

The Division of Policy, Training and Evaluation of the Department of Peace Operations is pleased to invite you to a brown-bag discussion on:

“Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and the role of UN missions”

Date: 10 March 2020, 13:00-14:30

Location: Secretariat Building – Conference Room S-2723

*Panel discussion with **Prof. Daisaku Higashi** (international relation scholar specializing in peacebuilding from the Sophia University in Tokyo); **Prof. Eisei Kurimoto** (social anthropologist and specialist on South Sudan from Osaka University); **Diane Sheinberg** (from PBSO, Peacebuilding Fund, covering the Sahel with expertise on transhumance-related conflicts); and **Kulmiye Mohamed** (from the Mediation Support Unit of DPPA, covering Africa as well as natural resources and mediation). The discussion will be moderated by **Rania Dagash**, Chief of Policy and Best practices Service in DPET/DPO.*

Background: Multidimensional UN peacekeeping missions and UN special political missions typically operate in challenging environments, where the State’s capacity to peacefully resolve disputes and conflicts is compromised or may have been so for years prior to the conflict.

However, weak state capacity does not necessarily indicate the absence of local conflict resolution mechanisms. In many cases, informal and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms centred around the role of customary authorities have been the default mechanism for centuries. Yet, the legitimacy and the capacities of these traditional authorities and mechanisms have been fragilized and undermined by protracted conflicts and shifting socio-economic and environmental patterns.

In this context, UN missions are faced both with opportunities and challenges when addressing local-level conflict dynamics and seeking approaches that capitalize on local resilience and ownership, but that may also heighten tensions between formal and informal conflict resolution mechanisms.

The panel will discuss some of these challenges and opportunities, with a focus on the following questions:

1. How can UN missions best incorporate existing knowledge and understandings of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to support locally owned and sustainable solutions?
2. How can UN missions work more closely with anthropologists and regional experts to benefit from their understanding of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms?
3. How can UN missions effectively support the roles played by traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, while also supporting the host-state’s institutional capacities to address local conflicts?
4. How can the UN avoid or mitigate the risk of supporting authorities and mechanisms that may not abide by the UN normative framework, including the protection of human rights and the inclusions of all segments of society, including women and youth?
5. How can the UN, more broadly speaking, help bridge the gap between peacebuilding efforts at the national level and conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts at the local and community level?

Everyone is welcome and we hope that you can join us. Please RSVP at jack.holmes@un.org.