



Scenario: Where is the Rationale?

Group Size: 4-15

This scenario may contain explicit language and references to harmful situations which may be emotionally activating for some people. If you need support, services are available through the [CAF Member Assistance Program \(CFMAP\)](#) and the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#).

You are deployed on a mission tasked with monitoring the implementation of a ceasefire agreement. You are a Troop Leader in a field engineer unit deployed to conduct explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and demining operations. The agreement has created a demilitarized zone, and the ceasefire has held thus far. In the zone, you are responsible for lifting mines and searching for unexploded explosive ordnance (UXO). However, in the agreement, both of the parties insisted that any weapons or munitions seized by United Nations (UN) forces would be returned to the identified owner. This condition was questioned even before your deployment, but the agreement must be obeyed to the letter. Any breach of the agreement may result in a resumption of hostilities. The Force Commander and the Sector Commander have both confirmed the order to comply with all aspects of the ceasefire agreement, no matter how distasteful or dangerous.

Your soldiers enter harm's way every day as they carry out their duties. Each night, mines, UXO, and weapons are returned to one of the belligerent parties. Your troops complain that this is wrong, as the parties may be relaying the mines outside of, or even in, the demilitarized zone. Your entire team approaches you and demands that you raise this issue with the chain of command. When you do, you discover that the entire unit feels the same way about this task, even your Commanding Officer (CO). The CO appeals to the UN chain of command and is given a direct order to comply fully. While there is an appeal through the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) chain of command to the Minister of National Defence (MND), the MND orders full compliance. You sense your troop's frustrations and question the wisdom of the orders.

Categories

Principles:	Obey and Support Lawful Authority
Values:	Integrity, Loyalty, Courage, Stewardship, Excellence
Cultural Themes:	Service, Identity, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Not Specific
GBA Plus Themes:	Not Specific
Audience:	Canadian Armed Forces

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical obligations to “Obey and Support Lawful Authority” in an operational setting.
- Discuss the ethical values of loyalty, responsibility, duty, integrity, and courage in an operational setting.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What would you do in this situation? What are the considerations?
 - Allow open discussion from the group.
 - Ethical concerns: The order contradicts your task. Your soldiers risk their lives lifting the mines to make the area safe. They are then required to re-supply those who are laying them in the first place. There is a potential that those same mines could be used again, thus increasing the risk to your soldiers and civilians.
 - Personal factors: As a leader, one of your primary concerns is the well-being of those under your command. The CAF adheres to the philosophy of “mission, troops, self.” Although you are achieving your mission by de-mining the zone, you cannot help but feel that you are violating your obligation to your soldiers.
 - Environmental factors: The lifted mines and ordnance must be returned to their owners to ensure that you are in compliance with the agreement. Your troops and the chain of command are frustrated by this condition.
2. What is the ethical dilemma in this situation?
 - Obeying lawful authority and Serving Canada (and the UN) before self are in conflict with the first principle, Respect the dignity of all people. How is the value of loyalty at odds with itself in this scenario? What are the potential moral injuries that could arise based on the decisions made in this scenario?
3. What are some potential courses of action that could be taken in this scenario?
 - Option 1: Obey the lawful command and explain to your soldiers that any breach of the agreement could result in a resumption of hostilities that could kill many more friendly forces and innocent civilians.
 - Option 2: Comply with the agreement by returning the items, but first ensure that they are in an unusable state.
 - Option 3: Disobey the order because you feel it is morally wrong. This would take the action of disobedience off your soldiers, and you must inform your superiors that you will not be complying with the agreement.
 - Option 4: Disobey the order by recovering, but not turning in, the arms or munitions. These recovered items could be destroyed, dismantled, or cached. Disobeying a lawful command could result in serious disciplinary actions.