

UNCOPS – Background Note for Session 2

FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH UNITED NATIONS POLICING

The world is witnessing the largest number of violent conflicts since 1946, with an estimated one quarter of the global population living in conflict-affected countries at the end of 2020. Organized violence left more than 119,100 deaths in 2021, a 46 percent increase from the previous year.¹ The impact of this violence is staggering, with poor and vulnerable populations most affected by persistent inter- and intra-State conflicts, widespread human rights violations, growing humanitarian needs, the climate emergency and the continued effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Given the inextricable links between peace, security and development, national and international police are key in preventing and addressing crimes and violence, and in helping to maintain public order and safety so as to enable the successful and sustainable realization of global development aspirations. Indeed, the role that international police play falls within the mutually reinforcing imperatives of justice, peace, democracy and human rights and is deeply interlinked with the [2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

PEACE AND SECURITY AND THE ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS POLICE

Representative, responsive and accountable policing remains a critical component of global efforts to manage and transform conflict and effectively address a wide spectrum of societal grievances. Faced with increasingly uncertain and complex operating environments characterized by both asymmetric and more conventional threats, [United Nations Police \(UNPOL\)](#) continue to adjust to multidimensional mandates and limited resources. Faced with pressing operational challenges, the range of [UNPOL](#) activities is considerable, from providing basic security and protecting civilians in the immediate aftermath of conflict with a particular emphasis on women and children, to developing sustainable host-State policing capacities to address, *inter alia*, linkages between serious crime and corruption, violent extremism and other transnational threats. [UNPOL](#) efforts are tailored for specific host-State contexts and have taken a variety of forms, including the conceptualization and implementation of community policing forums and support to the recruitment, training and deployment of police personnel. Working in both mission and non-mission settings, [UNPOL](#) promote national structures necessary to effectively ensure the rule of law and people-centered policing services. [UNPOL](#) remain essential not only to the successful resolution of pressing peace and security concerns but also, over the longer term, to our collective realization of [SDGs](#), including the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies and ensuring universal access to justice through effective and accountable institutions.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND UNITED NATIONS POLICING

As captured in [SDG 16](#), ending armed conflicts, strengthening institutions and enacting inclusive and equitable legislation that protects the human rights of all persons are necessary preconditions for sustainable development.

Befitting this nexus between peace and development and reflecting its status as a global service provider and enabler of [SDGs](#), [UNPOL](#) work globally within the [Strategic Guidance Framework for International Policing](#), one pillar of which is police capacity-building and development. [UNPOL](#) officers train, mentor and advise host-State police personnel and empower a myriad of stakeholders as part of national police reform efforts that result in a responsive and accountable governance framework and a strong legislative and normative base that reflects international human rights and criminal justice standards – all outcomes that help to renew the global social contract and address the growing disconnect between people and the institutions that serve them. By helping prevent and detect crime, protect life and property, and maintain public order and safety in adherence to the rule of law and international human rights law, national police and [UNPOL](#) contribute to all [17 SDGs](#), particularly: [5 \(gender equality\)](#), [10 \(reduced inequalities\)](#), [16 \(peace, justice and strong institutions\)](#), and [\(17\) partnerships for the goals](#).

OUR COMMON AGENDA AND UNITED NATIONS POLICING

In this context, [UNPOL](#) is also well placed to help address some of the most pressing global challenges outlined in the Secretary-General's report on [Our Common Agenda](#). Building on [SDG 16](#) and reflecting [UNPOL](#)'s own practical emphasis on trust as part of its community-oriented policing approach, [Our Common Agenda](#) describes a global trust deficit as a defining challenge. United Nations Police have long played a critical role in strengthening representative, responsive and accountable policing and associated access to justice; indeed, [UNPOL](#) efforts are key to ensuring that transformative change is achieved through promotion of people-centered rule of law, justice and security and that people remain front-and-centre in how justice is

¹ The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), 2021: <https://ucdp.uu.se/year/2021>

conceptualized and applied globally.

Another related facet captured in the [Our Common Agenda](#) report is the development of a new vision for the rule of law. UNPOL is supporting the development of the new vision as one of the co-chairs of the [Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law](#), in coordination with EOSG and GFP Partners. This field-oriented collaboration mechanism towards a One UN approach is complemented through the Secretary-General's establishment of a United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Policing (IATF-P), created to promote strategic-level coordination, interoperability and cohesion in this Organization's continued delivery of global policing assistance through its four strategic priorities of: (i) strategic policy and guidance standardization; (ii) planning, coordination, and partnerships; (iii) resource mobilization; and (iv) dialogue. A third relevant facet of [Our Common Agenda](#) includes a renewed commitment to prevention, which is yet another complement to [UNPOL](#)'s own successful contributions to preventative measures, including its support of political processes, its building of inclusive national capacities, the restoration of basic functioning of justice institutions in the aftermath of conflict and contributions to the fight against impunity for crimes fueling conflicts, including violence against women and girls. Working through the [Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law](#) mechanism in mission, transition and non-mission settings, [UNPOL](#) continues to support a wide range of activities to enhance coherence and effectiveness in the delivery of UN rule of law assistance, including advising on human rights-centred and gender-responsive policing and electoral security – all of which have helped contribute to the Organization's transition from a reactive mode to a preventive approach that results in longer term, sustainable and collective outcomes.

THE SECURITY-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS AND FUTURE OF UNITED NATIONS POLICE

Member States support is vital if international policing is to remain a central element of the peace and security and development agendas. Given the increasing scope and sophisticated nature of [UNPOL](#) taskings, including reform, restructuring and rebuilding obligations, the following aspects would benefit from Member States support:

- Recognizing [UNPOL](#)'s unique comparative advantage of working as part of the broader rule of law and the criminal justice chain directly with communities, including women, youth and civil society, on matters of public safety, such as preventing and investigating various types of crime, including international crimes and sexual and gender-based violence;
- Contributing to sustaining peace by strengthening their own police and other law enforcement agencies, with a view to enhancing their representativeness, responsiveness and accountability; and
- Helping to successfully implement the Police Division's expanding range of global backstopping work through the provision of personnel, training, financial and other resources.

KEY QUESTIONS

- In what ways can UNPOL support Member State police services and other law enforcement institutions to further advance the participation of youth in peace building and development processes so as to ensure sustainability?
- How can UNPOL's extensive expertise and experience in the international policing be utilized across the globe to enhance United Nations rule of law assistance and provide tailor-made responses to national needs?