

### Box 3.7.2 HIV/AIDS and UN Peacekeeping

In 2007, the UN's Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), conducted its second HIV/AIDS "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice" (KAP) survey of uniformed peacekeepers as part of its ongoing effort to measure the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS education programs for peacekeepers. Employing a model similar to that used in the first KAP, in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in 2005, the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit set out to survey the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in May 2007, the results of which were published in August.

DPKO's KAP survey is in line with Security Council Resolution 1308 (2000), which requested member states to initiate HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness programs for peacekeepers and offer voluntary counseling and testing. Recognizing the inherent challenges this poses in terms of standardization of training modules, the DPKO, with the support of the UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), developed a standard generic training module on HIV/AIDS to supplement training from member states. The MINUSTAH survey thus assessed the performance of these programs using the generic training module developed by DPKO and UNAIDS.

The MINUSTAH survey involved 1,166 uniformed male officers in the mission. Female officers were not included in the survey, as they represented a small

percentage of staff and confidentiality could not be ensured. In carrying out the MINUSTAH survey, the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit incorporated lessons learned from the UNMIL survey in 2005. For example, the 2005 survey of uniformed UNMIL personnel was administered only in English, while the MINUSTAH survey of 2007 was conducted in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, to allow for a wider subject pool and thereby remedy some of the shortfalls from the UNMIL survey.

The MINUSTAH survey revealed that between 47 and 74 percent of respondents demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS. The predeployment section of the survey assessed that 89 percent of military personnel had received training on HIV issues in their home countries, while 65 percent had received training on the ground in Haiti. The figures for UN police were 73 percent and 83 percent, respectively. Although the UNAIDS program distributes awareness cards to mission personnel, less than half of those surveyed had received the cards, and only 17 percent of respondents were carrying their cards when they were interviewed. The variance between knowledge and training demonstrates the challenges for the latter in terms of streamlining prevention and awareness.

The survey also found that 11 percent of respondents considered themselves at

high risk for contracting HIV, with 43 percent considering themselves at low risk and 42 percent considering themselves at no risk. However, nearly 90 percent of interviewees indicated an interest in a free, confidential HIV test in the mission area. The large number of respondents interested in the latter demonstrates the need for facilities to undertake voluntary counseling and testing, and placed an enormous responsibility on MINUSTAH to provide these services. The 2007 KAP survey had two notable limitations. First, the methodology was flawed, given the discrepancy between risk and testing highlighted in the survey's interview versus self-administered style, the latter of which elicits more honest responses but results in a lower response rate. Second, MINUSTAH civilian personnel and the local community were excluded from the survey. Nonetheless, as with the previous KAP surveys, the lessons of the MINUSTAH survey will be incorporated into future research.

The survey report made several recommendations for member states, DPKO, and MINUSTAH, including training and deployment of HIV/AIDS peer-educators by troop-contributing countries, providing guidance to troop and police contributors on testing and counseling standards, and emphasizing the importance that mission personnel carry their HIV/AIDS awareness cards at all times.