

Update by the Security Working Group  
to UNHCR's Security Steering Committee  
on current efforts to enhance staff safety and improve security management  
(1st quarter 2005)

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. This paper aims to present the goals and fulfilment strategy of UNHCR with regard to the security recommendations approved by the High Commissioner and by the Security Steering Committee, under the leadership of the Assistant High Commissioner. It is complemented by a matrix reflecting progress to date.<sup>1</sup> The paper also flags issues related to the complexity of security issues, the distribution of security responsibilities within UNHCR, and the budgetary implications that UNHCR foresees in the context of its upgrading of security management.

## II. BACKGROUND

2. As a field-based organization carrying out operations in difficult environments, staff security has always been a feature of UNHCR's work. Whether operating in remote and difficult duty stations, confronting crime and banditry or dealing with frustrated asylum-seekers, UNHCR staff members have necessarily had to deal with a wide range of security issues. In the last decade, however, the security environment in which UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations have been operating has steadily deteriorated, largely in response to the increase of internal armed conflicts and, more recently, as a result of the threat of terrorism. As a consequence, UNHCR must respond to a variety of challenges that have a direct impact on the organization's ability to fulfil its mandate while managing the security of staff members.

3. In 2004 UNHCR undertook a comprehensive review of its security management system. The overall catalyst for this review was the recognition of a significantly changing security environment since the events of 11 September 2001 and one in which the staff members of UN and other humanitarian organizations have been increasingly targeted.

4. This report was endorsed by the High Commissioner and in 2005 UNHCR launched a two-year Work Plan to ensure the fulfilment of the majority of the recommendations. The Security Review included 80 recommendations which were subsequently consolidated into 25. The matrix which complements this report inventories these, while the narrative below describes the general themes and progress achieved including on the status of the Geneva Headquarters security situation.

5. A Security Working Group – comprising all the deputy directors of bureaux, departments and divisions in UNHCR and chaired by the Head of the Emergency and Security Service – is responsible for the management of the Work Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Matrix for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2005 will be made available at the Standing Committee's Informal Consultative Meeting on Staff Safety and Security to be held on 4 May 2005.

### III. OBJECTIVES

6. To integrate security into all organizational processes means not only providing for “traditional” security measures (e.g. MOSS, guards, physical barriers, etc.), but also considering security implications in the manner in which UNHCR conducts all aspects of its operations.
7. In order for UNHCR to promote the continuing development of a culture of security, organizational policies, processes and procedures will need to be changed so that security is fully integrated. Of fundamental importance are the behaviour and knowledge of managers as they balance and reconcile the demands of addressing humanitarian imperatives with the necessity of managing risks both for their staff and for refugees and other persons of concern.
8. To effect this change, a two-year work plan was developed covering the broad themes of:
  - A. Organizational structure and resources
  - B. Human resource management
  - C. Policy and operational guidance
  - D. Training and capacity building
  - E. Operations
  - F. Partnership

### IV. PROGRESS IN KEY AREAS

#### A. Organizational structure and resources

9. UNHCR is currently undertaking an assessment of the status of MOSS implementation as well as determining unmet security (MOSS) costs for field offices. A world-wide MOSS-compliance status report will be finalized by the end of May. At present, we do not expect any outstanding issues or costs though there will be a few situations where MOSS-compliance will be impossible due to the particular logistics of the situation (e.g. Nairobi Branch Office<sup>2</sup>), or host government imposed constraints. There is, however, some flexibility allowed by DSS in the choice of alternative means of achieving the objectives of MOSS.
10. Security considerations have been included in the 2006 Country Operations Plan (COP) process. The incorporation of security costs into the 2006 COPs was conducted with a particular emphasis on the security considerations of UNHCR programmes such as reintegration operations, camp management, registration exercises and asylum interviews as well as general MOSS compliance.
11. Nevertheless, MOSS is not, and never can be, a fully comprehensive and total security strategy, and security training should therefore ensure that staff and managers do not assume that technical compliance with MOSS is, in itself, sufficient to ensure staff safety.
12. By its resolution A/RES/59/276 (XI) adopted on 23 December 2004, the General Assembly approved the creation of the Department of Safety and Security (DSS). The new department unifies the existing security structures within the United Nations, including the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, the United Nations Safety and Security Services, and the civilian security component of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

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<sup>2</sup> The Nairobi Branch Office is located on a main road with insufficient “stand-off”. Attempts to relocate the office into the UN complex in Gigiri have as yet been unsuccessful, and the cost of a new complex, meeting all the operational requirements of the office, has proved prohibitive.

13. The implementation of the above resolution necessitated the budget restructure of the former United Nations Office of the Security Coordinator as well as the Security and Safety Services, resulting in the creation of a separate budget section, Section 33, dedicated to the new department. This exercise also called for the reallocation of existing resources funded by the United Nations, as well as an increase in both the United Nations core support and the Jointly Funded Arrangements.

14. At present all UN agencies participate in the Jointly Funded Arrangement with DSS based on agencies paying according to their proportion of field staff worldwide. Following the General Assembly decision, UNHCR's 2005 budget contribution (6.5 per cent of total budget for field-related security costs) will more than double from \$2.3 million in 2004 to \$5.5 million in 2005.

15. All members of the United Nations' Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN), supported by the Under-Secretary-General of DSS, hope to revise this funding arrangement so that the DSS budget is met by the UN regular budget. This matter will be raised at the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly in September 2005.

## B. Human resource management

### *Integration of security competencies*

16. While a level of security competencies for senior managers is widely recognized as desirable, there are several challenges related to the inclusion of security competencies into standardized job descriptions, including the design challenge, consistency with UN standards, the development of formal criteria and the need for a holistic approach to the issues of management and accountability frameworks.

17. As such, while excellence in security competencies should not be a determining factor for promotions, it should be a strong consideration for postings; especially in certain job functions where there should be strong consideration for the inclusion of security competencies, such as drivers and front-line receptionists as well as managers.

### *Staff welfare*

18. UNHCR is working to integrate staff welfare issues better into the operational planning and day-to-day management of the organization. In the broadest sense this means that managers/leaders are sensitive to staff welfare issues and able to identify them and ask for help for dealing with them. Managers/leaders should also be aware of the relationship between mental health and staff behaviour in higher risk duty stations.

19. Specifically, cooperation between Staff Welfare Service and Emergency and Security Services includes planning quarterly meetings between the two services, working together to establish minimum standards of living and working conditions during emergencies, and preparation of staff deploying to high risk assignments.

## C. Policy and operational guidance

20. The existing Security Policy issued in November 2002 under IOM/68/2002-FOM/64/2002 is a solid foundation for improved policy. However the policy requires updating and expansion in a number of areas, including on gender and the specific security needs of

women, security measures for national staff members particularly in situations in which international staff members are evacuated, and security procedures in the event of death or serious injury to staff members due to insecurity.

21. As UNHCR establishes clarity on these specific issues, as well as with regard to its relationship with DSS, the development of a revised security policy can proceed and will be in place by end 2005. The policy will emphasize the fundamental responsibility and accountability of senior management for the effective and appropriate management of staff members' security, as well as the responsibility of each individual staff member for his/her own security, and, indeed, for the safety and well-being of their immediate colleagues.

22. Currently, the Department of International Protection is revising its Urban Refugee Policy. To this end, there are a number of cross-cutting themes where cooperation with UNHCR security is desirable: reception procedures, relations with host nation law enforcement and preparedness/response to threats and violent protests among them. This work should be completed by June.

23. UNHCR significantly contributed to the new IASMN Guidelines on Security for Women with a particular emphasis on the special needs facing national female staff operating in countries with specific cultural norms and traditions. These Guidelines were approved at the April IASMN conference.

#### D. Training and capacity building

24. UNHCR is pursuing this objective through integrating security considerations in other UNHCR training programmes, including the Management Learning Programme, the Protection Learning Programme, as well as targeting managers on security and protection issues such as DIP's inclusion of a "Protecting the Protectors" session in their forthcoming Protection Management Workshops, and involving ESS/FSS in protection training and developing security/protection strategies that bolster the protection of refugees.

25. The Security Review states that "Security Management Training should be mandatory for all Heads of Offices; this training should be organized as a first priority". It is clear to all that achieving this requires instilling a sense of accountability among senior managers, who are ultimately responsible for the safety of staff. However, it is equally clear that managers cannot be held accountable for something unless they have been adequately prepared and equipped with the tools to be knowledgeable, proficient and confident. To this end, three levels of security workshops are planned for 2005/2006: three Security for Managers Workshops, two Field Safety Adviser Workshops, and plans for two Assistant Field Safety Adviser Regional Workshops in early 2006.

#### E. Operations

26. There was good promotion and integration of security issues in the 2006 COP process with an increasing emphasis on looking at the way in which UNHCR operates including analysing staffing tables of offices on a case-by-case basis.

27. Security issues have also been integrated into the recently revised Contingency Planning Guidelines and the other emergency procedures.

28. For regional bureaux, there will be situational role playing of critical incident scenarios to gain an understanding of Headquarters' role in supporting operations in a critical incident in the field; to promote awareness of immediate actions and decisions needed, and who is responsible for them; and to begin development of a bureau strategy for handling critical incidents.

29. The determination of security thresholds is a critical next step of work so that Field Safety Advisors are deployed in a consistent and effective manner.

30. The Staff Council's 2005 Work Plan includes staff safety and security which provides an excellent opportunity to reinforce a culture of security.

#### F. Partnerships

31. In preparation for UNHCR's participation in the IASMN conference in New York this April, meetings were held with other operational agencies to discuss alliance building and sharing of best practice with the goal of building a consensus among the operational agencies in operational and policy matters.

32. UNHCR met with the new Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Safety and Security, Sir David Veness, who welcomed UNHCR's efforts to address security concerns. He stressed his desire to promote the enabling of field missions and to place emphasis on risk management rather than risk aversion. Subsequently, UNHCR presented a paper at the IASMN conference on the integration of programme assessment into the Security Risk Assessment model used by the UN security system which met with a very favourable reception.

#### G. Headquarters security issues

33. Under the leadership of the Deputy High Commissioner, UNHCR liaised closely with the host country and the UN Security and Safety Service in Geneva to identify physical security measures to be implemented at Headquarters. To date, the following measures have been taken: blast film has been installed at MBT; x-ray machines and a metal detector have been purchased; and the number of guards has been increased.

34. The Swiss authorities will manage the forthcoming installation of planters along the rue de Montbrillant and around the back of the building to prevent vehicle entry. The main vehicle access to the front of MBT and the garage will be displaced and the current exit onto Montbrillant will be closed off with vehicles entering/exiting onto the Avenue de France.

### IV. CONCLUSION

35. As with any working document, the Security Work Plan will adjust to changes in the internal and external environment. For example, the Security Review recommendation on the development of an improved database system for field security reporting has been superseded by the recently created SIRS (Security Incident Reporting System), which will serve all UN agencies.

36. The full implementation of UNHCR's Security Work Plan is expected to have important short, medium and long-term implications for the way in which UNHCR manages staff security and safety. An ideal security management system would see all UNHCR staff having a heightened level of security awareness and skills and a diminishing reliance on security professionals. We are confident we are firmly on this path.

37. It is important to note also that the Work Plan is not a one-off project but rather a paradigm shift in direction for the management of security within the humanitarian and UNHCR-specific context. There will continue to be a significant amount of work and development beyond the "shelf-life" of the Work Plan. UNHCR is committed to pursuing this course indefinitely and trusts that support will be forthcoming from our partners when needed.

Geneva, 2 May 2005