

Chapter

IV

SECURITY MANAGEMENT

SECTION

D

Measures to Avoid Risk

INTERIM POLICY

A. Introduction:

1. The United Nations policy on Security Risk Management categorizes decisions on how to manage risk as accept, control, avoid and/or transfer (see Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, “Policy and Conceptual Overview of the Security Risk Management Process”, paragraph 13). As part of a broader security risk management strategy, the Designated Official may temporarily remove personnel and/or eligible family members from an area or situation of unacceptable risk as a means of managing that risk (i.e., avoiding the risk). This chapter lays out the parameters, as well as the roles and responsibilities of relevant actors, regarding the three basic options for avoiding risk used by the United Nations Security Management System:
 - a. Alternate Work Modalities (temporary closure of offices, “work-from-home” for personnel, “stay-at-home” orders for eligible family members, etc.)
 - b. Relocation
 - c. Evacuation

B. Purpose:

2. The purpose of this policy is to lay out the parameters of measures to avoid risk as part of Security Risk Management, including alternate work modalities, relocation and/or evacuation, and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of relevant United Nations Security Management System actors in these decisions.

C. Application/Scope:

3. The policy is applicable to all individuals covered by the United Nations Security Management System, as defined in Chapter III of the Security Policy Manual (“Applicability of Security Arrangements”).

D. Conceptual Framework:

4. Security Risk Management is the fundamental United Nations tool for managing risk. The Security Risk Assessment assesses the level of risk of specific threats to the United Nations. Based on the Security Risk Assessment, different security measures may be implemented to reduce the level of risk to acceptable levels and enable the UN to continue operations.
5. One security risk management option is to avoid risk by temporarily removing persons or assets from a situation of unacceptable residual risk by using alternate work modalities, relocation or evacuation (or their combination). Indeed, until proper measures to control and lower risks are put in place, avoiding risk is the only option when residual risks are deemed unacceptable (See “Guidelines for Acceptable Risk”, paragraph 6)

6. Any decision to avoid risk must take into consideration the impact of the removal of personnel and/or eligible family members on United Nations programmes and activities, including security and/or business continuity plans. Avoiding risk can be a cost-effective way to manage risk, and it is best suited for situations when resource limitations prevent the implementation of proper risk controls or when there has not been enough time to implement proper risk controls (for details on “risk control”, see Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, “Policy and Conceptual Overview of the Security Risk Management Process”, paragraph 13b).

F. Alternate Work Modalities

7. Alternate Work Modalities are defined as measures that limit or totally remove the number of personnel or family members at a specific location(s), short of official relocation or evacuation, with the view to limit or remove their exposure to a sudden situation that creates unacceptable residual risk.
8. Alternate Work Modalities include, but are not limited to, temporarily limiting or removing the number of personnel at a United Nations premise, ordering school-aged family members to stay out of school temporarily, or creating “no-go” areas in urban areas where personnel and family members cannot visit at certain times.
9. Alternate Work Modalities are effective security risk management strategies for when there is no time to implement adequate risk controls, if such controls are not cost-effective, or if there is not enough information to determine what risk controls are needed.
10. Decisions on Alternate Work Modalities that involve temporarily closing offices or work-from-home arrangements must be made in accordance with United Nations Human Resources rules and regulations.

G. Evacuation and Relocation

11. Relocation is defined as the official movement of any personnel or eligible dependant from their normal place of assignment or place of work to another location within their country of assignment for the purpose of avoiding unacceptable risk. Relocation is a risk avoidance measure that can be applied to all personnel and eligible family members.
12. Evacuation is defined as the official movement of any personnel or eligible dependant from their place of assignment to a location outside of their country of assignment (safe haven country, home country, or third country) for the purpose of avoiding unacceptable risk. Except in the situations as outlined in paragraph 13 below, evacuation is a risk avoidance measure that can be applied only to internationally-recruited personnel and their eligible family members. The evacuation of eligible family members of internationally-recruited personnel is governed by the same eligibility conditions as for the payment of evacuation allowances as per Section A, Sub-Section III, paragraph 9 of Annex xx entitled

“Remuneration of United Nations System Staff and Eligible Family members on Relocation/Evacuation Status”

13. Locally-recruited personnel and/or their eligible family members may be evacuated from a duty station only in the most exceptional cases in which their security is endangered as a direct consequence of their employment by organizations of the United Nations common system. A decision in this regard can only be made by the Secretary-General, as recommended by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, based on a recommendation by the Designated Official. Personnel and/or their eligible family members not covered by paragraph 12 above may also be assisted to leave the country by the organization, when possible and to the extent feasible, and on a reimbursable basis, as per Security Policy Manual, Chapter xx (“Crisis Management), Section xx, “Assistance to Other Persons”.

H. Roles and Responsibilities

14. The Designated Official, in consultation with the Security Management Team and based on the advice of the most senior security professional directly supporting the Designated Official¹, may institute planned or ad hoc Alternate Work Modalities for all or some United Nations personnel and eligible family members to address specific security problems in their area of responsibility in accordance with Section F above. Contingencies for Alternate Work Modalities should be included in the Security Plan and any on-going Alternate Work Modality (such as “no-go” areas in a city) should be included in the country-specific Minimum Operating Security Standards.
15. Representatives of organizations participating in the United Nations Security Management System can also institute Alternate Work Modalities solely for their personnel in response to agency-specific risks. This derives from their responsibility and authority in the United Nations Framework of Accountability for Security. Representatives wishing to implement such measures should examine any possible negative impact these measures would have on security and/or business continuity plans, and they should also consult with other members of the Security Management Team to examine whether these decisions would have any negative impact on the security of other United Nations personnel in the country.
16. The Designated Official, in consultation with the Security Management Team, may recommend the relocation or evacuation of personnel and/or eligible family members when residual risks are deemed unacceptable, regardless of the Security Level. This recommendation is submitted through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security to the Secretary-General. After assessing the situation, the

¹ This is usually the Chief Security Advisor (CSA) or other Security Advisor (SA). Where a Chief Security Advisor or Security Advisor is not present, this term is equivalent to the titles of Chief Security Officer and Chief of Security and Safety Services or Country Security Focal Point (CSFP) in countries where no international professional security advisor has been assigned or present.

Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security makes a recommendation to the Secretary-General for approval of evacuation or relocation.

17. Upon the Secretary-General's approval of the recommendation, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security distributes an "All Agency Communiqué" to the UN System announcing the details and parameters of the relocation and/or evacuation.
18. In the event that there is an impasse or life-threatening exigencies that impact on the ability of the Designated Official and Security Management Team to make timely risk avoidance decisions, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security may convene the Executive Group on Security to advise and assist in rapid decision-making capacity.
19. If an imminent breakdown of communications is likely, the Designated Official is authorized to use his/her best judgment to implement relocation and/or evacuation, and report on such action immediately thereafter to the Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security.
20. If the Designated Official, in consultation with the Security Management Team, recommends that relocation and/or evacuation are no longer needed in any circumstance or area, it is the Secretary-General, on the advice of the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, who decides when and how personnel and eligible family members can return.
21. Decisions to relocate or evacuate personnel or family members are clearly decisions to control the number of personnel or family members as explained in paragraph 2(c) of the United Nations Security Management System policy on Security Clearances. Therefore, Designated Officials must institute "manual" security clearance procedures² for all locations in relocation or evacuation status.

H. Process of Relocation and/or Evacuation

22. Authorized relocation and/or evacuation of personnel and/or family members requires the Designated Official to take the following steps:
 - a. A decision, in consultation with the Security Management Team, on which personnel and eligible family members must be relocated and/or evacuated. The decision as to who remains is based on the "Guidelines for Acceptable Risk" and associated mechanisms for determining Programme Criticality and personnel requirements for priority programmes. Personnel who are unable to carry out their assigned tasks effectively due to the security situation and level of residual risk should also be relocated/evacuated. The Designated Official and Security Management Team may determine who will be relocated or evacuated prior to any official authorization of relocation and/or evacuation,

² See paragraph 18 of Chapter xx, "Security Clearance Policy and the Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) for details on "manual" and "automatic" security clearance procedures.

including as part of contingency planning or in anticipation of such authorization;

- b. Temporary concentration of all personnel and/or their eligible family members, as decided as per paragraph 22(a) above, in one or more concentration points. The Designated Official and Security Management Team may undertake this step prior to any official authorization of relocation and/or evacuation in anticipation of such authorization;
 - c. Relocation of all personnel and/or their eligible family members, as decided as per paragraph 22(a) above, to alternative locations within the country (NOTE: the temporary concentration and/or internal relocation of locally-recruited personnel and eligible family members is contingent on their desire to avail themselves of this option); and/or
 - d. evacuation outside the country of all internationally-recruited personnel and/or their eligible family members, as decided as per paragraph 22(a) above.
23. Relocation and evacuation movements are official travel, so the Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) must be updated regarding the movements of personnel and eligible family members.
24. Before the evacuation of any personnel or eligible family members, the Designated Official must take all of the following actions:
- a. Notify the host government and local authorities and request assistance as necessary;
 - b. Notify the Designated Official in the designated country of evacuation, as well as neighbouring countries and any other countries that may be affected, of the evacuation;
 - c. Notify Area Security Coordinators and wardens to instruct all personnel and their eligible family members on actions to be taken;
 - d. Brief Area Security Coordinators and wardens, as necessary, on further steps that may be required;
 - e. Review financial arrangements, including for the payment of salary advances, allowances, or other essential payments as necessary;
 - f. Adjust lists of personnel and eligible family members to reflect the evacuation and/or relocation;
 - g. Notify personnel in other parts of the country, unaffected by the evacuation and/or relocation, of these developments through the Area Security Coordinator; and

- h. Complete the checklist: “Follow up after Evacuation of Staff Member” (Annex xx) in respect of those who have been evacuated.

I. Return of Personnel and Eligible Family members:

- 25. Any personnel evacuated may be authorized to return under two conditions:
 - a. The Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, authorizes the cancellation of the evacuation status on the recommendation of the Designated Official, in consultation with the Security Management Team, in accordance with paragraph 20 above; or
 - b. The staff member is recommended to return to the duty station based on a Programme Criticality assessment as outlined in paragraph 22(a) above and authorized to do so by the Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security.
- 26. The authorization to evacuate eligible family members means that eligible family members, as described in the evacuation authorization, are not authorized to be present until the Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, authorizes the cancellation of the evacuation status on the recommendation of the Designated Official, in consultation with the Security Management Team, in accordance with paragraph 20 above. Compliance is mandatory.

J. Final provisions:

- 27. Field Security Handbook (2006), Chapter V, Sections E are hereby abolished.