadership of the Deputy Special Representative Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG RC/HC) in promoting protection as a theme of common interest to MONUC and the UNCT was critical in securing and maintaining the close cooperation of all stakeholders in the UN System in the DRC. The strategy recognizes that for protection to be effective it must combine humanitarian, human rights, political and military protection strategies. The protection strategy in the DRC is also linked-up with, and refers back to, a number of related strategies and plans. For instance, the third pillar of the strategy is directly linked with the State Authority components of the UN Stabilization Strategy for Eastern DRC (UNSSSS) and the Government of the DRC's Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for Areas Emerging from Armed Conflict (STAREC). The strategy is also interlinked with the UN Comprehensive Strategy for Combating Sexual Violence in the DRC, and it is a building block of the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) for the DRC and MONUC's Mission Implementation Plan (MIP). As such, the monitoring and evaluation framework of the strategy is also integrated with those of the other plans and strategies mentioned.

The UNAMID Directive and Strategy mention several coordination mechanisms and refer to the participation of several UNAMID components and units in various internal and external coordination forums, including with the Government of Sudan and local authorities and communities. They also recognize the inter-linkages between the Di-

rective, the Strategy and the missions' MIP and ISF, and it would thus appear as if the Directive and Strategy are based on, and coherent with, multiple coordination frameworks. The only concern is that both the Directive and the Strategy appear to be drafted by the HRDU and at times it reads as if it speaks to other components and units from the perspective of the HRDU only. In those instances it does not read like an integrated strategy or directive developed together with and co-owned by all the mission components.

The fact that there were two UNMIS Protection of Civilians Strategy documents, the so-called mission-wide Strategy and a separate Security Concept, raises concerns as to the degree to which especially the security and humanitarian aspects of the strategies were integrated. Although neither of the two documents addresses this *per se*, it is known that in practice the Protection Working Groups function as UNCT humanitarian clusters and do not include the security components of the mission. The result is that another level of information management and coordination is necessary to ensure that there is an adequate flow of information between the humanitarian actors on the one side, and the security actors on the other, and it is not clear to what extent there are any such mechanisms dedicated to the protection of civilians. It is also of concern that the security-focused aspect of protection, that is obviously a critically important part of the mission-wide strategy, is not summarised or otherwise integrated in the mission-wide strategy. Instead it is mentioned as being contained in the Directive of the Special representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) of 4 August 2009. The strategy makes provision for a number of coordination mechanisms at state and county levels, but does not address how this strategy will be managed within the mission, especially at the Mission headquarters in Khartoum and in Juba. As a result, it is likely that the military component would manage and monitor the security component of the strategy separately from the Office of the DSRSG RC/HC that may take responsibility for the humanitarian access portions of the strategy. It is unclear if the DSRSG political is responsible for the longer-term political, judicial and environment-building aspects. However, as the protection section, that should probably have a central role in environment building, falls under the DSRSG RC/HC, it seems likely that this aspect is also managed under a humanitarian umbrella. The lack of an integrated mission implementation framework under the leadership of the SRSG, that bring the humanitarian and military dimension together, may result in the humanitarian and security dimensions operating in silos, especially at the mission HQ level. The fact that there are two, separate strategy documents seem to indicate that this is, in fact, the case.

In the new UNMIS strategy, this dual approach to protection continues on paper – with the Security Concept as a separate document altogether. Organizationally, however, the strategy seeks to implement

PoC as a cross-cutting UNMIS-responsibility that requires coordination mechanisms between all three sectors, civilian, police and military. It envisions a system for monitoring and analysis and reporting of protection-related information at state and regional levels to generate rapid reactions. The strategy moves forward in specifying how coordination mechanisms at state and county level will be managed within the mission. All PoC related planning activities, whether civilian or military led, at HQ, regional, sector or State levels addressing strategic, operational and tactical planning aspects, will have to systematically be based on 'close consultation between military, mission support and PoC civilian focal points'. PoC civilian focal points, military planners and Director of Mission Support (DMS) staff will be designated permanently to participate both on a routine and emergency basis in joint planning efforts, at state, sector, regional and headquarters levels.

The strategy describes the creation of several levels of coordination mechanisms, from military coordination between UNMIS and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), to UN coordination at state and sector levels, as well as at the regional and the national level. The strategy has detailed provisions for the participants, structure, roles and responsibilities of the various coordination mechanisms. For the purpose of PoC activities mainstreaming, coordination and operational implementation, each state and sector coordinator will create a Protection Task Force, bringing together UNMIS civilian sections, UN Police (UNPOL) and the military. These task forces will produce a joint consolidated mapping of protection needs in each state that will be updated monthly. Likewise, State and sector coordinators will establish Stand-by State Protection Teams, to enable investigations, verification of reports on gross abuses, rapid reaction to emergencies and conflict mitigation and resolution initiatives. These teams will also conduct field missions.

State and sector coordinators will take a prominent role in the implementation of the new PoC strategy. They will ensure that protection become a key focus of their activities and of their engagement with Sudanese state officials. Protection focal points will be designated amongst staff with specific protection expertise at regional headquarters levels. They will develop a training curriculum for the mission and will be tasked with sustaining the training of civilians, UN police and military personnel on protection issues, concepts and processes to support the implementation of the strategy. Considering the short timeframe from the drafting of the strategy to the end-date of the mission (8 months), this is quite an ambitious objective.

All three mission strategies make reference to how they are interconnected to other related policy, strategy and planning frameworks, and there thus seem to be a solid understanding of the need for policy co-

herence in these missions. However, in practise, the management structures of the security-protection dimension and the humanitarian access dimension does not always seem to be as integrated as it should be. In all three cases the strategy documents could give the SRSG a more direct role in overseeing the implementation and monitoring the progress of the implementation of the protection of civilian strategies.

## **Conclusion**

The most serious tensions that emerge from a comparison of these three strategies are those between the missions and the local authorities on the one hand, and those between the security and humanitarian dimensions of the missions on the other. The tensions between the missions and their local counterparts are caused by two factors. First, the missions are, on the one hand consent based and mandated to support the local authorities, and on the other they have the mandate to use force, including potentially against their local counterparts, although this is specifically excluded as an option in the latest UNMIS strategy. This tension is not resolvable but can potentially be managed politically through clear and ongoing communication channels with local authorities so that they are aware of the mission's mandate, approach and policies.

The tension between the security and humanitarian dimensions are also deeply rooted, but past experience has shown that this tension can be managed through ongoing coordination, joint training, joint planning and joint monitoring and evaluation. The aim is not so much to arrive at a common approach, as it is to bring both sides to a point where they respect the role and contribution of the other and therefore recognize the need to coexist and coordinate. Future mission strategies should not shy away from these core tensions, but be explicit about the efforts they will apply to address and manage these tensions. Mechanisms need to be in place where potential differences can be exchanged, and a culture of frank and open dialogue needs to be developed, based on mutual recognition and respect.

All three mission strategies have shown a lack of appreciation for the social capital of host communities to manage their own protection. Most local societies will have developed coping strategies for protection before the deployment of the mission, and will continue to apply such approaches after the mission has withdrawn. The PoC strategies of the missions should be more sensitive to how they can support local protection capacities, as opposed to imposing their own ideas and approaches on the host communities. The strategies should also be more sensitive to the unintended consequences of mission actions, and be more proactive in monitoring the impact they are having, including potential side effects.



There is little focus on how to assess the populations own perception of threats and protection needs. The system-wide strategy of the UN in the DRC probably goes furthest in its focus on needs-based responses where and when appropriate, rather than a focus on mission activities and sequencing.

Lastly, the three strategies reflect varying degrees of an integrated approach. The system-wide strategy of the UN in the DRC seems to be the most integrated of the three. It appears to have achieved a security-humanitarian nexus with a cooperative approach to protection – without threatening the independence of the humanitarian actors. The UNAMID Directive and Strategy also reflects a thorough, multidimensional approach, but the strong drafting role of the HRDU is of concern, and it would have been more encouraging if the Directive and Strategy were more reflective of a common effort. UNMIS, with its two separate strategy documents, one reflecting the security approach and the other a more broad political and humanitarian approach, was probably the least integrated of the three strategies, but the new strategy provides for cross-cutting mission-wide responsibility, and it established coordination and monitoring mechanisms that encourage integration among the various mission components. Whether this has actually resulted in improved integration is not yet known.

This comparison reveals interesting differences and similarities among the three missions. It indicates how generic guidance needs to be applied differently in specific contexts, and how the time-period, or phase, the mission finds itself in, needs to be taken into consideration.