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Administration, Staffing and Finance



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Introduction

1. The purpose of this chapter is to provide general guidance on UNHCR's basic administrative procedures and actions in an emergency. Nothing in this chapter should be read as altering any existing rules, regulations and instructions, in particular the UNHCR Manual. The latest edition of The Checklist for the Emergency Administrator (hereinafter referred to as the Checklist) is an essential reference for administration in emergencies. The Checklist comes in three parts:

- i. The actual checklist (a few pages). This is reproduced as Annex 1;
- ii. Annexes to the checklist (in a large folder) which are primarily samples of the most frequently used administrative forms and extracts from the UNHCR Manual;
- iii. A computer diskette containing many of the forms.

Throughout this chapter references are given to the relevant item in the Checklist.

2. The chapter considers particularly the opening of a new office in an emergency, but may also be helpful when expanding an existing office or establishing Sub or Field Offices.

3. The status of an established UNHCR office is governed by an agreement between the host government and UNHCR, called a Cooperation Agreement, also referred to as a "Branch Office Agreement" or an "Accord de Siège". (See Checklist section on Premises). Until such an agreement is concluded, UNHCR will be covered by UNDP's agreement with the host government. In addition, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, 1946¹, is applicable to UNHCR and covers such matters as the inviolability of United Nations premises, the right to operate foreign currency accounts, exemption from direct taxes and customs duties on articles for official use, and facilities and immunities for communications. Specific considerations in respect of the emergency operation, for example regarding the handling of relief supplies, would be set out in the exchange of communications concerning the government's request for material assistance and in the project agreement (see chapter 8 on implementing arrangements).

Emergency Staffing

(See Checklist section on Personnel, Staff Conditions & Security). See also the Staff Rules and the Staff Administration and Management Manual, also the InSite database available on CDRom.

Introduction

4. As soon as possible the Head of Office should communicate to Headquarters the projected staff requirements at both general service and professional levels with the necessary detail to enable Headquarters to review these in accordance with established personnel procedures and to approve the staffing table for the emergency. Emergency staffing resources should be used for the initial emergency period only. In the initial period, prior to the creation of posts, national staff could be recruited and paid for under Temporary Assistance.

5. There should be no delay in committing necessary personnel. However, solely adding personnel will not meet the organizational needs of an emergency: the operations plan and definition of responsibilities must determine personnel needs, not vice versa. Experience shows that for a given operation, smaller teams with clear allocation of responsibilities are usually more successful than larger teams whose members have less clearly defined roles.

Additional staff, who are unclear as to their role, will add to the management burden in an emergency

Staffing must be flexible. Numbers are likely to vary over time.

Recruitment

6. It is important that the different advantages of national (also referred to as local) and international staff are understood, and that these different strengths are properly incorporated into a staffing plan. National staff members understand the local situation and are sensitive to issues that often escape the notice of the international staff member. They often enjoy a wide range of contacts that enable them to "get things done".

7. Very significantly, national staff may speak the refugees' language. Correspondingly, international staff members bring to the operation an impartiality and an embodiment of the international character of UNHCR, which is essential. They will also have experience from elsewhere to contribute to the management of the emergency.

¹ Contained in UNHCR, *Refworld CD-ROM*.

8. Headquarters is responsible for international staff identification, recruitment and deployment. The need for international staff will depend on the scale of the emergency and implementing arrangements.

UNHCR has developed a number of standby arrangements whereby suitable international staff can be deployed rapidly to an emergency operation.

9. The following table shows staff functions which may be needed in a large emergency.

Type of function
Overall management and leadership
Management of the administration in large emergencies
Core UNHCR functions in an Emergency Team: Field, Protection, Programme
Administrative and finance functions for an Emergency Team, to set up new offices and train staff
Community services functions
Supply and transport functions
Technical functions
– technical coordinators (e.g. for health, water, nutrition) and
– other technical support e.g. health assessment, epidemic preparedness and response, health monitoring systems, engineering (physical planning, water, sanitation, roads)
Support functions, e.g. base camp management, telecommunications and staff safety

10. The need for at least the following international staff (comprising an emergency team) should therefore be considered in a large scale emergency.

- Emergency Team Leader (with one of the senior officers also possibly acting as Deputy to Team Leader);
- International Secretary or Assistant for the Team Leader;
- Senior Protection Officer;
- Protection Officer(s);
- Senior Programme Officer;
- Programme Officer(s);
- Sector Coordinators, e.g. Community Services, Water, Health, Nutrition;
- Field Officers deployed at the refugee sites;

- Senior Administrative Officer;
- Finance Officer/Personnel Officer;
- Staff Safety Officer;
- Public Information Officer;
- Logistics Officer;
- Telecoms Officer.

11. The emergency team could be composed of staff deployed from emergency standby arrangements only, or a mix of the latter plus UNHCR staff already posted to the area. Emergency standby and staffing arrangements include an internal roster of UNHCR staff and emergency standby arrangements with other organizations. Details of these arrangements can be found in the Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources, Appendix 1.

12. For all staff, prior experience of an emergency operation is of course, a great advantage.

The overriding staffing priority is to fill key managerial posts with experienced UNHCR staff of the right calibre.

13. In a country where a major emergency is added to a previous small-scale programme it may be necessary to replace the existing Head of Office with a more experienced Head of Office at least for the duration of the emergency.

14. Administrative staff are another priority. An experienced administrative assistant will be an essential member of the team if a new office is being opened, and in large emergencies experienced finance and personnel officers are likely to be necessary. Without persons with these skills, other staff will have to devote a disproportionate amount of time to UNHCR internal administration. National administrative staff must be identified and trained, but this in itself requires experienced supervision.

15. Each refugee emergency will require a certain number of specialist skills even at the assessment and initial phases of the emergency. Where these are not available in-country, the assistance of Headquarters for recruitment of specialists through standby arrangements should be sought without delay. See Appendix 1, Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources for more details of these standby arrangements.

16. Informal volunteers, both nationals and members of the diplomatic and expatriate

communities may come forward to help. The value of these outside volunteers will vary considerably with the situation. It will be important to assess the skills of the volunteers, the time they can devote and the availability of management personnel needed to coordinate and support them.

Lack of proper supervisory support may lead to the volunteer taxing already over-extended staff as much as, or more than, the value added.

Reporting lines

17. In situations where an emergency team is deployed to an area of the country where there is no UNHCR office, the emergency Team Leader will normally report to the UNHCR Representative in that country or the Regional Representative or Special Envoy as appropriate in the individual circumstances.

18. When an emergency team is deployed into an area where a UNHCR office already exists and has responsibility for the operation, then the emergency team should integrate into the staffing structure of the existing office. The decision as to who should head the operation, the existing Head of Office or the Emergency Team Leader, will depend on the circumstances and the relative experience and seniority of the individuals. The decision as to who will head the operation must be clearly communicated to all staff at the outset to avoid any ambiguity in responsibilities and reporting lines.

Management

19. Sound personnel management, supervision and leadership are very important to the success of an emergency operation, but can easily be overlooked. The initial motivation of those involved is a major asset, but for persons at levels that do not allow an overview of the operation, this can be replaced by disappointment and frustration if supervisors are too busy to plan, organize, direct, control and continue to motivate their staff.

20.

Responsibilities, roles and tasks must be clearly defined and understood.

Job descriptions are the most common management tool for defining individual responsibilities, even if the imperatives of an emergency mean their frequent revision. They

are important for UNHCR staff, and even more so for seconded staff (such as United Nations Volunteers – UNVs, consultants and staff deployed through the emergency standby arrangements), and informal volunteers. Responsibility should be delegated to the lowest possible level, and with it must go the necessary authority. Responsibility without authority is useless.

21. Staff meetings should be convened regularly from the start. Team welfare will have an important bearing on the success of the emergency operation.

Everyone must be made to feel part of the UNHCR team. This includes consultants, seconded staff, and volunteers.

22. Very long hours will often be necessary, but supervisors must ensure that staff have time off, away from the refugee site, and do not get so overtired that their efficiency and the professionalism of their approach suffers.

23. All field staff have a particular responsibility to safeguard their own health, but also have a role to play in ensuring that their colleagues remain in good mental and physical health (see chapter 22 on coping with stress). Early corrective action can avert the need to hospitalize or evacuate key staff.

24. In an emergency there may be many occasions when staff see clearly that by devoting time to helping individual refugees or families in distress they could alleviate suffering directly. To seek to do so is very understandable but it can lead to a personal emotional involvement at the expense of the staff member's wider responsibilities towards the refugees as a whole, and to resentment among other refugees. Direct responsibility for individual care is usually best assured by the refugee community. For all staff, compassion must be tempered by a professional approach. Guidance by supervisors is often needed on this point.

25. Particular attention must be paid to proper supervision and encouragement of newly recruited national staff. Often the Head of Office and other international staff are extremely busy, out at meetings or in the field, and the other staff, who may know little about UNHCR and less about the operation, lack guidance and a sense of involvement. Some of the general information in the emergency office kit may be useful for briefing

newly recruited national staff. In all cases the new staff should receive a briefing from their direct supervisor covering, at a minimum, general information on the operation and the role of the new staff member.

Personnel Administration

26. UNDP may be able to help in determining conditions of service and even in identifying national field staff.

27. Careful attention must be paid to the administration of out-posted field staff. A convenient way of administering Field Officers, at least initially, is to ensure that the Travel Authorization (PT8) issued authorizing the mission to the country of operation also covers internal travel and DSA. If the latter is not covered, an addendum to the original PT8 is issued. Normally in emergency situations, and to avoid staff carrying too much cash, a DSA advance is given on a monthly basis. This advance is charged to the suspense account code as indicated on the UNHCR account codes listing (VF 324) and recorded on the reverse side of the original PT8. Upon completion of the mission, the office settling the travel claim, must ensure that the travel advances are deducted from the entitlements.

28. Particular care must also be taken to ensure the proper administration of out-posted national staff, for example, Field Officers' drivers. It should be noted here that while Heads of Office can authorize out-posted staff to drive official vehicles on official travel, as in an emergency this is likely to be necessary, every effort should be made to provide Field Officers' with drivers from the start. They can be of great help to Field Officers in a variety of ways.

29. All out-posted national staff must have contracts, understand their terms of employment and benefits, including the cost and benefits of the UN health insurance scheme, receive their salary regularly, work reasonable hours and take leave due.

All staff should have job descriptions and understand them.

Obvious as these requirements are, they can be difficult to meet in an emergency. There may be important extra demands on UNHCR drivers, both beyond simple driving and also as a result of their working for itinerant Field Officers and thus spending considerable time away from home. These factors must be taken into account.

Staff Visibility

30. A means for visual identification of UNHCR staff may be necessary, particularly outside the capital. Visibility materials, available from Headquarters, include flags, stickers (including magnetic stickers), vests, armbands, T-shirts and caps (see the Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources Appendix 1).

31. Consideration should also be given to adopting a UNHCR identity card with a visible photograph that can be worn as a pocket badge. Arrangements should be made as soon as possible for UNHCR staff to receive diplomatic identity cards issued by the government. Pending that, an official attestation in the local language could probably be quickly obtained for each out-posted Field Officer from UNHCR's government counterpart and might be very useful.

Staff Accommodation

32. At the start of an emergency, international staff will be on mission status and will generally be accommodated in hotels. Should the daily subsistence allowance (DSA) not cover the basic cost of adequate hotel accommodation, Headquarters should be informed at once and all hotel receipts retained. Conversely, DSA is reduced if official accommodation and/or meals are provided. If it is clear that special arrangements will be required for personal accommodation for staff who are assigned to that duty station, Headquarters should be informed, with details of local UN practice.

33. In extreme hardship areas, where there is no suitable staff or office accommodation, a standard staff and office accommodation package is available. This consists of prefabricated units which are stockpiled and which can be airlifted to the operation. Further information is provided in the Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources (Appendix 1).

34. Standard travel kits and field kits are also available from the emergency stockpile, and details of their contents are provided in the Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources (Appendix 1). The kits have been developed to provide staff with some basic personal items likely to be of use in the first days at such places, pending more appropriate local arrangements. The kits will normally only be issued to staff proceeding to isolated locations from or via Geneva, and when it is clear that there may not be time to obtain what is actually needed on arrival in the country of operation. If UNHCR is

already represented in that country, the Field Office should have a good idea of conditions to be expected and thus of what specific personal equipment may be needed, and this is probably best purchased locally.

35. Responsibility for the provision of the necessary personal items rests with staff members. Even when issued with kits, staff should check carefully what other items may be required; it is unlikely that a standard kit will meet all needs. Staff receiving kits will be required to account for them at the end of their mission, and will be expected to at least return the non-consumable items.

36. In difficult conditions it may be necessary to hire a base camp manager who will be responsible for organizing living arrangements for UNHCR staff. A description of the tasks of a base camp manager is provided in the Checklist.

Budget and Finance

(see Checklist section on Finance, Equipment & Supplies).

Authority to Incur Expenditure

37. Currently UNHCR classifies expenditure into two types:

- i. Project expenditure;
- ii. Administrative support expenditure.

This classification of expenditure may change in the future.

38. Authority to enter into obligations for project expenditure is given by a letter of instruction (LOI). Further details can be found in chapter 8 on implementing arrangements.

39. Authority to enter into obligations for administrative support expenditure is given by an Administrative Budget and Obligation Document (ABOD). This is issued by Headquarters and is addressed to Heads of Offices. It covers all non-staff costs including temporary assistance and overtime.

40. Authority for additional administrative support expenditure in an emergency is given to an existing Field Office by amending the existing ABOD. When an emergency occurs in a country where UNHCR is not already represented, an initial ABOD will be issued immediately. This can then be amended when more details of administrative requirements are known. Control of expenditure against funds allocated is by an Administrative Budget Control Sheet (ABCS) generated from the computerized accounting system.

Transfer of Funds

41. It is essential to have funds immediately available. Funds will normally be made available by bank transfer. However, such transfers, especially to out-posted Field Office bank accounts, sometimes suffer undue delays because of complicated banking channels. It is very important to select a local bank with a direct international correspondent relationship, if possible with Citibank N.A. New York or the UBS Bank in Switzerland. Further information can be provided by the Treasury Section at Headquarters.

42. At the start of an emergency it may be possible to hand carry a banker's cheque from Geneva to be credited directly to the Field Office bank account. If this is done, proper precautions must of course be taken to ensure the security of the cheque.

43. In very extreme cases, when no banking services are available, cash may be acquired locally (e.g. through local companies and traders) upon specific authorization from Treasury. Funds would be transferred to an account indicated by the trader after receipt of the cash by UNHCR. Cash may also be provided to Field Offices through professional courier services. Information about cash transfers, past, present and future, must be treated with absolute discretion.

44. Subsequently funds will be transferred by Treasury upon cash replenishment requests in the standard format shown in the box below. Care should be exercised that funds are called forward as close as possible to the date of their utilization to avoid unnecessary high bank balances over prolonged periods.

To: UNHCR Treasury (HQT00)
From: Requesting Officer/Field Office Location
Subject: Cash Replenishment Request

Please effect an immediate transfer of funds based on the following information:

Balances on hand (all bank accounts and petty cash) at (dd/mm/yy): *(provide details of amounts and currencies)*

Total disbursement needs for the next x (maximum 4) weeks: *(provide details of administrative and programme needs, amounts and currencies)*

Replenishment amount requested: *(indicate amount and currency)*

Complete bank name and address, including UNHCR bank account number, and the Field Office's accounting system receiving bank code.

45. Disbursements for both administrative and project expenses are made in the Field either from a local UNHCR bank account or, pending the opening of such an account, through UNDP. In the latter case, UNHCR Headquarters will arrange with UNDP Headquarters for the local UNDP office to receive the necessary authority to incur expenditure on behalf of UNHCR. Settlement with UNDP will normally take place through the common Inter-Office Voucher (IOV) system for amounts of less than US\$10,000 or through a special transfer of funds to UNDP New York for larger sums. As a rule, disbursements exceeding the equivalent of US\$100 should be made by cheque; whenever local circumstances require regular cash payments in excess of this limit, Headquarters' approval must be obtained.

Bank Accounts

46. All local UNHCR bank accounts are opened by Treasury upon recommendation from the Field Office. The choice of a bank will be determined by its reputation, ease of access, services offered and charges. Other UN agencies, diplomatic missions and NGOs should be consulted. The following information is required:

- i. Full name of the bank;
- ii. Address, phone, telex and fax numbers;
- iii. Type and currency of account;
- iv. Bank's correspondent bank in New York or Switzerland;
- v. Maximum amount of any one cheque;
- vi. Suggested panel of bank signatories;
- vii. Amount of initial transfer.

47. Treasury will designate the authorized bank signatories. Two joint signatories are normally required to operate UNHCR bank accounts. In exceptional circumstances, signature by one Officer may be authorized.

Particular care must be taken to ensure cheque book security.

Cheques must bear UNHCR in words, be consecutively numbered, verified on receipt, and kept in a safe by a staff member designated by the Head of Office. Cheques should always bear the name of the payee and should be crossed unless there is an overriding reason why this is not practicable. Under no circumstances should a bank signatory pre-sign either a blank cheque or one which is only partially completed.

48. Field Offices will normally maintain one non-resident local currency bank account; circumstances may however also require the opening of a non-resident US dollar account and perhaps even a resident local currency account. Where problems of exchange control regulations are encountered, the Treasury at Headquarters should be informed immediately. Field Offices should ensure that the most favourable conditions are obtained for the transfer and conversion of UNHCR funds.

Exchange Rates

49. If there is a significant discrepancy, i.e. more than 3%, between the actual market rate and the prevailing UN rate of exchange, a request for a revision of the latter should be made. This request should be coordinated with UNDP and other UN organizations locally and addressed to UNDP New York. The communication should contain a summary of the fluctuations over the previous 60 days. If necessary, UNHCR Headquarters should be requested to intervene with UNDP New York.

Accounting Procedures

50. UNHCR accounting procedures may change. However, currently, whenever a Field Office operates its own bank account(s), it must report to Headquarters monthly on all transactions for each account. The procedure is the same for both administrative and project expenditure. Most importantly, a properly supported payment voucher must be completed and immediately entered into the electronic accounting system. Where this system has not yet been installed, a manual payment voucher (F.10) should be completed and immediately entered on a bank journal (HCR/ADM/800). It is essential that the voucher quotes the authority for payment (LOI, ABOD, PT8 (travel authorization)). A "Mini Payment Voucher" book (F.11), designed especially for emergencies, may be used by out-posted Field Officers. An official UNHCR receipt voucher should be issued and entered on the bank journal for any receipts other than replenishments from Headquarters. Similarly, payments from petty cash have to be accounted for in the petty cash journal (HCR/ADM/800). It is imperative that all vouchers and journal entries list the correct account code, as indicated in the UNHCR account codes listing and on the PT8, or the project symbol marked on the LOI against which the transaction is to be debited/credited.

51.

Whatever the pressures of the emergency, accounts must be kept up-to-date and the monthly closure done on time.

Experience has shown that failure to do so will not only delay the replenishment of the bank account but will also result in far more work than would originally have been required.

Non-Expendable Property and Office Supplies

(see Checklist section on Finance, Equipment & Supplies).

Non-expendable property

52. Authority to purchase office furniture and equipment is given in the ABOD. Field Offices may purchase locally or regionally if the cost of the item is less than 15% above that available through the Supply and Transport Section at Headquarters².

53. The purchase of computer equipment, vehicles, telecommunications equipment and security equipment should be coordinated with Headquarters in order to ensure conformity with the organization's specifications. Local purchase should be considered and if the cost is within the 15% limit referred to above, the Field Office should forward three pro forma invoices, together with the item's specifications, to the Supply and Transport section at Headquarters for approval.

Asset Management System

54. The asset management system is an electronic system to track and manage all non-consumable assets owned by UNHCR (with a lifespan of over a year), regardless of funding source or user (including for example all vehicles, telecommunications and computer equipment, furniture and office equipment, buildings such as clinics, office, hospitals, and water purification and construction equipment). The system should be installed into at least one computer at the country office level. A decision should be made at the beginning if the extent of the operation requires that the system be installed in other offices within the country.

² Costs of items available through Headquarters are quoted in UNHCR's *Catalogue of Most Frequently Purchased Items*, UNHCR, Geneva, (updated regularly) and in IAPSO's *catalogue of Office Equipment*, IAPSO (updated regularly).

The office must also have the system user manuals, bar-code labels and data entry forms (obtained from the Asset Management Unit at Headquarters).

55. Whenever an asset is purchased, whether locally, regionally, through Headquarters, or by implementing partners with UNHCR funding, it must be bar-coded and recorded in the asset management system.

56. Where items are acquired from stockpiles maintained at Headquarters, such as computer and telecommunications equipment, relevant data about the item will be sent to the Field on diskette so that the office can import the details into the asset management system.

57. Where an asset is re-deployed to another location, data about it should be sent on diskette to the receiving office for importation into the asset management system.

58. It is important that all assets are bar-coded and recorded in the asset management system from the beginning of the operation. Failure to do so will result in "lost" assets and in far more work than would originally have been required.

59. Offices maintaining their own asset management database should regularly send their databases to the country office for consolidation.

The consolidated database should be sent to Headquarters every three months.

Office Supplies

60. An emergency office kit (see Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources, Appendix 1) can be used to supply a new office with stationery and small office equipment. The stockpiled kits weigh approximately 120 kg packed in two cardboard boxes. Each kit is designed for an office with five international staff and ten national staff.³

1. Office supplies, as well as printed stationery and forms, can be purchased locally, regionally, or if this is too expensive, office supplies and printed forms listed in the UN catalogue may be ordered on a stationery request form (GEN-236/1) directly from Headquarters. The emergency kits are not intended for re-supply, even in emergencies.

³ Further information is also contained in the *Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources* (Appendix 1).

61. Orders for items not listed in the UN catalogue⁴ and which are not locally available should be requested from Headquarters, giving all necessary details and specifications.

Office Premises

(Checklist section on Premises)

62. The order of priority for obtaining offices is:

- i. Rent-free from the government;
- ii. In common UN premises;
- iii. Government-provided offices against reimbursement by UNHCR and
- iv. Commercial rent.

63. Interim arrangements may be necessary, but the early establishment of the UNHCR presence in a convenient location will be of obvious importance to the success of the operation.

64. Office space per person should not exceed about 14m², but an approximate addition of 30% is needed to allow for a reception area, interviewing room, meeting room, and services area (filing, copier, etc.) as appropriate to the scale of the operation.

65. Considerations in selecting office premises include:

- Location (distances from ministries, implementing partners, bank, post office, airport, etc.);
- Security (for authorized access to individual refugees and UNHCR staff, to prevent unauthorized access, and for the physical security of offices, files, etc.);
- Parking facilities;
- Utilities (electricity, water, heating, air-conditioning, wires for telephone, toilets, simple kitchen facilities, storage room, etc.);
- Physical layout and orientation of the building. Ensure that the building and grounds are suitable for radio and satcom antennas and that there is no interference from neighbouring installations e.g. pylons;
- Provides for a large enough meeting space for UNHCR to discharge its coordination responsibilities through coordination meetings;

Room for expansion; in emergencies the numbers of staff can fluctuate considerably;

The condition of the office.

66. The use of residential accommodation (e.g. a villa) as an office may be an option.

67. Once office premises have been selected, the government, diplomatic community, other UN agencies and NGOs should be informed accordingly, and the relevant information provided to neighbouring UNHCR offices and to Headquarters.

Official Transport

(See Checklist section on Communications & Transport. In addition, chapter 18 on supplies and transport deals with all transport issues, focusing on transport for operational needs).

Vehicles

68. It is essential for UNHCR staff to be mobile. Action to ensure enough of the right type of official vehicles will be a high priority. Consult the Supply and Transport Section at Headquarters regarding the purchase of vehicles (see chapter 18 on supplies and transport for more information about the purchase or acquisition of vehicles). Once the vehicle is sold or passes from UNHCR's control (e.g. at the end of a lease agreement), ensure that any official UN or UNHCR logos and stickers are removed. Magnetic stickers (available from Headquarters) can be quickly attached and removed from vehicles and re-used.

69. Requests to Headquarters for vehicle purchase should give full details (make, type of body, number of doors, long or short wheelbase, left or right hand drive, petrol/diesel, special options: sand tires, extra fuel tanks, air-conditioning, heater, mine protection, anti-theft device, etc.). The duty-free on-the-road price and delivery time must be given if local purchase is requested.

70. In many countries duty-free fuel may be available for official UN vehicles. Details of procedures should be obtained from the government and other UN organizations. Follow them from the start; retroactive reimbursement is often impossible.

71. Vehicle daily log sheets should be introduced from the day the official vehicle becomes operational and these should be designed in such a way as to show the daily mileage of each vehicle and the purpose of

⁴ *Office Supplies, Forms and Materials, UN, Geneva, 1990.*

each trip. The daily log should also include the names of the driver and of the passenger(s). Mileage should be regularly checked against the purchase of fuel for that vehicle.

72. It is important that vehicles are insured and registered upon arrival. In respect of each official vehicle assigned to a Field Office, adequate insurance covering third party risks should be arranged locally with a reputable insurance company.

Light Aircraft

73. There may be situations when a light aircraft is the only way to ensure satisfactory communications between the various UNHCR locations. The need may be temporary, for example to expedite needs assessment and the initial response, or longer-term when the existing communications infrastructure does not adequately cover the location of the refugees and the journey by road is long and uncertain. In some circumstances, security is also a consideration.

74. Immediate action to provide the necessary flights is essential. Initially, or where the need is short-term, this is likely to be by commercial charter unless the UN system already has a light aircraft and spare capacity. If locally based charter companies exist, seek impartial local advice on their reliability, obtain as many offers as possible and send these to Headquarters with a recommendation. Include details of passenger insurance coverage. This information should be complemented by an indication of the required weekly flight plan (e.g. per week: 3 return flights capital/location X; 1 return flight capital/location Y; 1 round trip flight capital/X/Y/capital), and the estimated cost for the necessary flights (total or per month).

75. Where local charter is not possible or a long-term need is foreseen, inform Headquarters with as much detail of the requirement as possible and ways it might be met (for example, of charter companies from neighbouring countries known to operate in the country of operation). Some government disaster corps and a number of NGOs operate light aircraft. Some are specialized in this field like Aviation Sans Frontieres (ASF), and the Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF). If there is already such an operation in the country their advice should be sought.

Office Organization

(Checklist section on Filing & Documentation and Communications & Transport).

Filing and Documentation

76. A simple office communication system should be put in place immediately. This can be implemented by, for example, pigeon holes (ideally one for each staff-member and one for each collaborating organization), whiteboards and notice-boards. This will help to ease communication problems in the confusing early days of an emergency.

77. A suitable filing system and registry controls should be set up immediately on the opening of a new office. Annex 2 gives some guidance as to what might be required and how filing could be organized.

78. A rubber stamp to show date of receipt, file, action officer and remarks will be very useful. The practice of putting a chronological number on **every** outgoing communication is strongly recommended and will be particularly helpful in the confused early days. Everything should have copies on the chronological file in addition to a subject file.

79. As a precautionary measure, offices should have a shredder to destroy any unwanted documents or correspondence. In some countries waste paper is sold and used in markets for packaging, so care should be taken that discarded UNHCR documents are not used in this manner.

Communications

80. Communications needs are discussed in the communications chapter. A simple checklist for a new office is given below; the order will not necessarily be the priority.

- Identify the need for a telecommunications network as soon as possible (radio, e-mail, satellite, etc.);
- Obtain necessary permission from the authorities to operate the equipment with the assistance of the RTO or HQ Telecoms if necessary;
- Obtain immediate access to a telephone and fax and tell Headquarters (and neighbouring UNHCR offices as appropriate) the numbers and where they are located;
- Set up controls and registers for incoming and outgoing communications from the start;
- Establish a pouch system between the offices within the country of operation and Headquarters;

- ❑ Consider communications needs in selecting office premises;
- ❑ Obtain a PO box number and tell Headquarters (and local authorities, etc.) the number;
- ❑ Once the UNHCR telecommunications network is installed, inform government, UNHCR Headquarters, neighbouring UNHCR offices, diplomatic corps and others, and ensure correct listing in national telephone directories, in the local UN and diplomatic lists, and in the UNHCR directory.

Key References

Checklist for the Emergency Administrator, UNHCR Geneva, 1998 (and updates).

Most Frequently Purchased Items, UNHCR, Geneva, 1998 (updated annually).

NGO Directory, UNHCR Geneva, 1996 (And subsequent updates).

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Annex 1 – CHECK-LIST FOR THE EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATOR

(Note: This checklist is regularly updated, the latest version should be consulted)

This checklist is intended as a practical tool for UNHCR staff when responding to emergencies and assigned to duty stations where there is no established UNHCR presence, or where the existing office needs to be strengthened as a result of new events. The complete Checklist consists of three components listed below. Only the first part, the checklist is reproduced here. The complete checklist in its three components can be obtained from the Emergency Preparedness and Response Section at Headquarters.

The 3 components are:

1. The **Checklist** itself which lists most activities requiring consideration when establishing a Branch, Sub or Field Office. Not all items will be relevant. The administrative officer together with the Head of the Office will need to determine what action is to be taken. The list is not presented in an order of priority and it is therefore important to set your own priorities depending on the local circumstances. The list does not cover administrative procedures and action required for the ongoing needs of the office, but concentrates on those related specifically to the establishment of an office. Each item is preceded by a box which you may tick off as action is taken.
2. **Annexes**, which are primarily extracts from existing documentation. These have been included for ease of reference and are not substitutes for existing manuals and instructions of which the most important is the UNHCR Manual to which frequent reference should be made. Not all relevant UNHCR forms are included, as these are available in the Emergency Office Kit, or directly on request from Headquarters.
3. A **computer disc** which contains the format for all forms or documents which are indicated by an (*) in the Checklist. These forms or documents can be copied and amended to suit local needs. (It is recommended that the original format is not amended directly.)

The importance of setting up effective administrative procedures from the outset cannot be over-stressed. They will have important consequences for the effective administration throughout the operation.

ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE CHECK-LIST FOR THE EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATOR

	ACTION	ANNEXES
PREMISES		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Establish a UNHCR Cooperation Agreement if not already in place or consider its amendment if one already exists but circumstances have changed	a. Model Agreement (*) b. Example Agreement c. UN Convention on Privileges & Immunities
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Identify need for Sub or Field Offices	a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Identify Office Premises , negotiate lease and seek approval from Geneva	a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual b. Standard lease (*) c. Note on selecting
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Consider the use of UNHCR stickers and UN flags, posters and visibility material . Request more from HQ if necessary	a. Flag Code b. List of stockpiled visibility material
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Consider " Base Camp " requirements and need for Base camp manager, in situations where this is applicable	a. Base camp manager
COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT		
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Determine immediate needs for and set up communications : Telephone, E-Mail, fax, telex and/or radio and pouch. Complete communications questionnaire and send to HQs Attn. Telecommunications Unit	a. Communications Info Kit including Communications Questionnaire b. Telecommunications inventory forms (*) c. Pouch Service Instructions
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Establish telecommunications procedures . Train staff and advise procedures	a. Sitor/Pactor Manual b. Voice procedure c. Codan user instructions (*) d. Handover letter for handsets (*) e. Handset user instructions (*) f. Radio room discipline (*) g. Communications procedures
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Establish log for recording long distance phone calls giving particular attention to private phone calls	a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual b. FOM 01/93 including Telephone log form (*)
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Prepare forms for telex/fax messages	a. Model format (*)
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Establish communications log and chron files	a. Radio message chron forms(*)
<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Establish a regular system (shuttle) for transport of mail and personnel between sub office and branch office (if necessary)	a. Shuttle Passenger Manifest (*)
<input type="checkbox"/>	12. Determine Admin Vehicle needs : Landcruisers, Pick ups, saloons and/or minibus	a. Excerpts SFAS Handbook b. Excerpts IAPSU Catalogue
<input type="checkbox"/>	13. Establish procedures for light vehicle use: – Authority for UNHCR staff to drive official vehicles – Driver trip logs – Vehicle tracking system	a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual b. Driver Log format (*) c. Vehicle Tracking format (*) d. Excerpt from ICRC Handbook

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance logs - Construct key box & ensure key security - Identify best means for vehicle servicing - Make arrangements for the purchase of Duty Free petrol - Undertake driver education sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Authority to drive official vehicles (*) f. Inventory record form g. Vehicle inspection check list h. Rules for drivers i. Vehicles in UNHCR operations j. Fuel receipt voucher (*) k. Mileage rates
PERSONNEL, STAFF CONDITIONS AND SECURITY		
<input type="checkbox"/>	14. Establish staffing table with Organigram and job descriptions. Send to the Desk at HQs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Typical field office structures b. Additional example organigram c. Post creation and review procedures d. Benchmark job descriptions
<input type="checkbox"/>	15. Identify sources for local staff recruitment. Prepare simplified Job Application Form for local Staff. (P11 to be used only for candidates who are being seriously considered)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Simplified job application form (*)
<input type="checkbox"/>	16. Recruit essential and urgently required local staff. Set up local recruitment committee. Following selection, issue short term contract and arrange appropriate medical check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Excerpt UNHCR Manual and related recruitment forms b. Interview notes & Report Form (*) c. Recruitment tests for local staff (*) d. Regulations for NPOs – excerpt from APPB regulations
<input type="checkbox"/>	17. Identify UN Examining Physician if necessary if no UNDP Office and inform SASS for JMS approval	
<input type="checkbox"/>	18. Set up Personnel files for all staff	
<input type="checkbox"/>	19. Establish leave recording system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Secretariat Instruction on time, attendance & leave b. Example leave recording forms
<input type="checkbox"/>	20. Establish Working Hours, Overtime and DSA for local staff on mission in country in accordance with UNDP practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual b. IOM 61/88 and IOM/120/88 on salary advances c. Copy OT recording form (*) d. IOM 76/89 on Overtime for local staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	21. Establish local mission tracking system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mission recording format (*)
<input type="checkbox"/>	22. Send variable information on " Appendix B " for your duty station to Geneva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Format appendix B
<input type="checkbox"/>	23. Check that DSA appropriate for duty station and if considered to be inappropriate complete DSA Worksheet if no UNDP Office and transmit to SASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual b. DSA Worksheet & guidelines
<input type="checkbox"/>	24. If new duty station complete Classification of Duty Station questionnaire & send to HQs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual b. Classification of Duty Station Questionnaire

<input type="checkbox"/>	25. Review the validity of the post adjustment and if considered inappropriate advise DHRM	a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual
<input type="checkbox"/>	26. Determine appropriateness of salary level of local staff and if inappropriate advise DHRM	a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual b. Excerpt from CCAQ GS Survey Manual
<input type="checkbox"/>	27. Arrange payment of salary and allowances of international staff	a. Salary distribution request form and FOM/20/95 & Add.1
<input type="checkbox"/>	28. Negotiate discounts in local hotels and advise HQs. Ensure guaranteed room availability for mission staff	
<input type="checkbox"/>	29. Consider security procedures and an appropriate evacuation plan	a. Excerpts from UN Field Security Handbook b. IOM 47/92 on Field Security reporting
<input type="checkbox"/>	30. Collect personal data on international staff and request staff to complete inventories if warranted by security situation	a. Personal Data form b. Personal Effects Inventory form
<input type="checkbox"/>	31. Identify best means and procedures for medical evacuation of staff	a. Guidelines for Medevac Plan b. IOM/104/94 and IOM/26/95 – Guidelines on Medevac
<input type="checkbox"/>	32. Establish frequency and procedures for staff welfare missions through MARS/VARI/STAR	a. Excerpts from FOM/105/94 + addenda
<input type="checkbox"/>	33. Review the living and working conditions , report to Headquarters and request field kits, travel kits and staff accommodation as appropriate	a. Structure of living and working conditions report (*) b. Example of Emergency Operation Living conditions paper c. Excerpts from Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources (field kits, travel kits, staff accommodation) d. FOM/70/95 on Accommodation provided by UNHCR
<input type="checkbox"/>	34. Design and begin training and coaching programmes in office procedures for local administrative staff	a. Excerpts from UNHCR Training Module b. Notes on Coaching Skills c. Using Interpreters (*) d. FOM 102/88 on Language Training
FINANCE, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES		
<input type="checkbox"/>	35. Survey local banks. Propose bank signatories and interest level and request HQ to open bank account . Propose ceiling and request approval for petty cash account	a. Excerpt of UNHCR Manual b. Questionnaire on Opening Bank Account
<input type="checkbox"/>	36. Establish accounts procedures : Vouchers, Journals, files, signatory arrangements etc.	a. Allotment Account Codes For essential guidelines on accounting procedures refer to Part 5, Chapter IX of the UNHCR Manual and to the FOAS Manual

<input type="checkbox"/>	37. Request Emergency Allotment Advice if not already received & finalize administrative budget request to HQs on ABPS	a. Copy of Emer. Allotment Advice b. Excerpt of Operating Instructions of ABPS c. FOM 120/94 Field Office Admin Budget Procedures
<input type="checkbox"/>	38. Purchase and inventorise non expendable property , particularly furniture, vehicles and equipment and decide which to be charged to admin allotment and which to project expenditure (if any)	a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual
<input type="checkbox"/>	39. Check stocks of stationery and supplies , sort forms into Manila folders & order stationery and forms required from Geneva	a. Excerpt from UNHCR Manual
<input type="checkbox"/>	40. Investigate the possibility of the local printing of stationery. If possible and the cost is reasonable, request permission to do so from HQs. Proceed only once address, telephone number, etc. known and not likely to change	a. Examples of stationary Examplestationery
<input type="checkbox"/>	41. Survey EDP facilities and needs and recommend improvements/request additional equipment. If necessary request services of ICSS consultant to assess optimum Admin (and programme) needs	
FILING AND DOCUMENTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/>	42. Advise BO or HQs which newspapers and periodicals to be sent on a regular basis. (This is part of field office budgeting (ABPS) but worthwhile arranging separately)	a. Entitlement
<input type="checkbox"/>	43. Set up file list , chron files and document registration system	a. Filing principles (*) b. Standard file list (*) c. Chron Register Format (*)
<input type="checkbox"/>	44. Set up distribution system with central location of trays. Consider local construction of pigeon holes. Establish document circulation system	a. Example Action Sheet (*) b. Example Circulation Slip (*)

* Available on the computer disc which accompanies The "Checklist For The Emergency Administrator".

Annex 2 – Suggested Field Filing System

1. A file list should be set up immediately on the opening of a new office. It should be done in such a way that it can expand and contract to take account of new situations. One must achieve the correct balance between being too specific and too general.

2. Three types of files should always bear a standard format reference or symbol whether maintained at Headquarters or in the Field: personnel (PER/IND) files, individual case (IC) files and project files. The latter symbol is always allocated by Headquarters.

A *personnel file* bears the file reference PER/IND FAMILY NAME, Given Names, e.g. PER/IND SMITH, Ms Jane Marie

An *individual case* file bears IC FAMILY NAME, Given Names RUR (country of residence)/RUR (country of origin)
e.g. IC SMITH, Ms Jane Marie RUR/RUR

A *project file* bears Year/Source of fund/Country of operation/assistance type/project number, e.g. 98/EF/RUR/EM/140.

3. An indication of subject files which might be required is given below. The number designates a subject not a file. Accordingly, files may comprise two or more file numbers.

A file should “tell a story”.

Do not make subsequent perusal difficult by filing items out of sequence.

4. Security should be considered when filing documents, in paper and or electronic form. Files which should be destroyed in the event of evacuation of the office should be marked in advance. These should include individual case files and personnel files.

Suggested File List

1. General & External Affairs

- 100 UNHCR Structure/Mandate & Gen. Info.
- 101 Executive Committee
- 102 IOM/FOMs

- 110 Relations with (host) Government
- 111 Relations with local Consulates
- 112 Inter-Agency Meetings
- 113 NGOs (general & alphabetical by agency)
- 114 UN Agencies (general & alphabetical by agency)
- 115 Inter-Governmental Organizations (general & alphabetical by agency)

- 120 Reports from the field
- 121 Situation Reports (SITREPS)
- 122 Camp profiles

- 130 Missions to the office (UNHCR & alphabetical)
- 131 Missions by office staff (alphabetical)
- 132 Visitors to the office (non-UNHCR & chronological)
- 133 Public Information Activities & Media Relations
- 134 Press releases & Press clippings
- 135 Conferences and Special Events

- 140 Training/Seminars/Workshops

- 150 Fund Raising/Contributions

2. Protection

- 200 Protection General – UNHCR
- 201 Human rights/Country of Origin Info. (RUR – Alphabetical)

- 210 Protection (host country)
- 211 Detention
- 212 Determination
- 213 Tracing
- 214 Family Reunion
- 215 Physical Security of Refugees
- 216 Registration

3. Operations & Assistance

- 300 Field Operations General
- 301 Field Operations (by site/camp)

- 310 Programme General (UNHCR) including FOBS
- 311 Assistance Programme General (host country)
- 312 Emergency Management
- 313 Technical Support
- 314 Procurement

- 320 Food/Nutrition
- 321 Health
- 322 Water & Sanitation
- 323 Site Planning & Shelter
- 324 Non-Food Items & Domestic Supplies

- 325 Logistics (procurement, transport, storage)
- 326 Community Services, Counselling,
Community Development
- 327 Education
- 328 Productive Activities & Income Generation
- 329 Camp Management

- 330 Repatriation
- 331 Local Settlement
- 332 Resettlement

- 4. Administration & Finance**
- 400 Administrative Policy
- 401 Administrative Instructions

- 410 Office Premises
- 411 Office and Personnel Security
- 412 Asset Management
- 413 Expendable property & Supplies
- 414 Utilities
- 415 Records Management/Filing
- 416 Communications
- 417 Transport/Vehicles

- 420 Staff Rules & Regulations
- 421 Office Staffing
- 422 Applications for Employment/Recruitment
- 423 Salaries/Benefits/Allowances/Living
Conditions
- 424 Taxation/Exemptions/Privileges &
Immunities
- 425 Leave & Holidays
- 426 Travel/Mission & Leave Rosters

- 430 Accounting & Finance Procedures
- 431 Rates of Exchange
- 432 DSA Rates
- 433 Administrative Budget & Obligation
Document

21

Communications



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Introduction

1. Good communications are essential in an emergency. Effective communications require appropriate equipment, infrastructure, and good management.

Communications Management

2. With improved means of communications, even from very remote locations, the proper management of communications has assumed great importance. The structure and flow of communications should reflect that of the management of the operation, with communications being channelled in a properly structured manner.

At each level reports and information received should be analyzed and consolidated before being passed to the next level.

Raw information should not be routinely transmitted simultaneously through several levels of the management structure by copying reports widely, in addition to directing them to the person responsible for action. Distribution of information should be restricted to those who need it for the exercise of their functions and communications traffic in general should be restricted to that which is necessary.

3. Originators of communications should always ask themselves what the purpose of the message is, who will be receiving it, and whether the information contained is sufficient and appropriate for the purpose.

4. Under the pressures of an emergency there is sometimes a tendency to exchange incomplete information. If the information is insufficient for the purpose of the message, and if the matter cannot wait, then acknowledgement of gaps may save time and trouble. For example, "further information being obtained but meanwhile please react on points..."

5. The most appropriate means of transmission for the message should be considered in view of cost, urgency and bulk. For example, avoid using the telephone or fax when the message could be passed by electronic mail (e-mail). Similarly, large amounts of data, unless very urgent, should be sent via pouch or mail rather than by e-mail.

6. Using or developing standard forms can assist communications management, as they can act as a checklist for information usually

transmitted in that form of communication (sitreps are an obvious example – see the annex to chapter 8 on implementing arrangements.)

7. An effective referencing system must be used – this is a major factor in ensuring good communications.

Use separate messages for clearly separate subjects.

Correct numbering and/or referencing will greatly help identify earlier communications. It will also provide a means to systematically track actions required and help maintain orderly and disciplined communication. See chapter 20 on administration for more information on a filing system. Annex 1 describes the official UNHCR message identification system which is used by the Telecommunications Unit.

8. The immediate requirement for communications may be satisfied by telephone, e-mail and fax. However, regular pouch, courier or mail services should be established as soon as possible. A checklist for communication needs which should be considered when setting up an office is contained in chapter 20 on administration. In addition, the Checklist for the Emergency Administrator contains guidance, forms and information for setting up different types of communications.

Telecommunications

9. Effective telecommunications requires staff and equipment dedicated to that task. When planning telecommunications requirements, the Regional Telecommunications Officer and the Telecommunications Unit at Headquarters should be involved as early as possible. These can help to identify experienced UNHCR telecommunications staff who could be deployed to the operation. Emergency staff can include telecoms officers from UNHCR's standby arrangements. If necessary these officers can be used to supplement UNHCR Telecom staff.

Telecommunications Infrastructure

10. The existing telecommunications infrastructure of the country may not support UNHCR's requirements, because the infrastructure may be either inadequate or damaged. Certain security situations can also result in the telecommunications facilities being closed down or drastically reduced

(in which case cellular telephone networks would also be unavailable).

11. UNHCR maintains a stockpile of telecommunications equipment for rapid deployment to emergencies (see Appendix 1, Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources). This equipment provides emergency response staff with immediate communication links from even the most remote locations.

Types of Telecommunications

12. The following are the principle means of telecommunication currently available for use by UNHCR:

- i. **Telephone.** Telephones can be connected through standard landlines or cellular networks for communications within the country, and through international or satellite connections (VSAT, INMARSAT – see Annex 1) for communications with other countries;
- ii. **Fax.** Facsimile (fax) operates over standard telephone lines, or satellite (VSAT, INMARSAT) connections. Fax facilities are available to and from most countries, however it is more expensive and less easily relayed than e-mail;
- iii. **E-mail.** E-mail also operates over standard telephone lines or satellite connections. In the initial phase of an operation, e-mail can be obtained through portable satellite terminals, or using local phone lines if available, and later the SITA network or DAMA satellite system (see Annex 1) can be used if there is a suitable connection point;
- iv. **Radio.** Radio can be used for voice and written communication (including e-mail and electronic data). Installation by qualified technicians is required. In an emergency it is almost always necessary to set up radio networks to ensure communications between UNHCR offices and between UNHCR and other agencies. The radio network will also provide an emergency backup for communications with Headquarters in the event of landline communications being cut. Mobile radios (handheld or installed in vehicles) enable staff in the immediate region to maintain contact with one another and with the office;
- v. **VSAT (or Very Small Aperture Terminal – a slight misnomer as the smallest dish size is 1.8-2.4 metres in diameter).** VSAT is used for telephone, fax, electronic data and e-mail

communication. Installing VSAT is a substantial undertaking and must be carried out by qualified technicians;

vi. **Telex.** Although telex is used less and less, it still remains an option where it is available.

UNHCR Telecommunications Network

Field Preparations

13. The need for a UNHCR telecommunications network should be discussed at the highest appropriate level in the concerned ministry dealing with UNHCR matters (for example, the Ministry of Home Affairs). The advice of the technically competent authorities should be sought (for example the Ministry of Communications or post and telecommunications service). Note that Section IX of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations provides that “the UN should enjoy for its official communications, treatment not less favourable than that accorded to diplomatic missions in the country”.

14. Contact the Telecommunications Unit at Headquarters or the Regional Telecommunications Officer as soon as the need for a telecommunications network is known. Give the proposed number and location of offices, and distances between them, so they can advise on the type of equipment needed.

15. Permission to operate a radio station and frequency clearance must be obtained – in most countries there is a standard government application form. In the case of HF and VHF, check with UNDP and other UN organizations in case they have already received clearance for any frequencies. The Telecommunications Unit or the Regional Telecommunications Officer can give advice on completing the government application form.

16. It is also necessary to obtain permission to operate satellite communications installations. The competent authority will need to know specific information about operating frequencies and characteristics of the equipment. This information can again be obtained through the Regional Telecommunications Officer or the Telecommunications Unit at Headquarters.

Office Accommodation

17. The physical requirements for telecommunications equipment should be kept in mind when choosing office accommodation (see chapter 20 on administration). For example, a radio antenna will require space either

on the roof of the building or in an open area at ground level, and a room for the operating equipment very close to the antenna. Note that for optimum results, the cable connecting the radio equipment with its antenna should be as short as possible, and not more than 50 meters if possible.

18. VSAT installations in particular require an uninterrupted view towards the horizon in the direction of the equator (i.e. towards the southern horizon in the northern hemisphere, and towards the northern horizon in the southern hemisphere). The angle of elevation of the VSAT dish above the horizon will depend on the latitude of the office, the highest angle would be on the equator. If the VSAT is installed on a building (on a flat roof for example), the building must be strong enough to bear the weight. If it is installed at ground floor level, there should be enough space around it for a safety margin (4 m radius) to avoid the possibility of anyone coming too close to the transmitting antenna.

Radio Equipment

19. There are two types of radio equipment generally used by UNHCR in field operations for voice and data transmission: HF and VHF Radio.

20. Generally, HF communications are used for longer distances than VHF. The distance over which VHF is effective can be greatly extended by the installation of repeaters. VHF and HF radio would therefore be installed in the offices and in vehicles as appropriate; depending on the distance from base the vehicle is expected to travel.

Radio Call-signs

21. Each radio installation will have its own unique call-sign. The office installation is known as the "Base" station, the vehicle installations are "Mobiles". It is useful to have a formal naming convention for the call-signs, in order to provide a logical reference. For example, one letter can be used to signify the country of operation, one letter to signify the location, followed by one letter for the agency concerned. Remaining letters and figures may be added to provide additional clarity, if the number of users on the network is particularly high. (The country letter is normally omitted, unless cross-border operations are taking place.)

22. For example, a UNHCR office installation in Ruritania, Townville would be **(R) T H Base**, shortened to T H Base. A vehicle installation

for the same office would be **(R) T H Mobile 1** (T H Mobile 2, etc.)

23. The phonetic alphabet (see in the Toolbox, Appendix 2) is used so that the callsigns can be more readily understood over the radio, thus the above example becomes **Romeo Tango Hotel Base** (shortened to Tango Hotel Base), or **Romeo Tango Hotel Mobile One**.

24. Call-signs for individuals using hand-held radios will normally follow the structure, for example (for UNHCR Townville, Ruritania):

T H 1 ("Tango Hotel One")
Representative

T H 1 1 Deputy Representative

T H 1 2 Other staff member in
Representative's office

T H 2 Senior Administrative Officer

T H 2 1 Administrative Assistant

T H 2 2 Other administrative staff member

T H 3 Senior Logistics Officer

T H 3 1 Logistics Assistant

T H 3 2 Other Logistics Staff member

25. The phonetic alphabet is set out in Appendix 2, Toolbox. Further information and other procedures may be found in "UNHCR Procedure for Radio Communication" (pocket sized reference booklet).

Field – Headquarters Telecommunications

26. E-mail allows the field to communicate directly with individuals at Headquarters and at field offices where a Local Area Network (LAN) E-mail Post Office is installed. However, e-mail messages sent directly to individual staff e-mail addresses may not be read and acted upon immediately if the staff member is unexpectedly absent. It is better, therefore, to address messages that require immediate attention to a generic e-mail address, these are addresses with the form HQxxnn, where xx are letters indicating the organizational unit and nn are digits denoting a sub unit, e.g HQAF04 is the generic e-mail address of Desk 4 of the Africa Bureau. Urgent messages may be copied to the Telecommunications Service Desk at Headquarters, who will alert the relevant Desk Officer, or Duty Officer, as appropriate.

Telecommunications Unit – Operating Hours

27. The Telecommunications Unit at Headquarters is staffed between the following local Geneva times:

0700-2100 Monday to Friday

0800-1700 Weekends and Public
Holidays

Telephone 41 22 739 8777

E-Mail HQTU50

Swiss time is one hour ahead of GMT in winter and two hours ahead in summer. Arrangements can be made to extend these working hours, as necessary, in emergencies.

Key References

Checklist for the Emergency Administrator, UNHCR, Geneva, 1998.

UNHCR Procedure for Radio Communication, UNHCR, Geneva.

Annex 1 – Common Communications Equipment and Terminology

Common name or acronym	Full name	Description and Use
Codan	Manufacturer's name	High frequency radio system using voice communication, commonly used in vehicles
DAMA	Demand Assigned Multiple Access	Satellite (VSAT) system which allows multiple lines of telephone, fax and data to be transmitted via satellite
DTS	Digital Transmission System (proprietary name)	A successor to PACTOR, allowing the transmission of e-mail messages by radio
HF	High Frequency	Range of frequency of radio waves used for long distance radio communication
INMARSAT	International Mobile Satellite Organization (originally called International Maritime Satellite Organization)	Phone system which provides global phone, fax and data transmission via satellite
Pactor	Packetised Telex Over Radio	System whereby printed messages can be sent by radio
SATCOM	Satellite Communications	Generic term for any satellite communications system
SATCOM A, B, C, M, Mini-M	Refers specifically to INMARSAT terminals used by UNHCR	Telephone system used for voice, fax and data communications. The equipment comes in various sizes, from suitcase size to small laptop and with varying capabilities from simple telex to video-conferencing
SITA	Société International de Télécommunications Aéronautiques	An organization which provides a global communications network for airline reservations and ticketing. It can also provide a communications network for non-airline customers (e.g. UNHCR)
UHF	Ultra High Frequency (Higher than VHF)	Range of frequency of radio waves used for short distance radio communication
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal	Satellite system which allows multiple lines of telephone, fax and data to be transmitted via geo stationary satellite
VHF	Very High Frequency	Radio waves used for short distance radio communications (e.g. handsets or walkie-talkies)
VHF Repeater	Very High Frequency Repeater	Equipment used to extend the range of VHF short distance radio communications to a range of 20 to 80 km, depending on the topography

Annex 2 – Message Identification

The following instructions are for telecommunications operators who need to keep a formal log of all messages received and transmitted (including e-mail, fax and PACTOR). The principles are that in each case “HCR” must appear in the prefix and whatever the type and means of communication, each message must bear one number unique to that transmission for each addressee.

Components of the message identity are:

- Message from Headquarters to the Field: HCR/aaaaa/9999
- Message from the Field to Headquarters: aaaaa/HCR/9999
where **aaaaa** is the official UNHCR location (Duty Station) code of the Field Office concerned, and **9999** is a four figure sequential number starting at 0001 on the 1st of January each year.
- Between field offices: aaaaa/bbbbbb/HCR/9999
where **aaaaa** is the five letter location code for the sending field office and **bbbbbb** is the five letter location code for the addressee, and **9999** = four figure sequential number, starting at 0001 on the 1st of January each year.
- To non-UNHCR addressees: aaaaa/MSA/HCR/9999

There are two categories of four figure sequential numbers which may be used:

Category A is used for communications between Headquarters and field offices and between field offices with a considerable message exchange. The number used would be the next in the series for communications that year between the originator and addressee.

Category B is for UNHCR addressees who do not fall into Category A and for non-UNHCR addressees. If there are many such messages, two series may be used: UNHCR and non-UNHCR. All series or sequences restart at 0001 on the 1st of January.

Examples

Category A messages:

HCR/ANGLU/0123 means the 123rd message from Headquarters to Luanda, Angola this year.

ANGLU/HCR/0210 means the 210th message from Luanda, Angola to Headquarters this year.

ANGLU/RSAPR/HCR/0097 means the 97th message from Luanda to Pretoria, South Africa this year (where Luanda and Pretoria use sequential numbering).

Category B messages:

ANGLU/SENDA/HCR/0024 means a message from Luanda to Dakar, Senegal, and which is the 24th Category B message this year from ANGLU (where Luanda and Dakar do not use sequential numbering).

If there is more than one addressee, a separate message identity must be used for each. If the message is being sent to some addressees for information only, this should be indicated in brackets after the respective message identity. For example messages from Luanda to Headquarters for action, copied to Dakar for information, would bear the following:

ANGLU/HCR/0124

ANGLU/SENDA/HCR/0024

(SENDA for info)

In order that the system can work effectively any missing sequential number in **Category A** must be reported to the other category A addressee as soon as possible, and the last number of the year (or of a series) must be reported to each category A addressee. If a category A number is duplicated by mistake, correct this by allocating the next available number and reporting this number to the addressee by a service (SVC) message. Note that the SVC message itself should also be numbered. Indicate the date or subject to avoid any danger of confusion.

22

Coping with Stress



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Introduction

1. Stress is a feature of life which can be both protective and harmful. Unfortunately “stress” is too often viewed in a negative context when, in fact, it enables us to cope with change. Protective stress is part of a natural process – when threatened, the body always reacts with the same general adaptive mechanisms. The physical symptoms that occur when we are under stress enables us to “flee” or “fight” the threat. This response is a basic life protecting mechanism, enhancing physical and mental defences and preparedness – it focuses attention, and mobilizes the energy and resources necessary to be able to take appropriate action. Stress therefore allows us to remain productive even in the face of changing and challenging situations. Stress reactions are dependent on our personality, our professional experience and our physical and emotional well-being.

In an emergency, reactions to stress are normal.

2. However, when the circumstances inducing the stress are excessive, very intense or continuing over a period of time, stress may begin to negatively affect an individual's personality, health and ability to perform.

3. Stress takes up an enormous amount of energy. Being in a stressful situation is physically and mentally exhausting. However, once out of the crisis environment and given time to rest, people usually recover their normal equilibrium.

4.

Understanding normal reactions to stressful situations, knowing how to handle these and early attention to symptoms can speed recovery and prevent long-term problems.

Identifying Stress Symptoms

5. Emergency personnel are exposed to many types of stress and what is needed is to have the “ideal” level. Too little causes boredom, lack of stimulation and fatigue, too much and we become overwhelmed physically and mentally. The names given to the harmful types of stress are cumulative stress and traumatic stress.

Cumulative stress

6. Cumulative (or chronic) stress builds up slowly as a result of the magnitude and multi-

plicity of demands, lengthy working hours and daily frustrations and difficulties of living and working in emergencies. Because stress reactions develop so slowly and imperceptibly it is quite often difficult to notice them in oneself, they are, however, usually noticeable to close colleagues.

Once removed from a stressful situation and with the possibility for rest and relaxation, a person generally recovers quickly and may become aware of the difference in how one responds to situations when one is not experiencing stress.

Individuals in emergency work, who are experiencing high stress levels, are not the best judges of their own ability to cope.

Team leaders need to be particularly observant of individual reactions during an emergency.

7. Symptoms of stress can be physical and psychological. There could be changes in ordinary behaviour patterns, such as changes in eating habits, decreased personal hygiene, withdrawal from others and prolonged silences. Symptoms of cumulative stress can be seen in every facet of our lives. The following non-exhaustive list gives an indication of some of the most observed symptoms:

Physical symptoms:

- i. Gastro-intestinal
Dry mouth, impression of having ones heart in ones mouth, nausea, vomiting, sensation of bloating, heartburn, abdominal pain, appetite changes diarrhoea, constipation;
- ii. Cardiovascular
Elevated blood pressure, rapid heart beat, hot flushes, cold hands and feet, sweating;
- iii. Respiratory problems
Breathlessness, panting, sensation of not being able to breathe;
- iv. Musculoskeletal
Cramps, back pain, trembling, nervous ticks, grimacing;
- v. Neurological
Headache.

Psychological symptoms:

- I. Emotional
Anxiety, anguish;
- ii. Behavioural
Sleep problems, abuse of cigarettes alcohol or drugs, modification in ones libido;

iii. Intellectual

Concentration difficulties, memory difficulties, problems with reasoning and verbal expression.

8. The presence of several of these symptoms may mean that a person's coping ability is diminishing and work performance is being affected. However, the signs and the degree of stress presented by a person in any given situation will vary, depending on the level of stress experienced, previous emotional experiences and the personality of the individual.

9.

If the cyclic causes and resultant symptoms of cumulative stress are not promptly addressed, exhaustion sets in, leading eventually to "burnout". Should this happen one needs rest and counselling.

Traumatic Stress

10. Traumatic stress is brought on by unexpected and emotionally powerful events ("critical incidents") that overwhelm the individual's usual coping abilities. Critical incidents may arise in the context of a major disaster or emergency, and could be, for example, injury or death of a colleague, hostage taking, deaths of children, undergoing great personal risk, being a powerless witness of violence, or seeing or being associated with a tragic event accompanied by intense media coverage (especially if this is inaccurate).

11.

Staff might experience acute reactions during a critical incident or a delayed stress reaction minutes, hours or days after the event. In rarer cases reactions may come after a few months or years.

12. The reactions after a critical incident can resemble those of cumulative stress but they can be much more pronounced. Vomiting instead of nausea as an example. The following are mental survival mechanisms that allow us to deal with the event:

Emotional numbing, changes in the perception of time, along with a sense of ones live flashing before ones eyes, highly focused attention or tunnel vision, hyperarousal with sharpened senses.

These initial responses can be replaced in the period of time immediately after the incident by:

Hyperactivity, exaggerated humour, argumentativeness, social withdrawal, fear, anxiety, sadness, grief, memory problems, poor concentration, slow thinking and loss of perception in addition to the physical symptoms mentioned above.

13.

It should be emphasized that these symptoms are normal reactions to abnormal events and in most cases will disappear.

14. However, occasionally a serious condition termed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can result from critical incidents. The risk of PTSD can be considerably reduced by preparation, on-site care, and post incident defusing or debriefing.

15. The diagnosis of PTSD is made by a psychiatrist or psychologist based on the presence of various elements which include:

- i. Invasive memories (flashback);
- ii. Nightmares and sleep disturbance;
- iii. Repeated reliving of the event;
- iv. Detachment;
- v. Avoidance of trigger persons or situations;
- vi. Hyperarousal;
- vii. Anxiety, depression, grief, anger;
- viii. Suicidal thought;
- ix. Reactions intensifying over time;
- x. Clear alteration of personality;
- xi. Withdrawal from others;
- xii. Continued rumination about event;
- xiii. Constant expectations of a new disaster;
- xiv. Persistent sleep difficulties;
- xv. Total absence of reactions;
- xvi. Phobia formation;
- xvii. Reactions continuing for 3 to 4 weeks.

Techniques for dealing with Stress

Preventing and Minimizing Harmful Stress

16.

It is important to recognize that it is impossible to take care of others if you do not take care of yourself.

17. Being well prepared, both physically and psychologically, is an important way to reduce the chances of harmful stress. This

preparation not only includes understanding stress and how to handle it, but also educating oneself in advance on the living conditions, job, likely problems, local language and culture. It is important to be both physically and psychologically fit to work in a particular situation.

18. To prevent stress overload during an emergency, firstly, know your limitations. In addition, there are several practical steps to take:

- i. Get enough sleep;
- ii. Eat regularly;
- iii. Control intake of alcohol, tobacco and medicines;
- iv. Take time for rest and relaxation;
- v. Take physical exercise. Physical exercise releases tension and helps maintain stamina and good health (any sort of exercise for at least 20 minutes per day). Beneficial exercise for stress reduction also includes deep breathing and muscle relaxation exercises;
- vi. Give expression to the stress: Put words to the emotions you feel – find a colleague whom you trust to talk with;
- vii. Keep a diary, it may not be as effective as talking, but it can help.

The expression of emotion has proved to be an effective technique in reducing stress.

19. Other ways of reducing stress are:

- i. *Inward coping*: When a person performs difficult work in physically and emotionally threatening conditions, internal dialogue can add to the stress if it is highly negative and self-critical. To remain focused on the task, avoid unhelpful internal dialogue such as, “I’m no good at this. Everything I am doing is making things worse”. Instead make positive helpful statements to talk oneself through difficult moments. For example, “I don’t feel like dealing with this angry person right now, but I have done it before, so I can do it again”;
- ii. *Peer support*: Use the “buddy system”: staff members may agree in advance to monitor each other’s reactions to identify signs of excessive stress and fatigue levels;
- iii. *Setting an example*: Supervisors in particular have an important role to play as they can provide an example in the way they

handle their own personal stress, e.g. by eating properly, resting and taking appropriate time off duty. The team leader who tells a colleague, “Remind me to eat, and get me out of here the moment you notice any sign of fatigue. I’m no good when I’m tired”, is setting a positive example for the staff;

- iv. *Permission to go off duty*: In a crisis many staff members need to be given permission to take care of themselves. People do better in difficult situations when they feel that other people care about them. Team leaders are responsible for giving such specific permission to themselves and to their staff, for example, by giving permission to take the afternoon off, etc. The correct use by staff members of Mars and Vari can serve to alleviate stress.

Dealing with Critical Incidents (Traumatic Stress)

20. Stress defusings and debriefings are ways of protecting the health of staff after crises. The person or people who experienced the critical incident talk about the incident, focusing on the facts and their reactions to it. They should take place in a neutral environment, and never at the scene of the incident. They should be led by a trained professional. The information given below is intended to illustrate these processes and does not give sufficient detail to enable an unqualified person to perform either a debriefing or a defusing.

Defusing

21. Defusing is a process which allows those involved in a critical incident to describe what happened and to talk about their reactions directly after the event. A defusing should take place within a few hours of the event, its format is shorter than that of a debriefing. It consists of three steps:

- i. Introduction
Introduction of everyone present, a description of the purpose of the defusing, and stimulation of motivation and participation;
- ii. Exploration
Discussion of what happened during the incident;
- iii. Information
Advice to the participants about potential reactions to the incident, guidance on stress management, practical information, questions and answers.

Confidentiality is important. It should be possible to express strong emotions, secure in the knowledge that this will stay within the group.

22. Angry feelings can be a normal reaction to an upsetting event and staff should be able to “let off steam”. This is not the time for criticism of professional performance – this should be dealt with at a separate meeting.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)

23. In cases where staff have to deal with intense distress, defusings may be insufficient and need to be followed by a formal debriefing from a mental health professional. Debriefing is a process designed to lessen the impact of a critical incident. It occurs in an organized group meeting and is intended to allow those involved in a critical incident to discuss their thoughts and reactions in a safe, non-threatening environment. The team leader or a responsible member of the emergency team should request the Division of Resource Management at Headquarters to provide or help identify a mental health professional to conduct a debriefing. Sessions are normally held for groups of staff having undergone intense stress. They aim to integrate the experience, provide information on traumatic stress reactions, and prevent long-term conse-

quences including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and help staff manage their own personal reactions to the incident.

24. If a debriefing or defusing is not offered spontaneously after a trauma is suffered, request one. Information on individual consultations for UNHCR staff members and workshops on stress related issues can be obtained from the Staff Welfare Unit, HQ Geneva.
Telephone: 00 41 22 7397858
Confidential Fax: 00 41 22 7397370

Key References

- An Operations Manual for the Prevention of Traumatic Stress among Emergency Services and Disaster Workers*, Jeffrey T. Mitchell and George Everly, Elliot City Maryland, 1995.
- Coping with Stress in Crisis Situations*, UNHCR, Geneva, 1992.
- Humanitarian Action in Conflict Zones – Coping with Stress*, ICRC, Geneva, 1994.
- International Handbook of Traumatic Stress Symptoms* Edited by John P. Wilson & Berverley Raphael, 1993.
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Staff Safety



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Introduction

- ◆ The primary responsibility for the safety of staff members, their dependants and property and that of the organization, rests with the host government;
- ◆ Every effort should be made to facilitate the tasks of the government in the discharge of its responsibilities by making appropriate supporting arrangements and through regular liaison and exchange of information with the host country security officials;
- ◆ All of the recommendations below should be considered in addition to, and complementary with, actions taken by the host country security officials;
- ◆ Every office should have a security plan and a medical evacuation plan;
- ◆ The cardinal rule for landmines is that when in doubt, stay away. Inform the host country military. Any suspicious object should be treated as a landmine or booby trap.

The UN Security System

1. UN system-wide arrangements are described in detail in the UN Field Security Handbook (see references) and outlined here.

UN organizations have agreed to system-wide arrangements for the safety of UN staff and protection in the field.

The UN Security Co-ordinator (UNSECOORD), based in New York, acts on behalf of the Secretary-General to ensure a coherent response by the UN to any security situation. UNSECOORD produces monthly publications on security conditions on a country by country basis. In addition, the Field Safety Section at Headquarters can provide country specific information and advice.

2.

The primary responsibility for the security and protection of staff members rests with the host government.

This responsibility arises from every government's inherent role of maintaining law and order within its jurisdiction.

3. UNHCR and other UN organizations may lend assistance, when possible and to the extent feasible, to protect other people such as staff of NGOs working in co-operation with them. UNHCR has no legal obligation towards others working with refugees.

4. In each country, a senior UN official called the Designated Official (DO) is the person in charge of the security management arrangements of the UN system. The DO is accountable to the Secretary-General through UNSECOORD for the safety of UN personnel.

5. The principle responsibilities of the DO include:

- Liaising with host government officials on security matters;
- Arranging a security plan for the area and including provision for relocation of National staff and evacuation of International staff;
- Informing the Secretary-General (through UNSECOORD) of all developments which may have a bearing on the safety of staff members;
- Carrying out relocation or evacuation where a breakdown in communication makes it impossible to receive the Secretary-General's prior approval;
- Forming a Security Management Team (SMT);
- Informing the senior official of each UN organization of all security measures.

6. The DO will form an SMT, the function of which will be to advise him or her on security matters. The SMT is normally composed of: the DO; field security officers; a medical officer; an internationally recruited staff member familiar with local conditions and languages; a staff member with a legal background and any agency staff who by training, background or experience will contribute to the team.

7. In large countries with regions separated from country headquarters in terms of distance and exposure to emergencies, a UN staff member may be designated as the Area Security Co-ordinator (ASC). The ASC acts on the DO's behalf and will normally have responsibilities for staff safety similar to those of the DO, but within that region of the country. UNHCR may be requested by the DO to undertake this role.

8. The ASC (or DO where there is no ASC for the region) will appoint security wardens who will have responsibility for security within particular predetermined zones. A separate warden system for nationally recruited and internationally recruited staff may be required. The warden system should include all humanitarian agencies.

9. The primary tool for security preparedness is the security plan, which is the key feature of the UN security system.

Essential Plans

10. In addition to the basic security plan, UNHCR offices must have a medical evacuation plan, and may have a movement control plan and routine radio checks.

The Security Plan

11. The security plan will be country specific and have five phases. The DO may implement measures under Phases One and Two at his or her own discretion, and notify the Secretary General accordingly. Phases Three to Five will normally be declared by the DO only with the prior authorization of the Secretary-General. However, if there is a breakdown in communications, DOs may use their best judgement with regard to the declaration of phases Three to Five, and report to the Secretary-General as soon as communications allow.

12. The UN security phases are:

Phase I: Precautionary

In this phase, clearance from the DO is required prior to travel.

Phase II: Restricted Movement

This phase imposes a high level of alert on the movements of UN staff members and their families. During this phase all staff members and their families will remain at home unless otherwise instructed.

Phase III: Relocation

This phase is declared by the Secretary General, on the advice of the DO. It includes concentration of all international staff members and their families, relocation of non-essential staff and families elsewhere in, or out, of the country. Deployment of new staff must be authorized by the Secretary General.

Phase IV: Programme Suspension

This phase is declared by the Secretary General, on the advice of the DO. It allows for relocation outside the country of all international staff not directly involved with the emergency, humanitarian relief operations, or security matters.

Phase V: Evacuation

This phase is declared by the Secretary General, on the advice of the DO. The evacuation of all international staff should be carried out according to plans prepared beforehand.

13. The person responsible for security at each location (DO, ASC) should draw up a security plan within the framework of the country security plan. This will need to be regularly updated. Each situation will be different and will require different levels and structuring of the plan. Guidelines for drawing up the plan are in the Field Security Handbook, and copied in the Checklist for the Emergency Administrator.

14. The following are typical headings in a security plan:

A. *Summary of the security situation at the duty station.*

B. *Officials responsible for security:* those in the local area, in Geneva and in New York, with their call signs, phone and fax numbers.

C. *List of internationally recruited staff members and dependants.* This will need to be updated constantly, and should include basic details such as full name, nationality, date of birth, passport and laissez-passer numbers with date and place of issue. A means of tracking visiting missions should be established. The UN Field Security Handbook contains annexes to record this information in a standard format; copies of these are also found in the UNHCR Checklist for the Emergency Administrator.

D. *List and details of locally recruited staff and their dependants.* This will need to be updated constantly.

E. *Division of area into zones.* Zones should be marked on a map with the numbers and residences of staff-members clearly marked. The map should indicate the warden responsible for each zone.

F. *Communications.* This should include details of phone numbers, call-signs and radio frequencies of all staff, including those of offices in neighbouring countries.

G. *Selection of co-ordination centre and concentration points.* The plan should indicate a number of co-ordination centres and concentration points, and should indicate the stocks and facilities which should be available at these points. It may not be possible for all staff-members to reach the same concentration point and alternatives should be foreseen.

H. *Safe haven and means for relocation and evacuation.* The plan should include in-

formation on all possible means of travel – by air, road, rail and ship as applicable. Normally only internationally recruited staff can be evacuated outside the country. Under the UN security system, the provisions for evacuation outside the country may be applied to locally-recruited staff members in only the most exceptional cases in which their security is endangered, or their property is lost or damaged as a direct consequence of their employment by UN organizations. Under the UN security system, a decision to evacuate locally recruited staff can only be made by the Secretary-General (based on recommendations by DO and UNSECOORD). However, during phases 3, 4 or 5, the DO may exceptionally either a) permit locally recruited staff to absent themselves from the duty station on special leave with pay or b) may relocate them to a safe area within the country and authorize payment of DSA for up to 30 days. Up to three months salary advance may be paid and a grant to cover transportation costs for the staff member and eligible family members. Arrangements to pay locally recruited staff these various amounts should be included in the plan.

I. *Essential supplies:* The plan should include estimates of the requirements for essential items of food, water, fuel etc. which will be needed by the community for a reasonable period of time. Individual items to be kept ready should also be listed. These include: passports, laissez-passers, vaccination certificates, travellers cheques and cash.

J. Plan for handing over the running of the office to the National Officer in charge.

Planning for evacuation

15.

The security plan should note who will take what actions at the UNHCR office in the event of evacuation.

These actions include how to deal with confidential documents and individual case files (including those on computer files), financial data, cash, radios, computers and vehicles.

16. Any paper files which need to be destroyed in the event of sudden evacuation of the office should have been marked in a manner agreed-upon and understood by all staff. Such files would include: individual case files, local staff personnel files, etc. If time permits,

the shredding and/or burning of these files should be a top priority. Emptying sensitive files onto the floor and mixing their contents with others will afford some protection if there is no time to burn them. Staff should be sensitive to the security situation and bear in mind when creating paper or electronic documentation that it might have to be left behind.

17. It should be agreed in advance which electronic files (including electronic mail files) should be deleted first. In order to truly destroy confidential electronic records from a computer disk (regardless of whether it is a hard disk or a floppy disk), it is necessary to use special software designed for this purpose. Merely deleting the file(s) does not remove the information from the disk, it only marks the space which the file occupies on the disc as being available for re-use.

Medical Evacuation Plan

18. Every office should have a medical evacuation plan to cover evacuation from that office. The plan should include information about the nearest medical facilities inside and (if appropriate) outside the country, what types of service they provide and to what standard, means of transport to these facilities in case of evacuation, and types of evacuation scenarios (the Checklist for the Emergency Administrator includes a format for a Medevac Plan, as well as flow charts¹ for decision making for evacuation).

19. All heads of UNHCR country offices (i.e. representatives, chiefs of mission or, in their absence, the officer in charge) may authorize, without reference to Headquarters, medical evacuation of staff in the circumstances set out in detail in IOM/104/94FOM/107/94, New Medical Evacuation Scheme, and IOM/FOM 26/95, Medical Evacuation in Extreme Emergencies – SOS Assistance. These IOM/FOMs are included in the Checklist for the Emergency Administrator. Briefly, medical evacuation can be authorized:

- i. For all international staff and consultants and eligible family members, in order to secure essential medical care which cannot be secured locally as a result of inadequate medical facilities (and which must be treated before the next leave outside the duty station);
- ii. For local staff and eligible family members, in situations of great emergency when a

¹ Contained in IOM/104/94 FOM107/94.

life-threatening situation is present, or in cases of service-incurred illness or accident.

In addition, evacuation can be arranged in extreme emergencies through SOS Assistance (a private company which provides 24 hour world-wide emergency evacuation). However, this is very expensive and not covered by UN insurance. It can be used in life threatening situations, and where an evacuation by normal means cannot be organized in view of the gravity of the illness or injury. A password is needed before SOS Assistance takes action for UNHCR – heads of offices should ensure they obtain this password from the Division of Human Resource Management. The password should be known by the Head of Office and the Deputy Head of Office.

20. The medical evacuation plan should be written with close reference to the relevant IOM/FOMs, and the advice of the UNHCR programme health coordinator should be sought, as well as that of any medical NGOs. When an evacuation may be necessary, a UN Examining Physician should assist in decisions as to the degree of urgency and facilities required.

Movement Control Plan

21. A movement control plan should be prepared when there is a need to track the movement of vehicles, and should provide a means to determine the current location of the vehicles and passengers and whether they are overdue from a trip. The plan usually consists of a fixed schedule of radio calls to the vehicle from the base station (e.g. every 30 or 60 minutes) in order to report the current location of the vehicle to the base station. This information should be updated on a white-board following each radio-call. The driver of every vehicle should confirm safe arrival at the end of the trip.

Routine Radio Checks

22. Routine radio checks should be instituted when the current location and welfare of staff-members needs to be known. Radio calls from the base station can be made on a fixed schedule or randomly.

Security

23. Keys to effective security are:

- i. First and foremost, personal awareness on the individual level;
- ii. Appropriate behaviour to diminish the risk of security incidents;

iii. Appropriate response by the individual to security incidents.

Personal Security

24. For personal security, bear in mind the following:

- Be aware of and alert to your surroundings;
- Observe the behaviour of other people living in the area. Local people will probably know more about general security threats than you do;
- Don't travel alone;
- Don't carry large amounts of money;
- Don't travel after dark if it can be avoided. Most security incidents occur after dark;
- When leaving base, make sure someone knows where you are going and when you are expected back;
- Lock vehicle doors and keep the windows rolled up when travelling;
- Park vehicles to allow for fast exit;
- Don't take photographs around military personnel or military installations;
- Have cash, documents, and an emergency bag packed and ready to go at all times;
- Always be polite: be aware that your behaviour to local officials, police or military can rebound negatively on other staff.

Residential Security

25. Several steps can be taken to improve residential security:

- Make sure there are good solid doors. Never have glass doors on the exterior;
- Install a peep hole, a safety chain and a security bar;
- Keep the entrance door locked at all times, even when at home;
- Install bars and grills, at least on the ground floor;
- All windows should have locks;
- Draw curtains at night;
- Install outside lighting;
- Have emergency power sources, candles and torches;
- Keep a watchdog or other animals like goats, geese or peacocks;
- Install a telephone or walkie-talkie.

Depending on the circumstances and if authorized by UNSECOORD from the UN system, UNHCR can cover the costs of some of the improvements listed.

Base Security

26. Base security should be improved by:

- Hiring guards:
- The host country authorities sometimes provide guards. Guards hired by UNHCR are not permitted to carry lethal weapons while on duty. Guards should be trained and briefed, and should wear a uniform or some identifying garment;
- Ensuring there are lights:
- Lights should be powerful and should light up an area outside the perimeter fence, providing a barrier of illumination in which intruders can be detected.
- Installing fences and controlling access: Double fences with razor wires form an effective barrier. There should be more than one entrance/exit. Sensitive locations (for example, the accommodation area, communications room, generators and fuel store) may need to be surrounded by a barrier of sandbags. Procedures to control access to the compound need to be established. The fenced compound should be self-contained and equipment (e.g. spare tires, jacks, fire extinguisher, first aid kits, generators, water pumps), should be checked and maintained on a routine basis.

Field Security

27. Several steps should be taken by relevant staff and heads of office to improve field security:

- Develop a movement control plan (see above);
- When planning to travel, check the latest security situation with the DO, others who have been there, host country officials other UN agencies, NGOs, traders;
- Get all required authorizations, from the DO and host country authorities;
- Ensure that all staff know what to do in case of accident or breakdown – simple procedures should be established;
- Ensure that vehicles are properly equipped with extra food and water, sleeping bags, mosquito nets, tents, water filters, fuel, tow rope, jumper cables, spare tire, tire

jack, flashlight, batteries, first aid kit, travel documents, radio, vehicle insurance papers, shovel and maps;

- Ensure that vehicles are in good mechanical condition and are checked regularly. Certain items, such as brakes, tire wear, fluid levels, lights, installed radios, should always be checked prior to every field trip;
- Ensure that all staff know what to do at checkpoints – establish procedures for staff to follow. It is against UN policy to allow anyone carrying arms in UN vehicles.

Cash Security

28. Ideally staff members should not carry large sums of money in cash. If there is a functioning banking system in the area, then this should be used to the maximum extent possible.

29. If it is necessary to transport cash then arrangements should be made with the host country authorities for protection of the funds. Cash in large amounts should be kept on hand for the shortest possible time, and should either be deposited in a bank or be disbursed quickly to pay salaries or meet other legitimate expenditure. Advance payments could be considered to reduce amounts of cash being stored (provided financial rules are adhered to).

30. Measures which can contribute to security while transporting cash include making use of:

- i. Professional couriers;
- ii. Armoured vehicles;
- iii. Armed guards;
- iv. Deception. There should be no regularity in the arrangements: The timing, route, and other details should change every time;
- v. Discretion. The number of people knowing about the movement of cash, the identity of persons carrying cash, their routes and timetables, should be kept to the barest minimum necessary.

Crowd Control and Security

31. If crowds cannot be avoided:

- Ensure that clear information is provided to the crowd, so that they know what is going on and what to expect;
- Work with representatives of the people to organize the crowd into small groups and get them to sit down;

- Do not engage in unruly group discussions;
- When discussing grievances, meet with a small number of representatives of the crowd, never with the mass meeting;
- Provide sanitary facilities, water, shade and shelter;
- For crowd control, use monitors from among the people themselves;
- If confronted by a crowd when in a vehicle, do not get out. Check that the doors are locked and drive away carefully;
- Maintain poise and dignity if confronted by a hostile crowd, do not show anger.

Mine Awareness

32. In countries with high risk of mines, all offices should ensure there is appropriate training and reference materials (see references) – the information contained here is not sufficient, but provides only broad guidance.

33. It is extremely difficult to spot a mined area, so the first priority is to ensure you have up to date information about possible mined areas from local residents and de-mining organizations. Travel with a map marked with this information and update it by checking with local residents.

34. Be aware of the following:

- Signs: learn which signs indicate known mined areas (whether local signs, UN or other signs);
- No-go areas: avoid areas which are avoided by the local population;
- Visible mines or indicators: some mines are visible. There may also be evidence of mine packaging;
- Disruption in the local environment: for example disturbed soil if recently laid, and depressions in the ground in an old mine field;
- Trip wires;
- Mine damage (e.g. dead animals) which could indicate the presence of other mines.

35. When driving, the following precautions should be taken:

- Wherever possible stay on hard surfaced roads.
- Always follow in the fresh tracks of another vehicle, at least 50 m behind the vehicle in front.
- Flak jackets can be used as a seat cushion and as a foot protection.

- Wear the seat-belts, and keep windows rolled down and doors unlocked.

36. If you encounter a mine:

- Keep away, do not touch it;
- Do not try to detonate it by throwing stones at it;
- Stop the vehicle immediately;
- Stay in the vehicle, even if it is damaged and call for assistance.

37. If you have to leave the vehicle:

- Notify your location by radio;
- Do not move the steering wheel;
- Put on any protective gear available;
- Climb over the seats and leave the vehicle by the rear, walk back along the vehicle tracks. Never walk around the vehicle;
- Leave at least a 20 m gap between people;
- Close the road to other traffic.

38. When travelling on foot:

- Never walk through overgrown areas: stick to well used paths.

39. If there is a mine incident:

- Do not immediately run to the casualty. Stop and assess the situation first. There may be other antipersonnel mines in the vicinity, and administering first aid to one victim could result in another victim;
- Only one person should go to the casualty, walking in his exact footprints, to apply first aid;
- Do not attempt to move the casualty unless absolutely necessary, call for mine-clearing and medical assistance.

40. Within the UN system, mine clearance and related issues are primarily the responsibility of DPKO. Chapter 19 on voluntary repatriation contains some information about programme aspects of mines.

Protection Equipment:

41. Typical equipment that has been used by UNHCR includes:

- i. Bullet proof vests for protection against most bullets;
- ii. Flak jackets for protection against shrapnel;
- iii. Helmets for protection against shrapnel;

- iv. Ballistic blankets fitted in vehicles, for protection against hand grenades and anti-personnel mines;
- v. Armoured cars;
- vi. Shatter resistant windows;
- vii. Military combat rations for concentration points;
- viii. Metal detectors for body searches.

42. These items can be ordered through the Supply and Transport Section in co-ordination with the relevant Bureau and Field Safety Section.

Security Management

43. Heads of offices, whether at field or branch level should take action to ensure the security and safety of staff members. In addition to the responsibilities implicit in the above sections, appropriate security management measures also include:

- ❑ Ensuring both you and your staff have access to relevant, accurate and up-to-date information;
- ❑ Providing systematic briefings with all staff on the security situation and on the security plan itself. Bear in mind that some staff, particularly national staff, may provide valuable input into these briefings because of their local knowledge;
- ❑ Encouraging staff awareness: a key to effective security is personal awareness and good individual response to security situations;
- ❑ Providing training to all staff on hazards specific to the duty station;

- ❑ Ensuring the availability of materials on staff stress management and security in the duty station (see key references);
- ❑ Reporting security related incidents to Headquarters (Field Safety Section);
- ❑ Ensuring there is good communication with other organizations and NGOs about the security situation;
- ❑ Ensuring the office has a medical evacuation plan. In addition, the country representative should ensure he or she (and their deputy) has the SOS Assistance password in the case of extreme medical emergency.

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Working with the Military



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Introduction

- ◆ In humanitarian emergencies UNHCR staff will sometimes work alongside military forces: these might be UN forces (“blue berets”), national or regional forces acting under mandate from the UN, or other national or regional forces;
- ◆ Humanitarian agencies must be, and be seen to be, neutral and impartial acting solely on the basis of need. It is important that these agencies maintain independence even from UN authorized military activities;
- ◆ Each operation will need to develop a coordinating structure suited to the situation, the type of forces and the required civil-military relationship;
- ◆ The UN Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO) is responsible for all UN peacekeeping operations and has overall responsibility for UN relations with military forces.

1. Working with military forces can bring both opportunities and challenges for humanitarian agencies.

2. Military forces can support humanitarian agencies only within the limitations of their own resources and priorities, and within the limitations of their authority to provide humanitarian assistance, including how and to whom the assistance is provided.

Legal Framework for International Military Action

3. One of the purposes of the United Nations, as set out in its Charter, is to maintain international peace and security. The Charter invests the Security Council with this specific responsibility, and describes the measures which can be taken to achieve this in Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter.

4. Chapter VI, dealing with the peaceful settlement of disputes, mandates both the Security Council and the General Assembly to make recommendations upon which the parties in dispute can act. Peacekeeping operations under Chapter VI take place, at least in theory, with the consent of the parties to the conflict.

5. Chapter VII, dealing with mandatory measures, allows for enforced solutions to a dispute where the Security Council has identified “a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace or an act of aggression”. Article 42 pro-

vides for the use of armed force “as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security”.

Categories of Military Forces

6. The military forces with which UNHCR may be involved or encounter include:

- i. UN forces (peacekeeping);
- ii. Regional or other forces acting under UN authority;
- iii. Regional military alliances (e.g. NATO and ECOMOG), ad hoc coalitions,
- iv. National forces;
- v. Non-state forces.

UN Forces

UN Peacekeeping Forces

7. UN forces (“blue berets”) usually fall into the categories of observer missions or peacekeeping forces. These UN forces are assembled from countries willing to contribute and who are acceptable to all the parties to the conflict.

8. Observer Missions are made up mainly of lightly armed officers whose main function is to interpret the military situation to assist political and diplomatic mediation.

9. Peacekeeping forces usually contain combat units with logistics support. In the past, peacekeeping activities have included:

- i. Positioning troops between hostile parties, thereby creating buffer or demilitarized zones and the opportunity to act as a liaison between the parties to the conflict;
- ii. Promoting the implementation of cease-fires and peace accords by observing and reporting on military activity, assisting in the disengagement, disarmament and demobilization of forces and prisoner exchanges;
- iii. Assisting local administrations to maintain law and order, facilitating free and fair elections by providing security;
- iv. Protecting humanitarian relief operations by securing warehouses and delivery sites and routes, escorting humanitarian aid convoys, ensuring security for humanitarian aid workers, and providing logistics support;
- v. Supporting humanitarian operations by undertaking engineering tasks for the maintenance of essential utilities, services and aid delivery routes in a time of crisis, disposing

of mines and other weapons, delivering humanitarian relief supplies or providing logistics assistance to humanitarian agencies.

UN Mandated or Authorized Forces

10. Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter the Security Council may authorize or mandate the deployment of national or regional forces with a “war-fighting” capability. These forces normally will have tighter security rules than UN peace keeping Forces and Observer Missions, and UNHCR staff may find access to facilities or information more difficult. Mandated forces often do not report to a civilian chief inside the area of operations, and may therefore see themselves as acting independently of the international authority directing the civil and humanitarian programmes.

Regional Forces

11. UNHCR may also work alongside regional forces such as peacekeeping or intervention forces set up under the direction of regional institutions (for example, the Organization for African Unity, (OAU) or NATO.

National Forces

12. Humanitarian agencies may have to coordinate or negotiate with host country military, police, gendarmerie, militia or other armed elements. UNHCR staff should balance the advantages and disadvantages of accepting assistance or security from such forces, particularly in circumstances where there is no clear command structure.

Non-state Forces

13. These often consist of rebel groups, militia and other armed groups which have little or no sense of discipline, a poorly defined chain of command and often no discernible political programme.

Possible Roles of Military Forces in Humanitarian Operations

Delivering Humanitarian Assistance

14. In exceptionally large emergencies and as a last resort, military assets could be used to deliver humanitarian assistance, for example in the form of an airlift.

15. UNHCR has entered into an understanding with a number of governments that those governments will provide pre-packaged, stand-alone emergency assistance modules, called Government Service Packages (GSP).

There are twenty different types of packages providing assistance in certain technical or logistical areas such as long range airlift, road transport, water supply and treatment, sanitation and road construction. GSPs are not designed to be substitutes for traditional implementing arrangements in these areas, but are to be used only as a last resort in exceptionally large emergencies, where every other avenue has been exhausted.

16. Due to their extraordinary scale and cost it is assumed that GSPs, if called upon, will represent additional funding and will not be deployed at the expense of funds that would otherwise have been available to UNHCR. The Military and Civil Defence Unit also has arrangements with governments to use these pre-packaged emergency resources, as well as packages covering other areas. Within UNHCR, the responsibility for the development and deployment of GSPs rests with the Director of the Division of Operations Support. Further information can be found in the Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources (see Appendix 1).

17. When these assets are deployed the operation must maintain its civilian character and appearance. The guiding principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence from political considerations must be carefully adhered to.

Information Support

18. Military forces usually have a greater capacity to collect information than humanitarian agencies. This includes aerial reconnaissance information which may be of value in tracking the movement of refugees and in site selection. Care must be taken, however, in the interpretation and use of such material: the information it provides needs to be carefully weighed against information available from other sources, in particular first hand information from UNHCR staff on the ground.

Security of Humanitarian Operations

19. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 (see Annex 1 to chapter 2 on protection) oblige the parties in conflict to grant access for humanitarian aid, but does not provide for its forcible imposition should access be denied. Parties to a conflict may be unable or unwilling to control threats to the safety of humanitarian personnel and operations. Peacekeeping mandates may therefore include specific duties relating to the security of humanitarian

personnel, including creating the conditions in which humanitarian operations can be carried out in safety.

20. However, using force to protect humanitarian assistance may compromise the foundation of those activities, since the actual use of force, by its nature, will not be neutral. Before using peacekeeping or other forces to protect humanitarian activities, the priority should always be to negotiate with all the parties to the conflict to try to ensure humanitarian access. The use of military force to secure the provision of humanitarian assistance should never become a substitute for finding political solutions to root causes of the conflict.

21. Where it is necessary to use peacekeeping forces for the security of humanitarian operations, it is particularly important to maintain a neutral stance and to ensure that this impartiality and neutrality is apparent to all parties.

Evacuation

22. Any plan for evacuation of humanitarian workers should be coordinated with any military forces present (see Chapter 23 on Staff Safety).

Coordination Between Military Forces and Civilian Agencies

UN Coordination

23. The Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO) is responsible for UN peace-keeping. This includes the deployment of its military and civilian personnel to a conflict area (with the consent of the parties to the conflict) in order to stop or contain hostilities, and supervise the carrying out of peace agreements. DPKO therefore has overall responsibility for the UN's relations with military forces.

24. Where a UN force is deployed, there will usually be a Special Representative of the Secretary-General with overall responsibility for all related UN operations, including humanitarian operations.

25. There is a Military and Civil Defence Unit (MCDU) within the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The task of the MCDU (based in Geneva) is to help ensure the most effective use of military and civil defence assets in support of all types of humanitarian operations, including refugee emergencies, where their use is appropriate. Among UN humanitarian organizations, the

MCDU is the focal point for governments, regional organizations and military and civil defence organizations concerning the use of these assets.

Establishing Principles and Reconciling Mandates

26. Misunderstandings between military forces and civilian agencies can be avoided if, at an early stage, time is spent on clarifying:

- ❑ The objectives and strategies of the operation as a whole, and of each of its civilian and military components;
- ❑ The basic principles, legal constraints, and mandates (local or global) under which each organization or force operates;
- ❑ The activities, services, and support which the organizations or forces can expect from each other, as well as any limitations on their ability to deliver;
- ❑ Which aspects of the operation will be led by the civilian agencies and which by the military forces, and when there should be consultation before decisions are made;
- ❑ The fora in which the humanitarian agencies make decisions about their operations (e.g. the coordinating body described in chapter 7, on coordination).

Liaison Channels

27. Proper communication channels need to be developed between civilian and military organizations in order to deal with the differences in organizational priorities, structure and size. The risk of civilian agency staff being overwhelmed by multiple approaches from the military can be avoided by providing a single point of contact for the military through the designation of one UNHCR staff member as a liaison officer where the size of the operation justifies this. The military forces may have specialist civil affairs units. These units will often be made up of reservists with particular civilian skills or military specialists and act as the main point of contact between the humanitarian and military organizations. Within the military, the hierarchy is as follows: General, Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major, Captain, Lieutenant, Warrant Officer, Sergeant, Corporal, and Private.

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