

**Statement of Major General Michael Rothstein,  
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Bureau of Political-Military Affairs,  
U.S. Department of State  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing  
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Good morning Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin and members of the committee. I am U.S. Air Force Major General Michael Rothstein, here before you in my capacity as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Plans, Programs, and Operations in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

Among my duties at the State Department, I am responsible for providing executive leadership and guidance for U.S. government global security assistance programs and policies, such as the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) – which I look forward to discussing with you today. As an active-duty member of the armed services on detail to the State Department, one might say I am “living proof” of State and DoD's commitment to coordination and collaboration.

**GPOI as a Flagship Program for Building Global Peace Operations Capacity:**

Peacekeeping missions are a critical tool for promoting peace and reconciliation in some of the world's most troubled countries. As Ambassador Power highlighted to this committee in December of last year: “Even when the United States has an interest in seeing conflict abate or civilians protected, that does not mean that U.S. forces should be doing all of the abating or the protecting.”

While the U.S. cannot and should not send the U.S. military into all of the world's conflict zones, we have a compelling interest in curbing violent conflicts and preventing suffering around the world, and we need international peacekeeping to work. GPOI serves as our flagship program for building global peace operations capacity, and is one of the key ways the United States advances its vital interest in strengthening peacekeeping.

GPOI works to strengthen international capacity and capabilities to implement United Nations (UN) and regional peace operations. It builds the capacity of our partners and enhances their capabilities to meet the growing global demand for specially trained personnel required for peace operations. GPOI supports not only military peacekeeping activities, but also contributes to the development of formed police units (FPUs), complementing the efforts of our colleagues in the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

In addition to being the world's leading financial supporter of UN peacekeeping, the United States is also the largest trainer and equipper of military and police contingents deploying to peacekeeping operations in the world. Programs like GPOI have played a pivotal role in meeting the expanding need for well-trained, adequately equipped peacekeepers capable of responding to evolving mission requirements. To date, the program has facilitated the deployment of more than 200,000 personnel to 29 peace operations around the world. Moreover, assistance and engagement through GPOI have directly advanced the will and ability of partner countries to deploy key enabling capabilities essential to mission success, such as aviation, engineering, or

medical units, as well as to deploy more basic units to higher risk missions. GPOI is further working to expand the base of troop and police contributors and help create a surplus of peacekeeping forces. Importantly, this will allow the international community to be more selective in choosing which forces will deploy for which missions and help both raise and enforce standards.

### **How GPOI Works Directly to Prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA):**

Let me be clear: each and every instance of sexual exploitation and abuse by members of any peacekeeping force undermines the force's mission and legitimacy. Given the strategic importance of multilateral peace operations to U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives, we strongly believe contributing countries must take steps to ensure that personnel assigned to peacekeeping missions are properly trained, vetted, scrupulously professional in their conduct, and held to account when their actions fall below those standards. GPOI and our broader security assistance and security cooperation programs play a key part in supporting the efforts of our partner countries to professionalize their security forces and enforce stringent conduct and discipline standards.

GPOI is consciously structured to proactively address these serious issues. GPOI training and support programs must adhere to the GPOI Strategy, which includes prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in one of its seven program objectives. Additionally, all GPOI training must follow specific training requirements identified in program guidance to our implementers and trainers in the field—guidance that is emphasized and reemphasized throughout the year at regional and global roundtable consultations to address best practices in identifying and addressing this critical issue.

In 2015, GPOI funded 130 training events and courses around the world. These programs explain the UN's zero tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse and emphasize the critical role that individuals, units and leaders play in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. Where appropriate, GPOI-funded training incorporates instruction on human rights, conduct, and discipline, including the preventions of sexual exploitation and abuse; protection of civilians, including the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, and child protection.

At the individual level, such training includes examples, perceptions and definitions of sexual exploitation and abuse, in order for prospective peacekeepers to fully grasp its impact on individuals, the population, and the peacekeeping mission. These lessons outline peacekeeper standards of conduct including individual and leadership responsibilities for preventing, responding to and reporting sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as discussing the consequences of sexual misconduct. This training is further reinforced as part of unit level trainings.

While preventing sexual exploitation and abuse is the responsibility of every peacekeeper, GPOI training places particular emphasis on the critical role that unit leaders play in this task. For example, this topic is stressed as part of battalion-level pre-deployment training we provide through the GPOI-funded Africa Contingency Operations and Training Assistance, or ACOTA, program, as well as the Contingent Commander courses we sponsor in Africa, the Asia-Pacific regions, and elsewhere. This training places a focus on commanders' responsibilities to enforce conduct and discipline among their troops, including sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of misconduct.

## **How GPOI Helps Prevent SEA by Promoting the Role of Women and Enhanced Gender Integration into Peacekeeping Operations:**

Working to include women as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace in countries threatened and affected by war, violence, and insecurity can also help reduce instances of sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence. This is why, in addition to direct support for this specialized training, GPOI consciously works to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by promoting the role of women and influencing partner countries to increase gender integration into UN and regional peacekeeping operations, including specifically seeking out women to serve as trainers for foreign military or police units.

Over the past five years, the 50 active GPOI partner countries have nearly doubled the number of female military peacekeepers deployed to 2,539 and more than doubled the number of female FPU officers to 513. Additionally, GPOI has provided more than \$3 million specifically for women, peace and security and related protection of civilian initiatives in support of the UN and partner countries across the globe. As a point of contrast during this same period, the 71 countries that are not GPOI partners actually decreased the number of deployed females from 604 to 508, a loss of 16%.

GPOI also provides funding assistance for gender-specific facilities refurbishment to enable gender integration and more systemic training of female peacekeepers, such as the establishment of female barracks, latrines and showers at peacekeeping training centers.

## **Broader Efforts Required to Prevent and Respond to SEA:**

Training and gender integration initiatives, such as efforts the U.S. Government implements through GPOI and complementary security assistance and cooperation programs are foundational to sexual exploitation and abuse prevention efforts. We will continue to actively explore ways in which we can strengthen training and reinforce messaging on these critical issues.

However, it is important to note that training is only a small part of a broader, holistic effort required to more effectively prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in UN and regional peace operations. Many factors beyond training underlie sexual exploitation and abuse and other conduct and discipline issues. Individual morals, cultural values, unit professionalism, leadership, and education among other considerations, can contribute to conditions that foster peacekeeper conduct and discipline problems.

While we commit to objectively examining the effectiveness of our GPOI training activities, training is but one piece of the solution to this pervasive problem. We must also continue our work with the UN, troop and police contributing countries, and other international stakeholders to examine and address issues underlying the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse in some peacekeeping missions and to work together to implement more effective prevention measures.

Moreover, greater efforts must be undertaken. We must continue to push the UN for greater transparency and accountability in allegations and investigations and for the UN to clarify roles and responsibilities for conducting sexual exploitation and abuse investigations. Additionally we must engage diplomatically and consider security assistance to troop or police contributing

countries to strengthen both their political will and their actual capacity to respond effectively to allegations.

In some cases, troop or police contributors demonstrate the will to pursue allegations but lack the institutional capacity to conduct timely, effective investigations or, where appropriate, to prosecute cases through either a military or civilian justice system. In other cases, countries' leaders may view sexual exploitation and abuse allegations less seriously than warranted and be reluctant to take appropriate action. Accordingly, we must continue to work collaboratively within the interagency and with the UN, UN member states, including troop and police contributors, and other international stakeholders to develop the investigative, prosecution, and other mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable, as well as to pressure those countries reluctant to take appropriate action when necessary. If countries fail to respond appropriately, we are and must be willing to deliberately consider withholding further GPOI assistance.

### **The Presidential Policy Memorandum on U.S. Support to UN Peace Operations**

Although GPOI has long been invested in efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, the issuance of the Presidential Policy Memorandum on U.S. Support to UN Peace Operations in September 2015 has broadened and strengthened our efforts. We are working closely with the International Organizations Bureau, INL and others at the State Department, the U.S. Mission to the UN, and the Department of Defense to implement the policy. Together, we are taking steps to address a broad range of peacekeeping performance and accountability issues, with particular attention to sexual exploitation and abuse by coordinating and complementing how we use our programming and influence as the largest trainer and equipper of peacekeeping troops, our direct personnel contributions to UN peacekeeping missions, and our diplomatic influence at UN headquarters.

#### **Conclusion:**

Ultimately, the building blocks of an effective peacekeeping force are well-trained, disciplined and properly equipped security forces. Through GPOI and other security capacity building programs, the United States works to help our partners field peacekeeping forces of which the vast majority live up to high standards of professionalism, discipline and conduct. While there are many success stories, the track record is certainly not perfect. Whether it's directly or indirectly, through ongoing training or through expanding the role of women in peacekeeping and society, we are committed to helping prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse among peacekeeping forces.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.