

# UN Standing Police Capacity: 10 years of rapid assistance to peace operations

31 May 2017 – Ten years on, the United Nations Standing Police Capacity (SPC) continues to bolster peacekeeping operations by providing immediate start-up capability and strengthening police components with timely support, advice and assistance.

“The Standing Police Capacity [SPC] is a vital tool of UN peacekeeping across the entire spectrum from conflict prevention to peace sustainment,” said Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, calling current SPC staff members “to continue to invest in peace by deploying and developing the capacity of national police services each time you deploy.”

Established in 2007, the SPC filled a critical need in global peace operations by providing them with readily available police expertise. When deployed, the unit has made a positive contribution to missions’ police-related work and tasks, delivering a versatile range of products and services.

“The SPC was established to provide the United Nations with a small corps of senior police officers and managers prepared to undertake urgent mission assessments and to organize the start-up of police components of peace operations” said Walter Wolf, the first SPC Chief.

SPC has established police components in five peacekeeping operations, assisted 15 ongoing operations and supported five operations during reconfiguration, closures or transition.



A medical specialist within the Formed Police Unit serving in the UN Mission in Liberia provides free medical care to a local family. Photo: UNMIL/Christopher Herwig



In 2009, officers with the UN Police ([UNPOL](#)) and Chad’s Détachement intégré de sécurité (DIS) interview Sudanese refugees in their camp. Photo: UN Photo/Olivia Grey Pritchard



UNPOL’s Maria Silvia introduces safety to children of the Portuguese school in Timor-Leste. Photo: UNMIT/Martine Perret



First Lieutenant Sigit Jatmiko, of the Indonesian Formed Police Unit, interacts with children in Abu Shouk internally displaced persons camp during a morning patrol. Photo: UNAMID/Albert González Farran

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Haiti, Chad, Central African Republic, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan have been the major beneficiaries of the SPC, which has, in addition to integrating human rights into law enforcement and enhancing protection of civilians, worked in these countries to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, promote the role of women in peace and security and build effective, efficient police institutions.

With 37 experts ready to rapidly deploy to police components of UN peacekeeping operations, special political missions, UN funds and programmes and other partners, SPC stands ready to assist.

SPC Chief Maria Appelblom, one of the most senior police women in the Organization, told UN News about some of the tasks performed by the UN's rapid response unit – from helping to start up missions to assisting with elections.

“The Standing Police Capacity was with the team to start up the mission in Mali in 2013,” she said from Brindisi, Italy, where the unit is based. “And then one year later we started in Central African Republic. We were responsible in MINUSCA [UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic] for the planning of the visit of the Pope, but we were also working with UNDP and UN country teams.”

“We have been involved in Sierra Leone,” she continued. “We have assisted in establishing community policing and this is now a concept that is going to be replicated in several districts in Sierra Leone. Right now, we are assisting in preparation for their elections next year, with all of the security arrangements around that.”