

**United Nations**

**Department of Political Affairs  
Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
Department of Safety and Security  
Department of Field Support**



**Ref. UNDSS/SOP/1/2015**

## **Standing Operating Procedure**

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# **Deployment of United Nations Guard Units**

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Approved by: USGs of DPA, DPKO, UNDSS, DFS  
Effective date: 31 December 2015  
Contact: UNDSS/OUSG/PCCS/PPCU (Policy, Planning and Coordination Unit)  
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**Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) on the  
Process for the Deployment of United Nations Guard Units**

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**A. PURPOSE**

1. This standing operating procedure (SOP) aims to provide guidance for the process of the deployment of United Nations Guard Units (UNGU) to UN field missions. Besides for setting the parameters of command and control of the UNGU, this SOP does not govern the management of UNGU once they are deployed.

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**B. SCOPE**

2. This SOP shall apply to UN Secretariat Departments and UN field missions that are involved in the process of deploying a UNGU in their field operations. Compliance with this SOP is mandatory.

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**C. RATIONALE**

3. The Secretary-General, through his Decision Memorandum dated 22 July 2014<sup>1</sup>, decided that, given the increasing challenge of operating in non-permissive security environments, UNGU will be viewed as a possible security risk management option<sup>2</sup> for the United Nations once other preferred security risk management options have been exhausted<sup>3</sup>. The

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<sup>1</sup> The Secretary-General's Memorandum of 22 July 2014 contains "Decision No. 2014/4 – UN Guard Units" taken at the Policy Committee meeting of 1 July 2014.

<sup>2</sup> "Security risk management option" implies security protection capabilities for the physical guarding of UN personnel, assets and operations and not other security functions of the UNSMS.

<sup>3</sup> Armed security services from the host Government, alternate Member State(s), an existing peacekeeping force or security entity within the United Nations system are all possible guarding and protection options. The engagement of armed private security service providers will be a final possibility for protection as per *UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section I, Armed Private Security Companies, 8 November 2012*.

Secretary-General also authorized UNDSS to lead the drafting of a SOP providing guidance on the deployment of UNGU, in close consultation with DPA, DPKO, DFS, OCHA, OLA and other relevant entities.

4. Clear and detailed guidance will facilitate the deployment of UNGU and ensure that this process is effective, coherent, and standardized.

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#### **D. PROCEDURES**

5. The process of the deployment UNGU shall follow a seven-step procedure:

- Step One: Needs assessment
- Step Two: Authorization and legal basis
- Step Three: Identification of Concept of Operations and size
- Step Four: Selection of providers
- Step Five: Identification of logistics and training needs
- Step Six: Development of a communications strategy and plan
- Step Seven: Deployment

##### **Step One: Needs assessment**

6. A UNGU is a force composed of police or military personnel, or other State security forces, provided as contingents by one or more Member States and deployed with the authorization of the Security Council or the General Assembly to protect UN personnel, premises and assets in field missions operating in non-permissive security environments. Any decision to deploy a Guard Unit shall be based on a specific Security Risk Assessment<sup>4</sup> (SRA) developed under the lead<sup>5</sup> of the Chief Security Adviser (CSA), Security Adviser (SA), or in missions or duty stations without a CSA or SA, the Chief Security Officer (CSO), to ascertain: a) the need for guarding or protection services of any kind; b) the type of threat a UNGU is expected to counter; c) the capacity and ability of the Host Government to provide the required security and protection to UN personnel, premises and assets; d) the availability of other security risk management options, i.e. peacekeepers, mission security personnel<sup>6</sup>, e) the need for using a UNGU to fully or partially address the security requirements; and, f) the right set of skills required (police, military, Gendarmes etc.) to address the risks faced by UN personnel.

7. As part of the assessment/decision-making process, consultations among stakeholders at a senior level shall be held to develop: a) a cost-benefit analysis of using UNGU versus other viable security risk management options; b) an overview of possible implications of the UNGU, including with respect to relations with the Host Government, local community and

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<sup>4</sup> At the time of drafting of this SOP, the term "Security Risk Assessment" (SRA) was still in use. By the end of 2016 all duty stations will have implemented an enhanced risk assessment methodology termed "Security Risk Management Process" (SRM). For the purposes of this SOP, both the terms SRA and SRM are to be understood as the formal risk assessment process to determine the need for the deployment of a UNGU.

<sup>5</sup> Other mission entities, including military and police where relevant, may be required to assist with the development of the SRA, as well as security professionals of the Agencies, Funds and Programmes where relevant.

<sup>6</sup> Armed private security services is an option when all other possibilities, including UNGU, have been exhausted. (UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section I, Armed Private Security Companies, 8 November 2012).

other security actors, and the impact on programme delivery and risk transfer; and c) an exit strategy with clear benchmarks.<sup>7</sup>

8. Close consultation shall also include all UN actors present in the field, including humanitarian, development and human rights entities. The decision by the Designated Official for security (DO)<sup>8</sup> and the Security Management Team to request a UNGU must take into consideration acceptable risk<sup>9</sup> based on the determination of programme criticality<sup>10</sup> and the residual risk assessed through the Security Risk Management Process. Humanitarian, development and human rights entities will assess whether they would wish to make use of UNGU, and will also assess the implications on the use of UNGU on humanitarian, development and human rights programming. In the event that humanitarian, development or human rights entities (who are not part of the Mission) wish to make use of the UNGU, a separate MOU with these entities combining operational and financial issues, will be agreed between the Lead Department, DFS and the concerned entities.

9. *Result.* The output of this step is a clear statement of need for a UNGU based on a SRA.

#### **Step Two: Authorization and legal basis**

10. Where deployment of a UNGU is under consideration, the Secretariat will seek Security Council (or, where appropriate, General Assembly) authorization, through an exchange of letters between the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (or, where appropriate, the President of the General Assembly). The decision to approach either the Security Council or the General Assembly will depend on which body initially established or approved the Mission.

11. The letter to the President of the Security Council or General Assembly should justify why a UNGU is required, and describe why other potential options are not appropriate. The letter should also confirm that consent of the Host Government has been sought and received. Following authorization, the Security Council (or, where appropriate, the General Assembly), should be informed about which country will provide the UNGU and the number of personnel to be deployed, as well as any changes in mandate. This step will be carried out by the Lead Department<sup>11</sup>, and always in collaboration with DPKO Office of the Military Advisor (OMA) or DPKO Police Division (PD), whichever is responsible for the generation of the UNGU.

12. The legal status of the UNGU members depends on whether they are military personnel or police. If they are military, their status is governed by the provisions of the applicable SOFA/SOMA concerning military personnel, where one exists, or as otherwise specifically agreed with the Host Government. If police, they shall be deemed to have the status of experts on mission within the meaning of the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and

<sup>7</sup> Where UNGU are established, country-specific annual reviews on the need for those units will be conducted by UNDSS with the Lead Department in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

<sup>8</sup> This SOP assumes that in field missions the Head of Mission will be the DO. Should this not be the case, the Head of Mission as the representative of the Lead Department will take the final decision to request a UNGU.

<sup>9</sup> Guidelines for Determining Acceptable Risk, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section C, 5 May 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Programme Criticality Framework, CEB/2013/HLCM/7 dated 25 February 2013.

<sup>11</sup> The Lead Department is defined as the Department requesting the deployment of the UNGU.

Immunities of the United Nations, or as specified in the applicable SOFA/SOMA and/or applicable Host Government agreement, where one exists.<sup>12</sup>

**13. Result.** *The output of this step is the required exchange of letters and the outcome is the authorization to proceed with the raising of the UNGU. The lead Department shall keep other concerned Departments informed of progress.*

### **Step Three: Identification of Concept of Operations and size**

14. Before approaching Member States for support to raise a UNGU based on the specific SRA, planning must be undertaken by the Lead Department<sup>13</sup>, in consultation with, and agreed by, UNDSS, DFS, and DPKO (OMA) or DPKO (PD) as appropriate, to clearly identify the tasks and size of the envisaged UNGU. This is to be formulated as a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) and the resultant Statement of Unit Requirements (SUR).

15. The objective of a UNGU is to provide protection to UN personnel, premises and assets. While the specific tasks for each UNGU may differ depending on the country context, they are generally limited to perimeter security in areas identified through the SRA; quick reaction response in terms of the CONOPS mentioned in paragraph 14; close protection if organized and trained in this role; and, assistance with evacuation/extraction. When no alternative exists, UNGU may be used for security and convoy/motorcade escorts with clear operating guidelines. The tasks assigned to a UNGU do not include any protection of civilians or stabilization activities.

16. The size and composition of a UNGU shall be determined depending on the assessed needs for specific tasks. Due consideration must be given to the inclusion of gender imperatives in determining the structure and composition of the UNGU.

**17. Result.** *The output of this step is a CONOPS setting forth the tasks to be performed by the UNGU to be used for calling for expressions of interest and contributions from Member States.*

### **Step Four: Selection of providers**

18. The Lead Department, in consultation with the requesting field mission, will draw up the documents necessary<sup>14</sup> to solicit contributions from Member States. Actual approaches to potential providers will be done by DPKO OMA or PD as appropriate. DPKO OMA or PD as appropriate shall identify suitable providers from among the Members States who express an interest (taking into account the appropriate SURs and language skills, if desired) and shall ensure that selected Member State(s) follow necessary and appropriate screening and vetting procedures that are in line with the UN standards outlined in the Policy on Human Rights Screening of United Nations Personnel (2012). The generation of members of Guard Units shall be consistent with the existing and applicable policies and procedures for the generation of uniformed personnel to peacekeeping operations.

<sup>12</sup> Peacekeeping operations have the possibility to organize a unit within the force that is dedicated to the protection of the premises of the peacekeeping operations, its personnel and assets. In these cases the legal basis for their deployment is the mandate of the Security Council establishing the mission together with the SOFA/SOMA as agreed with the host Government.

<sup>13</sup> Defined as the Department requesting the UNGU.

<sup>14</sup> The standard process for force generation and for the soliciting of interest from member States for the raising of military or police elements will apply.

**19. Result.** *The output of this step is the required set of documentation to solicit contributions among prospective Member State(s). The outcome is a pledge(s) Member State(s) to provide forces for the UNGU.*

#### **Step Five: Logistics and training needs**

20. Based on the CONOPS and SUR referred to in Paragraph 14, DFS will develop a Support Plan in consultation with the Lead Department and, if already identified, Member State(s) contributing to the UNGU. The Support Plan will cover all aspects of support, and clearly indicate the respective responsibilities of the UN and Member States(s).

21. The decision to wear the blue helmet/beret, or a different colour helmet/beret will be made on a case by case basis depending on 1) the sensitivity of TCCs to wear a different accoutrement other than the Blue helmet while serving for the United Nations, and 2) the contextual risks of misperception or inflated expectations that members of the UNGU will have a Protection of Civilians (POC) role. When the decision is made for UNGUs not to wear the blue helmet/beret, UNGU will keep their national uniforms and distinguish themselves with specific UN insignia. The insignia, as well as the helmet/beret, will be agreed upon by relevant Departments and Offices including DPA, DPKO (OMA), DPKO (PD), UNDSS, DFS, OLA and OCHA. This will be done in close consultation with relevant UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, as well as the relevant troop and police contributing countries.

22. In accordance with GA Resolution 49/37 (1995), pre-deployment training of uniformed personnel is a Member State responsibility and should be conducted following UN standards and material, including Core Pre-deployment Training Material (CPTM) and Specialized Training Material (STM). The required training includes, inter alia, the topics of, standards of conduct, conflict-related sexual violence, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, gender issues and cultural and religious sensitivity. Appropriate certification shall be provided that pre-deployment training was conducted. Additional training should be linked to the CONOPS and determined by DPKO (OMA), or DPKO (PD) where relevant. This additional training will be done in close collaboration with the Lead Department and with UNDSS<sup>15</sup>. Training must include clear guidance on the use of force<sup>16</sup> and how to handle situations where human rights violations are witnessed by the unit. To ensure provision of induction training and ongoing training for UNGUs, each unit should deploy with two training officers. Curricula and training materials for post deployment training relating to the guarding function must be developed jointly between DPKO and UNDSS.

**23. Result.** *The output of this step is a logistics plan and a training plan. The desired outcome is a properly equipped and trained UNGU that is ready to be deployed.*

#### **Step Six: Development of a communications strategy and plan**

24. Where a decision has been taken to deploy a UNGU, a mission-specific communications strategy will be designed to communicate the roles and tasks of the UNGU both internally and within the country where the UNGU will be deployed. The intent will be to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are aware of the role of the UNGU, and its limitations and restrictions. Such a strategy will be developed by the Lead Department, in consultation with the broader

<sup>15</sup> UNDSS training collaboration, if required, will occur in the field after deployment.

<sup>16</sup> In accordance with paragraph 29 of this SOP, UNGU shall be governed by the Use of Force Policy, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section H, 8 April 2011.

UN system, prior to the deployment of the UNGU. Once approved, the Lead Department will be responsible for developing the communications strategy into a communications plan.

25. **Result.** *The output of this step is a communications strategy and plan. The desired outcome is a well-informed host Government, general public, mission, country team and UNGU prior to, during, and after deployment.*

### **Step Seven: Deployment**

26. The UNGU will deploy as planned, as a unit, or in phases. It will begin functioning as a UNGU once the agreed command and control structure is in place. The agreement on command and control as outlined in paragraph 27 below is the final aspect of the deployment of a UNGU governed by this SOP.

27. Command and control arrangements will be jointly determined between the head of the Lead Department in the field; the Designated Official for security (DO) (if different to the head of the Lead Department in the field; DPKO (OMA) or DPKO (PD) as appropriate; and, UNDSS, both at Headquarters and in the field. These arrangements will take cognizance of UN Security Management System (UNSMS) policies including the Framework of Accountability<sup>17</sup>, and will be formalized in the CONOPS. In general, command and control arrangements are as follows:

- The Lead Department has overall accountability over the UNGU through its Head of Mission. In the case of DPKO this could be the Force Commander where no SRSG is present. The lead Department maintains operational authority over the UNGU.
- The DO has oversight responsibility (but not operational authority) over the UNGU when performing its role within the UNSMS<sup>18</sup>.
- UNDSS is responsible, through the DO who is advised and supported by the CSA/CSO, for the routine tasking of the UNGU. The CSA/CSO carries out this function on behalf of the DO.
- Coordination with all external security agencies will be organized through the CSA/CSO.
- DPKO (OMA) or DPKO (PD) (as appropriate) is responsible for force generation and technical oversight and advice to the commanding officer (with direct contact when necessary) of the UNGU.
- DFS will facilitate the deployment and sustainment<sup>19</sup> of the UNGU according to the Support Plan.

28. The CSA/CSO will plan, coordinate and promulgate the daily tasking of the UNGU whilst the UNGU commander will retain overall command of all UNGU personnel. The commander

<sup>17</sup> Framework of Accountability, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter II, Section B, 4 February 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Where the Head of Mission is also the DO, this point is automatically incorporated with the operational authority of the Head of Mission over the UNGU.

<sup>19</sup> This needs to be clearly spelled out through the Support Plan, Statement of Unit Requirements and Memorandum of Understanding. Depending on circumstances, the UNGU might have to arrive initially (partially) self-sustained.

will have direct access to the Head of Mission (or head of UN presence), or to the Force Commander when present, and will be the principal adviser on military/police matters regarding the use of the UNGU. He/she would be required to remain in regular contact and consultation with DPKO (OMA) or DPKO (PD) as appropriate on technical matters, as well as with the CSA/CSO for advice on UNSMS policies, daily tasking and actions during crisis.

29. UNGU, in performing their duties, shall be governed by the Use of Force Policy of the UNSMS<sup>20</sup>.

30. **Result.** *The output of this final step is a correctly equipped and trained UNGU ready for implementation of the CONOPS within an agreed command and control structure.*

## E. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

31. The following roles and responsibilities apply:

- **Lead Department:** Overall accountability over the UNGU through the Head of Mission. In the case of DPKO this could be the Force Commander where no SRSG is present. The Lead Department maintains operational authority over the UNGU. The Lead Department is responsible for drafting the letters to the Security Council or President of the General Assembly (as appropriate) to request authorization for the deployment of a UNGU, for obtaining approval from the host Government, and, for development of the CONOPS together with DPKO, UNDSS and DFS.
- **Designated Official for Security (DO):** Oversight responsibility (but not operational authority) over the UNGU when performing its role within the UNSMS.
- **UNDSS:** Responsible, through the DO who is advised and supported by the CSA/CSO, for the routine tasking of the UNGU. The CSA/CSO carries out this function on behalf of the DO.
- **DPKO (OMA) or DPKO (PD) (as appropriate):** Responsible for force generation, supervision over training, and technical oversight and advice to the commanding officer (with direct contact when necessary) of the UNGU.
- **Commanding Officer of UNGU:** Responsible for daily command and control of the UNGU according to the CONOPS. Reports to the Force Commander if present, or Head of Mission.
- **DFS:** Responsible for developing the Support Plan for the UNGU according to the CONOPS, and for deployment and sustainment of the UNGU, in accordance with the Support Plan.

## F. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

### *Acceptable Risk*

Acceptable Risk is the maximum level of security risk that is acceptable for the implementation of UN programmes or for UN presence. An assessed threat impact of "Critical" and likelihood of "Very Likely" during the assessment of risk results in a risk rating of "Unacceptable", and no UN presence is permitted. Determining acceptability of any risk rating lower

<sup>20</sup> Use of Force Policy, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section H, 8 April 2011.

than "Unacceptable" is assessed using the combination of the residual risk level developed through the Security Risk Management process and the Programme Criticality Framework<sup>21</sup>.

CONOPS	Concept of Operations for a UNGU.
Lead Department	The Department requesting the UNGU.
Programme Criticality	The determination of the criticality level for undertaking specific UN activities within a given geographic location and timeframe, and is measured on four levels.
Security Risk Assessment	See Security Risk Management. <sup>22</sup>
Security Risk Management	The SRM process is an analytical procedure that assists in assessing the operational context of the UN; and identifies the risk level of undesirable events that may affect United Nations personnel, assets, and operations; providing guidance on the implementation of cost effective solutions in the form of specific prevention and mitigation strategies and measures with the aim of lowering the risk levels for the UN by reducing the impact and likelihood of an undesirable event.
UNGU	A UN Guard Unit is a force composed of police or military personnel, or other State security forces, provided as contingents by one or more Member States and deployed with the authorization of the Security Council or the General Assembly to protect UN personnel, premises and assets in field missions operating in non-permissive environments.
UNSMS	The sum of all the Departments, Offices, Agencies, Funds, Programmes and Organizations subscribing to a common security framework through membership of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN), including the policies, rules and procedures agreed by the IASMN, is termed the United Nations Security Management System. The UNSMS is led by the Department of Safety and Security. Adherence to the rules and policies of the UNSMS is mandatory for the Secretariat Departments approving this SOP.

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<sup>21</sup> Guidelines for Determining Acceptable Risk, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section C, 5 May 2009; and, Programme Criticality Framework, CEB/2013/HLCM/7, 25 February 2013.

<sup>22</sup> At the time of drafting of this SOP, the term "Security Risk Assessment" (SRA) was still in use. By the end of 2016 all duty stations will have implemented an enhanced risk assessment methodology termed "Security Risk Management Process" (SRM). For the purposes of this SOP, both the terms SRA and SRM are to be understood as the formal risk assessment process to determine the need for the deployment of a UNGU.

**G. REFERENCES**

*RELATED POLICIES*

- Armed Private Security Companies, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section I, 8 November 2012.
- Guidelines for Determining Acceptable Risk, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section C, 5 May 2009.
- Programme Criticality Framework, CEB/2013/HLCM/7, 25 February 2013.
- Framework of Accountability, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter II, Section B, 4 February 2011.
- Use of Force Policy, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section H, 8 April 2011.
- Policy on Human Rights Screening of United Nations Personnel (2012)
- Security Risk Management Process, UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section A, April 2009.

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**H. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

32. Compliance with this SOP is monitored by the Lead Department. The Lead Department is responsible for reporting on all aspects of the UNGU to governing bodies and collaborating Departments.

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**I. CONTACT**

33. The contact for this SOP is UNDSS/OUSG/PCCS/PPCU (Policy, Planning and Coordination Unit of the Policy, Compliance and Coordination Service).

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**J. HISTORY**

34. This is the first governance regarding the process for the deployment of UNGU.

**APPROVAL SIGNATURES:**

Under-Secretary-General  
for Political Affairs

Date: 31/12/15



Under-Secretary-General  
for Peacekeeping

Date: 30/12/2015



Under-Secretary-General for  
Safety and Security

Date: 15 December 2015



Under-Secretary-General for  
Field Support

Date: 29 December 2015

