

Disinformation hinders peacekeeping mandate delivery and threatens peacekeeper safety

Thank you President and thank you for Brazil's leadership on this topic, and thank you to our briefers. I join you in paying tribute to all peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the service of peace.

President, effective strategic communications are essential enablers of mandate delivery. They help to build trust and amplify the voices of those building and sustaining peace. They are also vital to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

As we heard from the Secretary-General, almost half of peacekeepers said disinformation hinders mandate delivery and threatens their safety and security.

I want to make three key points in this regard.

Firstly, strategic communications should be a whole-of-mission activity, integrated into planning and mandate implementation, and measured by the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System.

And they should leverage digital technologies to keep pace with changing communications landscapes. We support efforts to this end under Action for Peacekeeping Plus and the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of Peacekeeping.

Secondly, all actors should refrain from anti-UN misinformation and disinformation which undermines mandate delivery and the safety and security of peacekeepers, including in the DRC, the CAR and Mali.

Since the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group deployed in Mali, we have seen a significant increase in the volume of dangerous lies being spread about MINUSMA's mandate and activities. This puts peacekeepers' lives at increased risk in an already volatile environment.

It sows distrust which discourages local communities from sharing information with MINUSMA. That hinders the mission's ability to prevent attacks on civilians and peacekeepers alike.

The continued spread of dis- and mis-information will lead to more lives lost. There is no excuse for such activities.

Thirdly, President, I want to underline the importance of strategic communications in supporting the women, peace and security agenda.

I am proud of the efforts British peacekeepers and their German counterparts have been making in MINUSMA in this regard. They have met local women's

associations and helped local radio stations reach out to female audiences. This has helped build mutual understanding and given Malian women platforms for their peace advocacy.

In conclusion, President, let me stress that the United Kingdom continues to offer its full support to UN peacekeeping, including in mainstreaming an innovative, modern and integrated approach to strategic communications.