CONCEPT NOTE

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING

PROTECTING THE PEACEKEEPER: SUPPRESSING THE DEPLOYMENT OF IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES AGAINST PEACE OPERATIONS

26th March, 2021 at 14:00-17:00 EST

The Permanent Missions of Kenya, China, Estonia, France, Ireland, Mexico, Niger, Norway, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam will co-host the Arria-formula meeting to address the threat posed to peace operations by the indiscriminate use of Improvised Explosive Devices. The Permanent Missions of Belgium, Ecuador, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Portugal are co-sponsors of the event.

Context

Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks are presently the greatest explosive ordinance threat against civilians, children, peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones. The proliferation and indiscriminate use of IEDs increasingly constitute a serious threat with far reaching ramifications. Terrorist groups and armed groups with affiliated terrorist links continue to train, manufacture and use these explosive ordinances as a weapon of choice in conflict zones to great effect. The attractiveness of IEDs to terrorists and armed groups is that they can easily be assembled with locally available materials and planted and detonated effortlessly along patrol and supply routes.
Peace operations are faced with various threats as they are carried out in dangerous and complex environments. Security Council mandated Missions in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, Somalia, Yemen and the Sahel region have recorded significant rise in the number of injuries and fatalities attributed to explosive ordinances.

These IEDs are used in urban settings targeting vital infrastructure and laid along Main Supply Routes (MSRs) where they target convoy vehicles. In the case of Mali and Somalia, Vehicle–Born Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDS), Victim Operated Improvised Explosive Devices (VOIEDS) and Radio Controlled Improvised Explosive Device (RCIEDS) have been used to breach peacekeepers’ defensive positions and camps resulting in catastrophic consequences. Similarly, IEDs targeting convoys have frequently been reinforced by ambushes, often attacking survivors with small arms fire giving them little or no chance of survival.

Compounded with the threat of COVID-19, peacekeepers’ movement has been hampered, and their visibility and situational awareness reduced, which has a cascading effect on the greater UN family to implement their mandates or deliver humanitarian and development programmes. This means that, the show of presence and freedom of movement are greatly compromised in areas where IEDs are a high threat; hence the protectors need protection.

Besides the loss of lives, injuries and emotional stress associated with IED attacks, the UN continues to lose equipment through damage or complete destruction, particularly of vehicles, exerting a heavy financial burden in terms of reimbursement and compensation. Furthermore, there is a reputational risk and potential loss of confidence of the population in the peacebuilding process and the ability of missions to protect civilians.

The evolving threat puts the onus on Missions to adapt to these complex threats within their environments of operation by enhancing their capacity to deter and counter the impact of IED threats. It also requires an integrated response from the UN system to address the cross-cutting challenges in terms of situational awareness, adequate use of technology, generation of critical capacities, pre-deployment and in-mission training and medical evacuations.

**Objectives:**

The main objective of the meeting is to raise awareness and to explore ways of reducing the impact of risks and threats posed to peacekeepers and UN personnel at large by IEDs. The meeting will in particular:
1. Provide a recent account of the increased use of IEDs by terrorist groups, terrorist affiliated armed groups and criminal networks and make suggestions for enhancing regular monitoring and reporting.
2. Present UN efforts to address the IED threat at the mission-level and to support host countries and civilians in facing this challenge.
3. Discuss best practices in ammunition stockpile management to prevent conventional munitions, such as artillery shells, mortar bombs and landmines from being used as IEDs.
4. Consider contemporary challenges such as threat of online training and dissemination of instructional videos both on IED construction and on execution of attacks by adversaries and terrorist networks.
5. Consider options for the provision of care and assistance to survivors of IED attacks given that survivors are often left with lifelong health effects of a physical and psychological nature.

**Guiding Questions:**

1. What must be done to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers from the IED threat in terms of training, information, capacity, equipment and technology?
2. How can regional and international organizations support affected states with technical, financial and material assistance to strengthen national capacities to counter the IED threat?
3. How can the networks producing and setting up IEDs for terrorist groups and terrorist affiliated armed groups be targeted or hampered?
4. How can national regulation reinforce the control and traceability of explosive precursors and the accountability of supply chains?
5. How can intelligence and surveillance capabilities help to mitigate IED threats?

**Welcome & Opening Remarks:** (2 minutes)

1. Amb. Martin Kimani, Permanent Representative, Kenya

**Briefers: (4-5 minutes each)**

2. Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, **Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations**
3. Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre, **Force Commander, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)**
4. Brig. Charles L Mwazighe, **International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC)**
5. Ms. Ilene Cohn, Deputy Director, Officer-in-Charge, **United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)**

**Member States: (2-3 minutes each) (Questions to the briefers are encouraged)**

6. Security Council Member States Interventions
7. Member States and Permanent Observer Interventions
8. Civil Society Organisations Interventions
9. Closing Remarks
Modalities:

Kenya will Chair the meeting. All Member States, Permanent Observers, UN entities and civil society organisations are invited to attend.

Speakers are encouraged to limit their interventions to 2-3 minutes in order to accommodate as many interventions as possible. The meeting will be conducted in English.

A document will be prepared to reflect briefings and interventions made during the meeting. All participants are encouraged to submit their statement no later than the day of the meeting to kenyasc@kenyaun.org

The meeting will be conducted via zoom platform and broadcasted through the UN Web TV. Kindly register here to access the zoom meeting link.