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**United Nations**  
**Department of Peace Operations**  
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## **Standard Operating Procedure**

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# **Recognizing Outstanding Performance of Uniformed Units**

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Approved by: Jean-Pierre Lacroix, USG DPO

Effective date: 1 March 2025

Contact: Office of Military Affairs (OMA); Office of the Police  
Adviser (PD)

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## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES ON RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF UNIFORMED UNITS

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### A. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

1. The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to set out detailed principles, criteria, and procedures to be followed by the senior leadership of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Military Affairs (OMA) and the Police Division (PD) in the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) in recognizing outstanding performance for military and police units.
2. This award recognizes specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments by which units clearly distinguished themselves through their behaviour, mindset and dedication, which had an outstanding and considerable positive impact on host-State communities, counterparts, or United Nations personnel in the implementation of mission's mandate. The procedure and recognition of outstanding performance is intended to also act as incentive for units to improve their performance, to strengthen morale and increase positive coverage in reports and communications. This award

is not intended as a general recognition that a unit is performing well or has a high level of readiness (in training, equipment, or similar). A unit with some performance related challenges may still be nominated for a specific action, series of actions or accomplishments (see further details in this SOP).

3. This SOP is designed to support missions in identifying instances of outstanding performance. OMA and PD have developed detailed tables that provide examples and considerations<sup>1</sup> which cover main and supporting performance areas. The criterion for evaluating outstanding performance is listed, as applicable, in Annex B (1) for Military Units and Annex B (2) for Formed Police Units (FPUs).

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## **B. SCOPE**

4. This SOP applies to all peacekeeping operations where formed military and / or formed police units are deployed and provides instructions on how to initiate, plan, select, recommend, and award recognition for outstanding performance at UNHQ. It does not involve any associated financial premiums.
5. Recognition of outstanding performance of individual personnel is not covered in this SOP and is separately administered through existing modalities in mission or at UNHQ.

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## **C. PRINCIPLES**

6. UN Security Council Resolution 2436 (2018) requested the Secretary-General to recognize outstanding performance and to report to the Security Council on instances of outstanding performance in order to highlight best practices and promote their widespread adoption.
7. Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), the Declaration of Shared Commitments and the Action for Peacekeeping+ (A4P+) emphasise the significance of performance and detail efforts to regularly assess performance and recognize outstanding performance. Similarly, the Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework (IPPAF) provides an overview of measures to strengthen peacekeeping performance and accountability across the DPO, DOS and the DMPSC.

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<sup>1</sup> Recognizing outstanding performance comes in addition to existing evaluation processes developed by respective Secretariat offices and divisions.

8. In view of above guidance, Force Commanders and Police Commissioners/ Senior Police Advisers in missions shall identify units for recognition of outstanding performance and recommend units for specific action/s to their respective Heads of Mission for endorsement and submission to UNHQ, when and as appropriate. The recommendation shall not measure the overall performance of the unit, which is captured separately in the in-mission military and formed police unit evaluations. Recognition of instances of outstanding performance under the SOP shall not be taken to supersede, replace or otherwise modify the broader performance evaluation of the unit under those SOPs. Upon review and approval of the recommendation, a letter of recognition will be sent to the troop or police-contributing country (T/PCC) by the USG DPO. In exceptional circumstances, a letter by the Secretary-General can also be proposed by the USG DPO. The instance of outstanding performance will be proposed for inclusion in the next mission-specific SG report.
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#### **D. PROCEDURES**

9. Each field mission / Head of Mission is expected to review, every quarter, if any unit(s) deserve(s) to be nominated for outstanding performance, based on recommendations from the Force Commander and/or the Police Commissioner.
10. Nominations for outstanding performance should be based the criteria defined in Annex B (1), or Annex B (2), as appropriate. In exceptional circumstance, a unit already recognized may be nominated for the second time during the same period of deployment, for different specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments.
11. Units that have been repatriated on disciplinary grounds shall not be eligible to be considered for recognition, including those repatriated in relation to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse while in the service with the UN and/ or when possible failures in command and control have been identified in relation to the repatriation on disciplinary grounds of individual members of units. Where there are allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse or other serious misconduct implicating personnel from the T/PCC to which the Unit belongs, this information should be considered as part of the decision-making process.
12. Where allegations of serious misconduct are reported to the UN subsequent to the award, substantiated by an investigation conducted in accordance with applicable procedures, and deemed to be widespread and systemic or resulting from failures in command and control, recognition shall be considered nullified.
13. Units which have been repatriated for unsatisfactory performance while in service with the UN, shall not be eligible for recognition.

14. Units nominated by missions for recognition of outstanding performance shall be reviewed by all relevant stakeholders responsible for uniformed peacekeeping, as indicated in Annex B (1) and B (2).
15. There are three phases for nominating, recommending, and recognizing outstanding performance:
  - (a) Phase I: Nomination, selection, and recommendation to the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peace Operations.
  - (b) Phase II: Decision and information to field missions and recipient unit/s.
  - (b) Phase III: Letter to T/PCCs and mention in mission-specific SG Report and to the media through the DPO Strategic Communications Section.

**(a) Phase I: Nomination, selection, and recommendation to USG**

16. An email (template in Annex A) is sent to all field missions on a quarterly basis, reminding Heads of Mission to review if any uniformed units should be nominated, and requesting a response within three weeks.
17. The Heads of Mission with support from the Force Commander and Police Commissioner, respectively, are to endorse the nominated unit/s which has/have met the criteria listed in para 2 of this SOP. Nominations for the Recognition of Outstanding Performance shall be processed and signed using the nomination form given in Annex C. Other relevant documentation such as a summary of operational activities can also be transmitted by email to support the nomination.
18. OMA/PD are to consolidate and review nominations (within two weeks) for completeness. Nominations should then be circulated by email together with a draft note to USG DPO for consultation<sup>2</sup>. The mission nomination, cleared by OMA/PD, should then be consulted with all stakeholders in a dedicated meeting or one that brings all stakeholders together, such as the regular Monthly Performance Meeting. Any reservation or concerns shall be shared with all stakeholders and included in the note to USG DPO. The note shall contain the recommendation(s) for USG's endorsement, including whether recognition should be elevated to the level of SG.

**(b) Phase II: Decision and Information to field missions and T/PCC**

19. In this phase, the USG DPO will make a decision on the recognition of Outstanding Performance based on the recommendation(s) provided in the note and the

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<sup>2</sup> Stakeholders should include: DPO (OMA, PD, DPET, OPSP, SCS, IOT, OASG [depending on mission], OUSG, ODCSS), DOS (UCSD, OASG SCM), DMSPC (CDS).

discussion captured in the Monthly Performance meeting or another meeting of all stakeholders.

20. Subsequent to USG DPO's decision or SG's decision, should the case arise, OMA/PD shall draft a code cable for the USG's signature and transmittal, informing the relevant missions of the unit(s) selected for the Outstanding Performance recognition. The Code Cable should include the USG's letter to the Permanent Mission.
21. Upon receipt of the code cable announcing the recognition, Heads of Mission or Force Commanders / Police Commissioners shall inform the recipient(s).
22. The Office of the USG should inform the Permanent Mission(s) of the Outstanding Performance Recognition recipient(s) by letter within one week of the decision by the USG DPO.

**(c) Phase III: Communication and Notification in SG Report**

23. OMA/PD should liaise with the Strategic Communications Section (SCS) of DPO, in coordination with the relevant desk or (Integrated Operation Teams) IoT, to develop a communication plan. SCS should be notified as soon as the recipient(s) is (are) confirmed to ensure the timely preparation and dissemination of relevant communications.
24. OMA and PD should work with the respective IOTs or desks to make sure that a paragraph recognizing the unit(s) Outstanding Performance is inserted in mission-specific SG Reports.
25. Nomination updates may be presented to USGs during quarterly integrated performance meetings.

**Table 1: Tracking table of the three phases for Recognition of Outstanding Performance.**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Process/ Activity</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Suggested timeline</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1: Nomination, selection, and recommendation to USG	1.1 Call for nominations through email	OMA/PD	IOT/ OUSG	Quarterly	Initial email + 6 weeks
	1.2 Selection Process	FC/PC/HoM	OMA/ PD	Within 3 weeks after 1.1	
	1.3 Submission of nomination form by email to OMA/PD	FC/PC	Mission Chief of Staff	Within one day after 1.2	
	1.4 Recommendation to USG DPO	OMA/PD	Stakeholders	4 weeks after 1.3 (2 weeks for consolidation and review by OMA/PD followed by two weeks of stakeholders consultations)	
2: Decision and Information to field missions	2.1 Decision making	USG DPO	MilAd/PoIAd		Decision + 1 week
	2.2 CC to field missions	OMA/PD	IOT/OUSG	1 week after 2.1	
	2.3 Letter to T/PCC Permanent Mission	OMA/PD	OUSG/DPO	1 week after 2.1	
3: Communication and inclusion in SG Report	3.1 Strategic Communication plan	SCS/ DPO	Strategic Communications / SCPIs in the field IoT/Desk OMA/PD/DPET		
	3.2 Inclusion in SG Reports	IOT	OMA/PD/DPET/IoT/Desk		

## **E. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

26. USG DPO shall recognize outstanding performance for the selected unit. In exceptional circumstances, upon recommendation of the USG DPO, a letter can also be proposed to be signed by the Secretary-General.
27. OUSG shall communicate to the respective Permanent Missions of the T/PCCs recognised for Outstanding Performance.
28. MilAd/PolAd shall be responsible for oversight of the Recognition of Outstanding Performance SOP.
29. OMA/PD shall be responsible for implementing the Recognition of Outstanding Performance SOP and ensure that all stakeholders involved are kept informed throughout the nomination process. They shall ensure that all correspondences in the annexes are updated (i.e.: addressees in code cable, email).
30. Each Force Commander / Police Commissioner, having consulted with relevant stakeholders, shall recommend unit(s) to the Head of Mission anytime, but should also respond within three weeks upon receipt of the call-for-nomination email in case no units should be recognized.
31. Force Commander / Police Commissioner shall inform OMA/PD by email of HOM's decision to nominate unit (s) within one day after decision.
32. OMA/ Military Performance Evaluation Team (MPET) and Police Division/ Selection and Recruitment Section are the responsible entities for custody, record holding, compilation of respective military/police nominations.
33. DPO Strategic Communications Section, with support from the Department of Global Communication, where needed, shall coordinate, in close consultation with the strategic communication and public information units in Public Affairs components of the concerned field missions, the design and implementation of a communication plan.

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## **H. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

34. In the field, the responsibility for implementing this SOP rests with the Force Commander / Police Commissioner. At Headquarters, the Military Adviser to the Department of Peace Operations and the Police Adviser to the Department of Peace Operations shall monitor compliance with this document.

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## **I. CONTACT**

35. The Office of the Chief of Staff, Office of Military Affairs, Department of Peace Operations. The Chief of the Strategic Policy and Development Section, Police Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peace Operations.

## J. HISTORY

36. This is the first version of the SOP on Recognition of Outstanding Performance of Uniformed Units.

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## G. References

Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations (Action for Peacekeeping) (2018)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2436 (2018)

Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework (IPPAF) ([Version Mar 2023](#))

2016.02 SOP on Force and Sector Commander's Evaluation of Subordinate Military Entities in Peacekeeping Operations

2022.10 Assessment and Evaluation of Formed Police Unit Performance (SOP)

2011. Human Rights in UN Peace Operations and Political Missions (Policy).

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**APPROVAL SIGNATURE:**



Jean-Pierre LACROIX  
Under-Secretary-General  
Department of Peace Operations

**DATE OF APPROVAL:** 7 February 2025

## **Annex A: Quarterly Call for Nomination email**

**From:** MilAd/PolAd

**To:** FCs; PCs;

**Cc:** D/MilAd, D/PolAd, Director DPET, MCOS, FCoS, DPC, OUSG/DPO;

**Subject:** Call for nominations - Recognition of Outstanding Performance (Quarter XX)

### **Body:**

Dear Force Commanders and Police Commissioners,

The Department of Peace Operations aims to recognize specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments by which uniformed unit/s clearly distinguished themselves through their behaviour, mindset and dedication, which had an outstanding and considerable positive impact on host-State communities, counterparts, or United Nations personnel in supporting mission mandate implementation while carrying out operational tasks. For clarity, this award is not intended as a general recognition that a unit is performing well (in training, equipment compliance, or similar) but instead to recognize specific, concrete actions or accomplishments.

A unit with some performance related challenges may still be nominated for a specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments. Units that have been repatriated on disciplinary grounds shall not be eligible to recognition, including those repatriated in relation to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse while in the service with the UN and/ or when possible failures in command and control have been identified in relation to the repatriation on disciplinary grounds of individual members of units. Where there are allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse or other serious misconduct implicating personnel from the T/PCC to which the Unit belongs, this information shall be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Where allegations of serious misconduct are reported to the UN subsequent to the award, in the event that the allegations are substantiated by an investigation conducted in accordance with applicable procedures, recognition shall be considered nullified.

Units which have been repatriated for unsatisfactory performance while in service with the UN, shall not be eligible to be considered for recognition.

All heads of missions are invited to nominate their respective uniformed units in accordance with the principles and procedures outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures on Recognizing Outstanding Performance of Uniformed Units (2023.XX).

Criteria for nominations include but are not limited to those defined in Annex B (1) for Military Units and in Annex B (2) for Formed Police Units.

In order to ensure swift review and consideration, nominations shall be submitted to HQ

using the attached nomination form. The nomination form together with all relevant documentation should be sent by email to the Chief of Staff of the Office of Military Affairs and/or the Deputy Police Adviser of the Police Division no later than three weeks following reception of this communication.

USG DPO shall inform the respective T/PCC Permanent Mission of the Recognition of Outstanding Performance awardee(s) by means of a signed letter. Additionally, the outstanding performance shall also be highlighted in the next mission-specific SG Report and on social media.

Many thanks and best regards.

## Annex B (1): List of Criteria – Military Units

### CRITERIA FOR RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF MILITARY UNITS

#### Notes:

1. This matrix provides possible areas for recognizing outstanding performance by UNHQ. It is, however, not inclusive of all potential actions that that may warrant recognition.
2. For a unit to be considered for recognition of outstanding performance, the specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments for which it is recognized should fall within **one main** performance area below (operational tasks or command and control).

<b>Recognition of Military Unit Outstanding Performance</b>	
<b>Main Performance Areas</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b> (to be validated by the FC/FHQ)
<b>Operational Tasks (SUR tasks - POC, Patrol, FP etc.)</b>	
Demonstrated, through a specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments, performance of operational tasks and knowledge of the operational environment and of task standards (policy, ROE, etc.) with significant positive effect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The unit took specific action/s, series of actions or had accomplishments, that contributed to a positive change in local communities, particularly Protection of Civilians (POC).</li> <li>• The unit accomplished one or more specific notable operational activities that may include, but are not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Collection of peacekeeping-intelligence.</li> <li>– Restoration of law and order.</li> <li>– Eviction of armed groups (AGs) from an area.</li> <li>– Avoidance of escalation and violence through negotiation and establishment of a secure environment.</li> <li>– Securing a main supply route (MSR), clearing roadblocks, clearing accident sites, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emergency aviation support to mandated tasks, such as POC, humanitarian assistance, etc.</li> <li>- Contribution in medical treatment of locals or UN personnel.</li> <li>- Engagement/CIMIC with the local population.</li> <li>- Hostage rescue.</li> <li>- Evacuation of mass casualties in a hostile environment.</li> <li>- Conducting gender responsive operations/implementing Women, Peace and Security mandate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Command and Control</b></p>	
<p>Demonstrated, through a specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments, including in the area of command and control with significant positive effect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments, the unit leadership demonstrated innovation in implementing the Mission’s mandate, including but not limited to operations, capacity-building, command, and administration, and integration of gender and Women, Peace and Security</li> <li>• The unit commander demonstrated, in a specific instance, innovation and the ability to motivate in overcoming adverse circumstances in terms of courage, resilience, and determination.</li> </ul>

<b>EXCLUSION CRITERIA/DISCLAIMER</b>	
<b>Performance Area</b>	<b>Criteria to be Validated by the FC/FHQ (in consultation with relevant sections of the Mission)</b>
<b>Use of Force</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allegations of inappropriate use of force, or rules of engagement violation reported to UNHQ for the current rotation</li> <li>• Allegation or other information establishing that the unit has been involved, either directly or by act or by omission in the commission of a violation of international human rights or humanitarian law, including sexual violence, reported by mission to UNHQ for the current rotation.</li> </ul>	
<b>Health and hygiene Standards</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe health and hygiene shortfalls that hamper operational effectiveness reported by the CMO to UNHQ/DHMOSH.</li> </ul>	
<b>Environmental Standards</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-compliance with UN guidance on environment, water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management resulting in serious environmental risk reported to UNHQ.</li> </ul>	
<b>Conduct and Discipline</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple violations of UN standards of conduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), reported by SRSG to UNHQ for investigations to be undertaken in accordance with applicable procedures, indicating failures in command and control or possible widespread and systemic nature of such violations.</li> </ul>	

## Annex B (2): List of Criteria – Formed Police Units

### CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF FORMED POLICE UNITS (FPUs)

#### Notes:

1. This matrix provides possible areas for recognizing outstanding performance by UNHQ. It is, however, not inclusive of all potential specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments that that may warrant recognition.
2. For a unit to be considered for recognition of outstanding performance, the specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments for which it is recognized should fall within **one** main performance area below (operational tasks or command and control).

<b>Recognition of Outstanding Performance by FPUs</b>	
<b>Main Performance Area</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b> (to be validated by the Head of Police Component, (HOPC))
<b>Operational core tasks<sup>3</sup></b>	

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the FPU Policy, these include the protection of UN personnel and facilities, contribution to the protection of civilians (POC); and support police operations that require a formed response or specialized capacity above the capability of individual police (IPOs).

Demonstrated task execution with significant positive effect.

- The recommended FPU undertook specific action/s, series of actions or attained accomplishments that contributed to positive change in local communities, particularly in the area of POC, as reflected in communities or others' feedback.
- In the instance for which the unit is recognized, the recommended FPU functioned as a cohesive unit beyond the capacity ordinarily expected of a FPU, to prevent and end ongoing human rights violations and abuses and to protect civilians.
- The unit accomplished one or more specific notable **operational activities** that may include, but are not limited to:
  - Public order management either on a mutually operational supportive role with the host-State police service or other law enforcement entity, or in situations where the host-State authorities are not present or incapable in hostile environments.
  - Use of specialized tactics despite the absence of specialized capacities like SWAT.
  - Deterrence of activities of armed groups through policing, especially through the non-use of force.
  - Avoidance of escalation and violence through negotiation and establishment of a secure environment.
  - Securing a humanitarian convoy, clearing roadblocks, or responding to serious/violent crime scenes, etc.
  - Emergency first responder activities in support of mandated tasks, such as POC.
  - Contribution to emergency needs of locals or UN personnel.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Empowerment of children, youth, women and men by facilitating education, promoting respect for human rights, or supporting skills development, etc.</li> <li>○ Restoring police and state presence through enhanced outreach to local communities.</li> <li>○ Protection provided beyond mandated tasks.</li> <li>○ Hostage rescue.</li> <li>○ Evacuation of mass casualties in a hostile environment.</li> <li>○ Accomplishment of mandated tasks despite significant limitations (i.e. large AOR, lack of vehicles/ inadequate facilities, use of innovative methods, etc.).</li> <li>○ Integration of gender and Women, Peace and Security in their work/Implementation of Women, Peace and Security mandate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Command and Control</b></p>	
<p>Demonstrated, through a specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments, including in the area of command and control with significant positive effect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Through specific action/s, series of actions or accomplishments, the FPU leadership demonstrated innovation in implementing the Mission’s mandate, including but not limited to police operations, capacity-building, command, administration, and integration of gender and Women, Peace and Security. In (a) specific instance(s), the recommended FPU exemplified significant leadership skills in overcoming adverse circumstances by demonstrating courage, resilience and determination.</li> </ul>



<b>EXCLUSION CRITERIA/DISCLAIMER</b>	
<b>Performance Area</b>	<b>Criteria to be Validated by the HOPC (in consultation with relevant sections of the Mission)</b>
<b>Use of Force<sup>4</sup></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allegations of inappropriate use of force, or rules of engagement violation reported to UNHQ for the current rotation</li> <li>• Allegation or other information establishing that the unit has been involved, either directly or by act or by omission in the commission of a violation of international human rights or humanitarian law, including sexual violence, reported by mission to UNHQ for the current rotation.</li> </ul>	
<b>Conduct and Discipline standards</b>	
Violations of UN standards of conduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), indicating failures in command and control or possible widespread and systemic nature of such violations.	
<b>Environmental standards</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-compliance with UN guidance on environment, water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management resulting in serious environmental risk reported to UNHQ.</li> </ul>	
<b>Health and hygiene standard</b>	

<sup>4</sup> In accordance with the 1990 Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (Basic Principles), the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (Code of Conduct), and mission-specific guidance, such as Directives on the Use of Force and Firearms (DuF).

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Severe health and hygiene shortfalls that hamper operational effectiveness reported by the CMO to UNHQ / DHMOSH.</li></ul> |  |
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**Annex C: Nomination form**

**UNIT NOMINATION FORM**  
 Recognition of Outstanding Performance  
 (use one nomination form per nominated unit)

Name of mission \_\_\_\_\_

Unit name as per Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):	
T/PCC:	
Date of Arrival in Mission:	
Date of Rotation:	
Description of duties in mission (no more than 500 words):	
Reason for nomination (Between 400-800 words):	(Date / time period of the incident; which criteria of outstanding performance the unit met; how the unit acted; what the unit achieved etc; supporting documentation can be shared by email.)

Head of Mission: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Force Commander: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

or

Police Commissioner: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_