



United Nations

**Command Post Exercise (CPX) in Force Headquarters of
United Nations Peacekeeping Missions
Handbook**

July 2019

Foreword

The Command Post Exercise (CPX) in Force Headquarters of UN Peacekeeping Missions Handbook aims at providing information that will contribute to the understanding of the functioning of the Force HQ in crisis situations in a United Nations field mission to include organization, management and working of Military Component activities in the field. The information contained in this Handbook will be of interest to the Head of Military Component/ Force Commander, Deputy Force Commander and Force Chief of Staff. The information will also be of value to all military staff in the Force Headquarters and will provide greater awareness to the Mission Leadership Team. Furthermore, it will help facilitate systematic military planning.

Peacekeeping operations have evolved to adapt and adjust to hostile environments, to the emergence of asymmetric threats and complex operational challenges that require a concerted multidimensional approach and credible response mechanisms to keep the peace process on track. Military component, in United Nations peacekeeping missions play a vital and pivotal role in protecting, preserving and facilitating a safe, secure and stable environment for all other components and stakeholders to function effectively. However, one of the consequences of the Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers was an action plan with several proposals to improve the security of Peacekeepers. At Headquarters level one of the proposed actions was “Develop an In-Mission Training program to strengthen the military decision-making process of military staff officers. The challenge of such an In-Mission Training is immense. The operational environment in each mission is different, the officers are coming from countries of all continents, the scope of each mission and the background of the officers is diverse. Therefore In-Mission Training, procedures of staff work in Headquarters should be standardized and trained; and should be in synch with respective FHQ SOPs.

The CPX Handbook is design to provide the basic structure to plan, organize, conduct and evaluate an exercise within a FHQ, including the implementation of Lessons Identified (LI). It may also be used for CPX within Sector Headquarters , Brigade Headquarters and Battalion Headquarters.



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Chapter 1 – CPX Planning

1.1. Develop Training Objectives (TOs)

- 1.1.1. Force Commanders (FC) directives, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Lesson identified from exercises already conducted, as well as observations and requirements by the Mission Leadership are possible starting points to derive TOs. The derived objectives must meet the mission requirements and are the baseline for all further preparation of a CPX.
- 1.1.2. TOs, in the context as mentioned above, are mainly used to test and evaluate routines, SOP and/or crisis management procedures within a FHQ. Therefore, it is important, to consider the current situation or already foreseen gaps and challenges, as well as the structural and procedural organization of the HQ during the development process. The approval of the TOs is incumbent on the FC. The development of the TOs must be done by the staff under direction of the U7, DCOS PET or the FCOS. As already mentioned the approved TOs serve as the basis for further planning of a CPX and must be brought to the attention of all participants in the exercise. The evaluation of the CPX must be designed in such a way that the degree of achievement of the TOs can be determined and, if necessary, conclusions can be drawn for corrective measures.

1.2. The Core Planning Team

- 1.2.1. In every Force HQ (FHQ), a standardized core planning team (CPT) comprising all branches including evaluation (lessons identified / lessons learned) must be established. The DCOS PET or the U7 should lead the core planning.
- 1.2.2. A revision and if needed an adaption of the core planning team may be necessary, as soon as the TOs are approved by the FC. In addition, support by other Mission Components could be necessary.

- 1.3. **Develop exercise timeline.** The exercise timeline supports the CPT and the staff in preparation, conduction and evaluation of a CPX. Therefore, the timeline comprising the planning, execution and the evaluation of the CPX, but also the further planning to implement any derived lessons identified. An example can be found in Annex A.

1.4. Establish exercise organization (including evaluation team)

- 1.4.1. As a minimum requirement, the exercise organization consists of an Officer Scheduling the Exercise (OSE), an Officer Conducting the Exercise (OCE), the Exercise Director (ExDir), the Training Audience (TA), Director of Evaluation (DirEVAL) and Real-Life Support (RLS).
- 1.4.2. In general, the OSE is the Force Commander, who establishes the requirements of the exercise. The OSE designates the OCE, who is responsible for planning, organizing, executing of the exercise and reporting of the results according to the OSE direction.
- 1.4.3. The ExDir is responsible of the overall control of the conduct of the Exercise.
- 1.4.4. In principle, the TA is the whole FHQ. However, it must be specified in accordance with the approved TOs.
- 1.4.5. The DirEVAL is responsible for the evaluation efforts as directed by the OSE. DirEVAL provides direction to the evaluation teams and gives advice to the ExDir in respect of Exercise Control (ExCon) during the exercise.
- 1.4.6. RLS is responsible for all administrative and organizational issues (e.g. exercise facilities, computers, telephones, radios, handouts, maps, etc.) to prepare and conduct the exercise. RLS coordinates with and supports the OCE and the ExDir.

- 1.4.7. In addition, a Response Cell could be necessary to cover other Mission level components, other external UN components or mission relevant actors (e.g. local police, IOs and NGOs, etc.), and the subordinates.
- 1.5. Develop the exercise scenario**
 - 1.5.1. Based on the approved TOs, the scenario must be established. In principle, utilize the current situation in the respective mission as a starting point, compromising the political and media situation, the security situation, the humanitarian and development situation, but also the mission support situation.
 - 1.5.2. Furthermore, the Mandate, Strategic Directives from DPO, Peace Agreements (PA), the Strategic Concept of Operations (ConOps), the Status of Forces Agreement (SoFA), the Operational Order (OpOrd), Rules of Engagement (RoE), Direction on the Use of Force (DUF), National Caveats, command and control structures (C2) and other important or dependent documents should be taken into consideration.
 - 1.5.3. The scenario should be realistic and comprehensive to consider the nature of a multidimensional UN Peacekeeping Mission.
 - 1.5.4. Based on the larger picture/Narrative/Scenario, the TA needs to complete the planning process to come up with the COA which is a primary requirement for initiating the CPX play. This will also help CPT/Ex Writing Team (EWT) in determining and developing major events, incidents, injects and their corresponding responses and expected outcome by the players.
- 1.6. Develop incidents and/or events**
 - 1.6.1. Incidents and/or events build storylines designed to trigger certain decisions and activities based on the approved TOs. In this respect, use the most likely or most dangerous courses of actions of the parties to the conflict, or injects inspired by developments of the last months, political and humanitarian developments, to develop and advance a storyline. This storyline must be described in a way that it creates a problem for the FHQ requiring an immediate action/reaction. The so created challenge for the FHQ can be based on a single event, or a combination of different incidents.
 - 1.6.2. In addition, the expected outcome should be described for every incident or event (what measures must be taken by the FHQ).
- 1.7. Develop criteria/ratings for evaluation**
 - 1.7.1. From the beginning of planning and conducting an exercise, evaluation must be taken in consideration. As soon as the TOs are approved, the DirEVAL starts to develop criteria/ratings for evaluation. These criteria must be based on the requirements of the exercise, the above-mentioned TOs, the exercise scenario, the incidents/events developed to create a challenge for the FHQ requiring an action and the expected outcome.
 - 1.7.2. The criteria/ratings must be measurable. This means that either a measurement catalog is developed in which all TA measures are recorded on a numerical scale or, on the other hand, the respective results obtained are described as a solution proposal and can be assigned to them.
- 1.8. Brief to the FC.** Latest at the end of the Planning Phase, the FC must receive an overall briefing about the organizational and content-related issues of the exercise. This brief must comprise the approved TOs, the exercise structure, the timelines, the scenario, the developed storyline, the support requirements, the problem(s)/challenges created for the TA and the expected outcome. Furthermore, the evaluation criteria and all issues regarding RLS must be covered.

Chapter 2 – CPX Conduct

2.1. Exercise Introduction Brief. At the beginning of the exercise and under the lead of the OCE or the ExDir, all participants must be briefed about the TOs, the scenario, expectations from the TA through the exercise and all organizational/RLS-issues. The exercise Introduction Briefs marks also the formal start of the exercise.

2.2. Exercise Command & Control and Real-Life support

2.2.1. The ExDir exercises command and control of the overall exercise organization to guide all activities within the CPX, to best achieve the OSE/OCE's aim and objectives.

2.2.2. A crucial aspect of control is ensuring that the ExDir, the DirEVAL, the Mentors and Evaluators constantly monitor the progress towards the achievement of the TOs.

2.2.3. As already mentioned in Section a, the exercise setting should provide a problem/challenge for the TA (FHQ). Therefore, during the conduction of the exercise, the TA should run through a military planning process (annex F), to provide courses of action to face the issue.

2.3. Exercise Corrections. A deliberate plan to attain the TO is expected and to achieve it through numerous contingency plans, scenarios, injects and additional direction from the ExDir may be applied to keep the tempo of the CPX play.

2.4. Exercise Observations

2.4.1. Every person involved in the exercise, both in the planning and the conduct of the exercise has the responsibility to collect and write observations to improve the exercise.

2.4.2. In addition, queries at the end of the exercise for the TA, ExCon and RLS should be conducted.

2.4.3. DirEVAL in close coordination with the OCE and the ExDir is responsible for both, to develop observation/evaluation sheets for observations/evaluations during the exercise and queries/feedback sheets at the end of an exercise for all participants and evaluators.

2.5. De-brief

2.5.1. With the key functions of the TA, including the Mentors: Under the leadership of the ExDir, a daily debrief must be conducted. At this time, the exercise events of the day should be finished, and the respective results of the exercise should be presented. First findings should be addressed, as well as necessary corrective measures for the further conduct of the exercise should be determined.

2.5.2. With the whole exercise organization: Under the leadership of the OCE a debrief at the end of the exercise is to carry out. At this time, the TOs, the main events of the whole exercise and the respective results of the exercise should be presented. Furthermore, a summary of the findings and observations as well as the feedback of the queries should be addressed. Finally, the timetable of the follow-on steps regarding evaluation of the exercise, determination of lessons identified, and implementation of Lesson identified should be presented.

Chapter 3 – Evaluate a CPX

3.1. Conduct After-Action Review (AAR). Like in operations and other training activities carried out in the UN missions, AAR are conducted after CPX. The AAR are in the responsibility of the Military Best Practice Officer (MBPO) within the FHQ. They are used as a discussion of an action, activity, project or operation to reflect on what happened, why it happened, lessons identified, follow-up action, and improvements. AARs should be a routine part of exercises as activities with a view towards making recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the mission. AARs are to be submitted within 2 weeks of the conduct of the CPX. AAR-Templates are typically part of the Lessons learned and best practices part of the missions' SOP.

3.2. Evaluation of the Exercise by participants IAW the evaluation sheets. Evaluation helps to provide data on the effectiveness of the exercise and is useful in advising mission leadership how to improve the training efforts. The evaluation of SOs during the CPX should be guided by honesty, transparency and the cooperation between the evaluation team and the SOs. In this respect, evaluated branches and SOs during a CPX can greatly benefit from a structured, systematic approach to identify strengths and weaknesses. The evaluation team for the CPX may vary in composition and size according to its tasks and the training audience. Within the FHQ, the Chief Evaluation should be the team leader and each participating branch in the CPX should contribute in accordance with the missions' SOP. In addition, the Chief Evaluator must prepare and conduct the CPX evaluation.

3.3. Collect Observations

3.3.1. The format for data collection of the evaluation team are typically part of the missions' SOP. A simplified version of data collection for CPX evaluation can be found in Annex C. Always, the sample checklists and evaluation method should comply with the missions' SOP and be authorized by the mission's leadership.

3.3.2. In addition, it is significant, to access the participants reaction on the CPX, to develop an action plan for implementing what they have learned. This can be done through a participant's feedback sheet (Annex D). The focus should be to determine the relevance, importance and usefulness of the CPX content and the overall satisfaction with the CPX. Due to the fact, that the CPX is a shorter training element, this questionnaire should be prepared prior to the CPX as an end-of-course questionnaire. To revise the whole training, the questions should focus on the content, format, pace and objectives of the CPX. To make use of the participants feedback immediately for analyzing and reporting, Likert-type scale-based questions should be preferred. The options in a Likert-type scale can be easily codified and participants can align with the level of agreement. In addition, open questions should be added, to receive additional comments from the training participants.

3.4. Analyze Evaluation sheets and observations. A basic principle of analyzing the collected data during the evaluation is to base on objective measures of success listed in the prepared CPX evaluation checklists. The observations done by the evaluators should include, but not limited to, a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the participating branches and SOs evaluated including recommendations. However, due to the fact, that incidental observations do not reveal the totality of the branches or SOs capability, the outcome of the evaluation and recommendation should be discussed thorough within the evaluation team. The preliminary findings should be forwarded precisely to the FC in accordance with his guidance.

3.5. Develop the exercise evaluation report and consolidate LI/LL. Once the evaluation is completed, the DirEVAL drafts the evaluation report. The details of the evaluation and the recommendations then should be discussed with the FC, the FCOS and all DCOS to implement an action implementation plan.

3.6. Forward exercise report. The evaluation report is to be presented to the FC and –following the common understanding of transparency - must be shared with the CPX audience to make the best use of it for future training measures.

Chapter 4 – Plan to implement the LI/LL

4.1. Consider how to implement the respective LI/LL and who must be involved. The MBPO facilitates the learning process and ensures that the best practices and the lessons learned from the CPX are documented and that the actionable recommendations are forwarded for review and action to the FHQ staff. The MBPO should also use a missions Best Practices Toolbox to bring the outcome of the CPX to attention to the mission staff. Using the annual best practices Workshop in New York, the MBPO should contribute with his CPX experience to the overall aim of conducting CPX in all UN missions to enhance the SOs capabilities in the missions.

4.2. Develop timeline for implementation. The MBPO should develop a knowledge management strategy and an action plan to ensure, that (depending on the CPX evaluation outcome) the missions learning needs are well addressed. Considering the contingents rotation, it is of importance for the mission, that the actual contingent will have a benefit from the learning effects of the CPX. Due to the fact, that a part of the implementation of the LI/LL will take place after the rotation of contingents, it must be ensured, that the CPX information in the FHQ will be saved. Handover notes by the responsible SOs and End of Assignment Reports (EoARs) by the department chiefs of the FHQ about this LI/LL for conducted CPX must be produced before leaving their mission. Their purpose is to provide the SOs successors with LI/LL, key knowledge and information about conducted CPX.

4.3. Develop evaluation criteria/ratings for implementation (using similar measurement as during the exercise). The development of evaluation criteria and their ratings for a CPX must follow the timelines and procedures of the missions' SOP in accordance with the FCs guidance. As it is a standard procedure for the process leading U 7 branch, generic samples are always part of existing missions' SOPs as an annex to the military training and exercise procedures. It is of importance, when existing checklists are matched for CPX evaluation, that prior to the CPX, these are standardized and, if sector SOs are included, coordinated with the sectors.

4.4. Analyze the implementation. For a coordinated training effort, all involved branches in the CPX are encouraged to designate best practice focal points. It is essential, that the branches share reports and AARs relating to the CPX topics with the MBPO. This gives him the chance, in close coordination with the CPX involved branches, to develop mechanisms and a knowledge base on missions' progress to enhance the mission SOs capabilities.

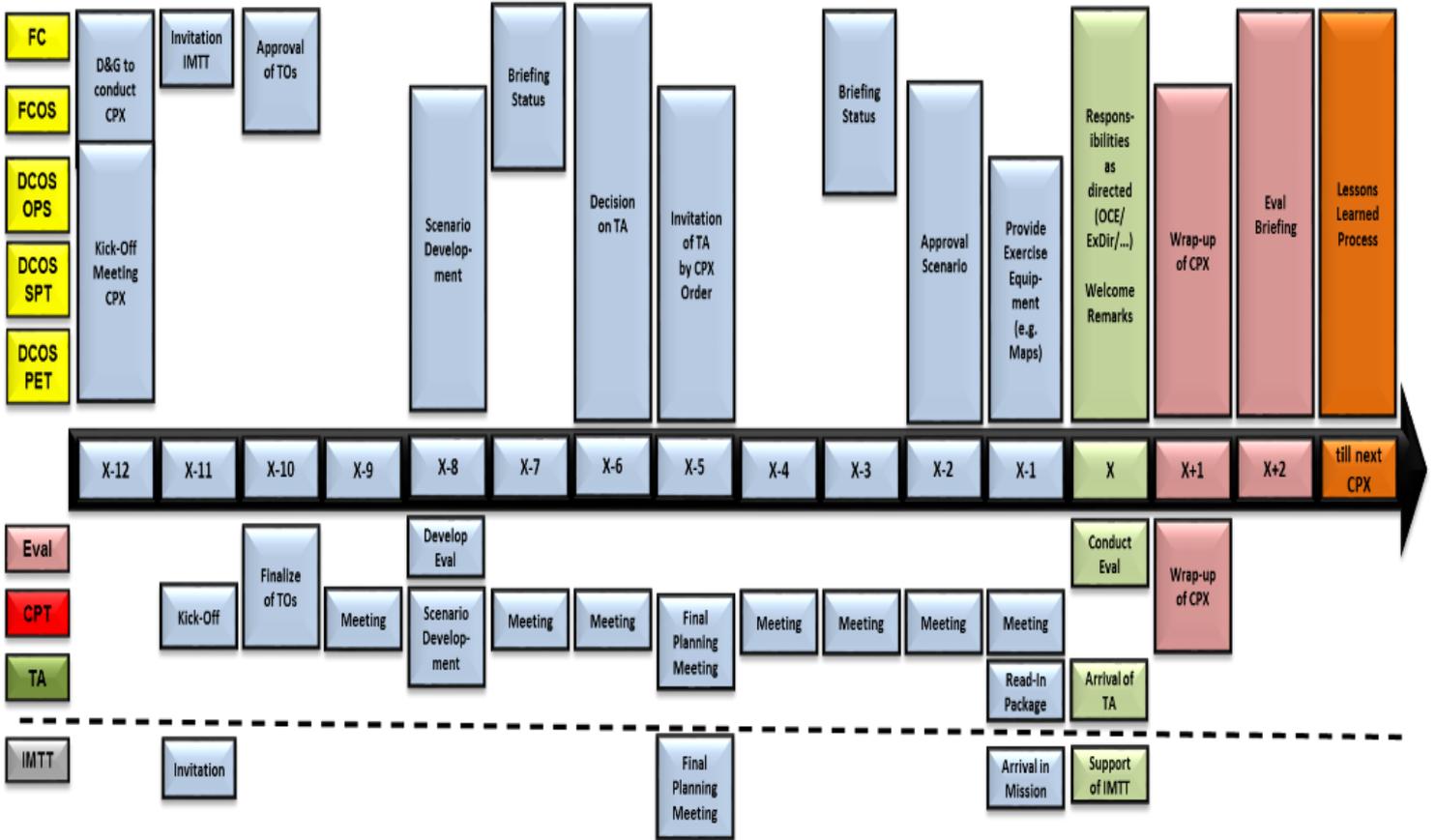
4.5. Consider possible training objectives for next CPX. Based on the actual mission's needs and the FCs guidance, the general training objectives for the exercises like CPX or table top exercises (TTX) are determined. In preparation of the future FCs training directives, the U7 branch must identify priorities for the SOs training e.g. as an outcome of the CPX evaluation. In addition to that, remedial action for the evaluated SOs during the CPX can also be the provision of training and the revision of missions' SOPs and directives.

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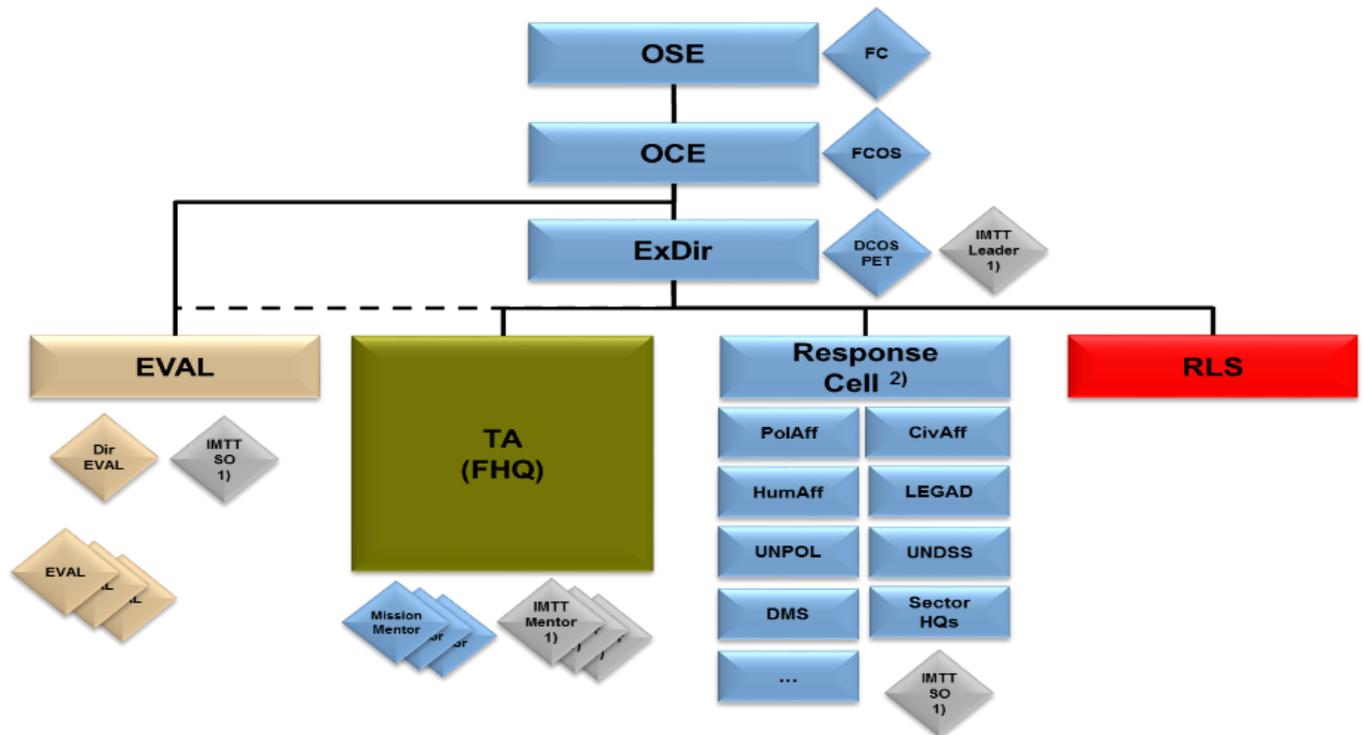
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Annex A

Suggested CPX Design Timetable (Phase 1 – Phase 4)



Suggested CPX C 2 and ExCon Layout Example



Remarks:

- 1) Support by IMTT
- 2) Depending on the Scenario

Annex C

Evaluation Sheet Example

No	Branch	Team	Observation	Assessment	Recommendation	Action to be done	Remarks
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							
12.							
13.							
14.							
15.							

Participants' Feedback Sheet Example

Participants' Feedback Sheet
(Mission); CPX (Date)

This questionnaire is to determine your personal impression on the CPX. Your feedback is an important contribution to the development of the CPX. The questionnaire is anonymous.

Please return to admin office: **NLT x (date)**

Thank you for your support.

Rating scale: 1=excellent, 2=good, 3=satisfactory, 4=unsatisfactory, 5=poor

1. Lesson (if introductory lessons are given):

- Content and execution:
- Benefit for your business:

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Remarks:

2. CPX setting in general:

- Timings and Schedule:
- ExCon work (response cell, etc.):
- Concept of the vignette-based exercise:

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Remarks:

3. Was the training beneficial for your duty?

1	2	3	4	5
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Remarks:

4. General remarks (What needs to be improved in your opinion):

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description	Acronym	Description	Acronym	Description
AAR	After-Action Review	FIR	First Impression report	MSU	Medical Support Unit
AOO	Area of Operations	FIT	Force Integration Training	OHC	Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator
ATS	Air Transport Section	FRAGO	Fragmentary Order	OCE	Officer Conducting the Exercise
BN	Battalion	FTX	Field Training Exercise	OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
BPO	Best Practice Officer	GA	General Assembly	OSM	Operation Support Manual
CASEVAC	Casualty Evacuation	GIS	Geographic Information Systems	PCC	Police Contributing Country
CCIR	Commanders Critical Information Requirement	GO	Governmental Organization	PoC	Protection of Civilians
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation	HOM	Head of Mission	POLAD	Political Advisor
CISS	Chief Integrated Support Services	HOMC	Head(s) of Military Component	RLS	Real Life Support
CIVPOL	Civilian Police	HOPC	Head(s) of Police Component	RoE	Rules of Engagement
CMO	Chief Military Observer	HQ	Headquarters	SAR	Search & Rescue
CMPO	Chief Military Personnel Officer	IAW	In Accordance With	SC	Security Council
COE	Contingent Owned Equipment	IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)	SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
CONOPS	Concept of Operations	IED	Improvised Explosive Device	SHQ	Sector Headquarters
COA	Course(s) of Action	IER	Information Exchange Requirements	SG	Secretary-General
COO	Chief Operations Officer	IMPP	Integrated Mission Planning Process	SITREP	Situation Report
CPT	Core Planning Team	IMTC	Integrated Mission Training Centre	SOFA	Status-of-Forces Agreement
CPX	Command Post Exercise	IMTT	In-Mission Training Team	SOMA	Status-of-Mission Agreement
DDR	Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration	IO	International Organization	SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
DFC	Deputy Force Commander	IOC	Initial Operating Capability	SOR	Statement of Requirements
EO	Executive Office	DFS	Department of Field Support	SRSRG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival	DIREVA	Director Evaluation	STARTEX	Start of Exercise
ETD	Estimated Time of Departure	DMS	Director of Mission Support	TA	Training Audience
ENDEX	End of Exercise	JOC	Joint Operations Centre	TCC	Troop Contributing Country
EXCON	Exercise Control	LI/LL	Lessons Identified/Lessons Learned	TCN	Troop Contributing Nation
EXDIR	Exercise Director	LEGAD	Legal Advisor	TO	Training Objective
EXPLAN	Exercise Plan	MEDEV	Medical Evacuation	TOT	Training of Trainers
EXSPEC	Exercise Specification	MEL/MI	Main Event List/ Main Incident List	UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
FC	Force Commander	MILOBS	Military Observers	USG	Under-Secretary-General
FER	Final Exercise report	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	PIO	Public Information Office
FHQ	Forces Headquarters	MSR	Main Supply Route	VTC	Video Tele Conference

Suggested Military Planning Process for CPX

Military Planning Process

