

STAFF SAFETY AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT

I. OBJECTIVES AND FOCUS OF REPORT

1. This note provides an update on activities and progress on issues noted in previous papers presented to the Standing Committee in 2004 and 2005.¹ It focuses principally on efforts to implement the recommendations of UNHCR's Security Policy and Policy Implementation Review, but also addresses new initiatives in support of the strengthening of UNHCR's culture of security and other security-related activities.

2. At all times, the rationale underlying UNHCR's security management system is to enable and support field operations effectively through a professional security and risk management approach.

II. CHALLENGES

3. The Office continues to face difficult working environments in attempting to fulfil its mandate responsibilities. While the overall number of refugees has declined in recent years, new challenges are being presented, including in internal displacement situations where UNHCR has taken on an expanded role through its participation in the humanitarian cluster leadership approach. UNHCR's operational tempo demands that it must enable staff to perform their duties in very demanding circumstances, in as safe a manner as possible.

4. Availability of resources continues to be a challenge for many security-related activities and programmes. The application of financial limitations on the budgets of country operations demands constant re-examination of priorities and re-allocation of resources. Funding and opportunities for security-enhancing initiatives are often postponed to give priority to operational needs; this increases the risks for staff working in larger operations with less resources for security measures.

5. Challenges facing the United Nations security management system within the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) have a corresponding impact on UNHCR's ability to manage staff safety effectively while carrying out its mandate responsibilities. While much progress has been made, UNHCR is concerned that UNDSS needs to take greater account of UNHCR's specific organizational and mandate-related security concerns, notably the physical protection of refugees and its effect on staff security. UNHCR continues to support UNDSS and

¹ See EC/54/SC/CRP.20 and EC/55/SC/CRP.21

the security management system improvements through financial contributions, which for 2006 amount to some US\$ 6 million; at the same time, the Office maintains the position that funding for the United Nations security system should come from the United Nations Regular Budget.

III. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

6. Based on its Review of Security Policy and Policy Implementation, the associated Work Plan 2005-2006 and numerous issue-driven initiatives, UNHCR continues to engage in activities aimed toward enabling operations; strengthening the Office's security management system; and reinforcing the physical protection of beneficiaries as a component of UNHCR's overall security and risk management programme.

A. Minimum Operational Security Standards (MOSS)

7. UNHCR conducted a global MOSS status survey in mid-2005. An analysis of this survey noted in early 2006 that while the majority of UNHCR offices were MOSS-compliant, a significant number had yet to reach full compliance. The survey also highlighted a number of gaps in the capacity of field offices to identify and plan for the effective implementation of security measures, including MOSS.

8. As a result of the survey findings, the High Commissioner has called for MOSS-compliance by all offices in areas of Security Phase III or higher by the end of 2006. Given the current financial challenges facing most operations, it was decided that funds from UNHCR's central security budget would be utilized to cover any shortfalls in field offices. At the time of this report, over US\$ 1.4 million had been allocated to field offices to cover specific MOSS-related expenditures; and further funding sources are being identified to cover the remaining gaps. It is anticipated that UNHCR will be able to meet the target for compliance in all Phase III+ countries without significant problems by the end of 2006.

9. In addition to the short-term objective of filling gaps in MOSS compliance, the analysis of the survey results has prompted UNHCR to develop a toolkit for field management and security staff to assist in planning, developing and budgeting for security measures. This toolkit is in the final stages of development and will be introduced through visits to targeted UNHCR offices. These visits will aim to increase the capacity of field offices, not only to implement MOSS and other security-related measures, but also to ensure that relevant and necessary measures are implemented in a rational and systematic manner.

B. Security management training

10. UNHCR continues to promote the Security Management Learning Programme (SMLP) as its principal security training tool. The SMLP is directed at mid- and senior-level field managers and covers a wide spectrum of security-related issues. The ultimate goal of the SMLP is to increase the knowledge and capacity of field managers to address security issues without having to resort to additional staffing and resource options. UNHCR has conducted two SMLP workshops in 2006 and plans to run a further two in 2007; each workshop involves up to 50 field-based managers and Field Safety staff. Representatives from UNHCR's Implementing Partners also often participate.

11. In addition to the SMLP, UNHCR continues to include security management as a significant component of the Workshop for Emergency Management (WEM), the thrice-yearly preparatory workshop for UNHCR's Emergency Response Teams. The security component of the WEM has undergone a review in 2006 to place renewed emphasis on programme risk management and beneficiary security.

C. Partnerships

12. As explained earlier, UNHCR continues to support the global UN Security Management System, and to provide regular input and assistance on policy matters in collaboration with UNDSS and other Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) partners. The Office fully supports the mission of the UN Security Management System in its role of enabling operations in the Field and will continue to emphasize the need to give precedence to enabling UNHCR's and other partners' operations in the Field, by supporting these through professional and effective programme risk management strategies.

13. The Office also occasionally provides advisory security services for the United Nations Common System in the absence of a UNDSS security presence at a field venue. In addition, UNHCR staff often perform the function of Area Security Coordinators in many non-capital locations. It is estimated that UNHCR's contributions to common system staff safety and security costs have increased six-fold since 2001.

D. Refugee/beneficiary security

14. UNHCR is reinforcing the issue of beneficiary security as a component of UNHCR's overall security management system in recognition of the fact that the security of beneficiaries is closely linked with the security of staff. This initiative is being conducted on a number of fronts, including revisions to the specific functions of Field Safety staff; internal discussions, notably with the Division of International Protection Services, on links between refugee security and staff security (e.g. Resettlement and Security); and through assistance to the Regional Bureaux in the development and implementation of specific refugee security packages for country situations (e.g. Chad). This reinforcing role has also been expanded to include such issues as Mine Action, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and leadership of the cluster workgroup on camp coordination and camp management for internally displaced persons.

E. Structural and Management Change

15. As the Office moves through difference phases of the current Structural and Management Change process, the security management system needs to evolve concurrently. The Field Safety Section (FSS) in the Division of Operational Services has undertaken an internal review of the priority areas for support and the implications that this may have in a restructured organization. Emphasis has been placed on direct support to country operations under the umbrella of the Regional Bureaux.

16. In addition to the questions related to the Structure and Management Change process, FSS is in the process of reviewing all functional job descriptions, including regional, country-based and HQ-based staff with a view to economizing efforts on non-priority issues while focusing on priority areas. This review includes not only the specific functions of staff but also guidelines and parameters for deployments of FSS staff and the increase in operational

management by regional FSS staff. It is envisioned that these change initiatives will place the UNHCR security management system in a better position to serve all of its clients, both staff and beneficiaries.

F. Enhancing a culture of security

17. Although virtually every improvement or initiative in UNHCR's security management system is aimed at enhancing the organization's culture of security, there are a number of specific proposals that address this issue directly. These include: conducting functional workshops that target specific groups of functions (e.g. security in programme management, security in logistics, etc.) and their involvement in security management; developing a field safety web-board for the purpose of sharing experience and information on security informally; promoting active engagement with the Staff Welfare Section on safety issues (e.g. sharing incident reports/information to ensure counselling support is available); and reinforcing the relationship with the Staff Council in order to promote issues of mutual concern. The ultimate goal of this endeavour is to raise the awareness of all staff on security and safety issues and to engage all staff and managers in UNHCR's security management system.

IV. FOLLOW-UP

18. The majority of initiatives aimed at strengthening UNHCR's security management system are not one-off actions but rather an ongoing series of activities. The overall strategy is based on ensuring continuous technical support while at the same time providing training and guidance to field staff that will assist country operations to address their own country-specific security issues.

A. MOSS

19. As noted earlier in this Paper, UNHCR will achieve full MOSS-compliance in all countries of Security Phase III and above by the end of 2006. The next stage of compliance monitoring will target the remaining offices throughout UNHCR's operational area and an update on progress will be provided in 2007. It should be noted that UNHCR's planning and budget-approval cycle only addresses the current gaps, with MOSS maintenance costs factored into the 2007 budget.

20. UNHCR is also in the final planning stages for implementation of a monitoring exercise that will deploy missions to countries of operation on a regular basis. The aim of these missions is to provide guidance and training to country managers on all security-related activities, including MOSS development and budgeting. The missions are designed to complement the training provided in the SMLP, and they should go a long way to improving the country-level management of security programmes. It is anticipated that this project will begin with two or three high-profile countries in 2006 and will continue on a monthly basis in 2007 until the majority of UNHCR offices have been supported.

B. Partnerships

21. UNHCR will pursue its strong relationship with its partners in the UN security management system and will further seek to shape UNDSS policies and procedures in order to ensure the inclusion of a field perspective and the continued enabling of field missions. The

Office is examining the potential for undertaking a case-study project to outline UNHCR's operations within the framework of the Security Management System and from which a Best Practice guide will be produced. This guide could then be used to inform security management practices for all of UNHCR's interaction with its partners in the United Nations Security Management System and with UNDSS in particular. It is envisioned that this guide will be produced by mid-2007.

C. Security of beneficiaries

22. The physical security of UNHCR's beneficiaries will continue to be a focus of the organization's security management system. While no specific timeline exists for initiatives in this area, various activities have already begun and the Office should be able to demonstrate a closer working relationship between beneficiary and staff safety procedures in 2007.

V. CONCLUSION

23. UNHCR reiterates its commitment to follow through on the way in which security needs to be managed today within the humanitarian and UNHCR-specific context. This strategic direction emphasizes the continuous development of staff, managerial, and organizational capacity; an effective relationship with security partners; and an overall approach which encompasses every facet of security and programme risk management, including the physical protection of persons of concern.

24. Building upon of the Review of UNHCR's Security Policy and Policy Implementation, and in consideration of the wide range of issues relevant to the evolution of security management within the Office, the strategic objectives outlined in this Paper are intended to help UNHCR's security management system to:

- foster a planning and management capacity which enables UNHCR not only to comply with Minimum Operating Security Standards but also to plan, budget and monitor effective implementation of MOSS as well as other security-related activities through a programme risk management perspective;
- provide relevant and effective training in security management to field managers and decision-makers;
- engage partners in the security management system to work towards a comprehensive approach that considers the needs of beneficiaries as well as the security implications in all aspects of UNHCR's operational planning, and from the earliest stages;
- approach the physical protection of beneficiaries as an integral component of the security management and programme risk management process of country operations; and
- promote a culture of security risk management throughout the organization, recognizing that this is a fundamental element underpinning all operations.

25. In support of these efforts, the Committee is asked to consider the draft decision in annex for adoption.

DRAFT DECISION ON STAFF SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Standing Committee,

Recalling the Executive Committee's 2000 Decision on safety of staff of UNHCR and all other humanitarian personnel (A/AC.96/944, para. 25) which urged States to assume fully their responsibilities for safeguarding the physical security of United Nations personnel, as well as all other humanitarian personnel, and to ensure their safe and unhindered access in order to allow them to perform efficiently their task of assisting the affected civilian population, including refugees and internally displaced persons, and which also encouraged UNHCR to further develop and integrate appropriate security arrangements in its operations and to allocate adequate resources for the safety and security of its staff and the populations under its care, and

Recognizing the importance of ensuring that the management of safety and security within the humanitarian and UNHCR-specific context must encompass every facet of security and programme risk management, including the physical protection of persons of concern,

1. *Takes note* of document EC/57/SC/CRP.24 on Staff Safety and Security Management which provides an update on efforts to implement the recommendations of UNHCR's Security Policy and Policy Implementation Review as well as new initiatives in support of the strengthening of a UNHCR culture of security and other security-related activities;
2. *Encourages* UNHCR to plan, budget and monitor effective implementation of Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) throughout the organization;
3. *Requests* UNHCR to engage with partners in the United Nations security management system to work towards a comprehensive approach that considers the physical protection needs of beneficiaries as well as the security implications for staff in all aspects of UNHCR's operational planning, and from the earliest stages;
4. *Endorses* UNHCR's moves to promote a culture of security risk management throughout the organization, and *recognizes* that this is a fundamental element underpinning all of the Office's operations;
5. *Notes* UNHCR's current annual financial contributions of some US\$ 6 million to the United Nations security management system and *further notes* its position that funding for the United Nations security system should come from the United Nations Regular Budget.