

CHAPTER IV

Security Management

Section H

USE OF FORCE POLICY



Promulgation Date: 8 April 2011
Technical Review: 1 May 2017

A. Introduction

1. The United Nations recognizes and respects the value and integrity of each and every human life. Deciding whether to utilize force when authorized in the conduct of official responsibilities is one of the most critical decisions made by a United Nations security official. It is a decision which must be made quickly and under difficult, often unpredictable and unique circumstances. Sound judgment and appropriate exercise of discretion will always be the foundation of decision-making in the broad range of possible use of force situations. The official will necessarily have to select what type of action, ranging from verbal warnings or instructions to the use of a force, including deadly force, is appropriate based on the nature of the threat to be negated and the specific circumstances of the incident.
2. While detailed policy guidance is provided in training and must serve as the basis for any official's decision on what type of force to use, if any, this is no substitute for good judgment that must be exercised at all times.¹ United Nations security officials are always to bear in mind that when the use of force is unavoidable, they will act with restraint, respecting and preserving human life and causing the minimum harm to people and property.

B. Purpose

3. The purpose of this policy is to provide United Nations security officials with guidelines and restrictions for the use of force (both Non-Deadly Force and Deadly Force). This policy is based on the highest standards of international guidelines and human rights law.²

C. Applicability

4. This policy applies to United Nations security officials at the Security Service, General Service, Field Service and Professional levels as well as other contracted security personnel responsible for the protection of United Nations personnel, visitors and assets.

D. Definitions

5. Deadly Force means any force that creates a substantial risk of causing death or serious bodily injury.
6. Non-Deadly Force means any use of force other than that which is considered deadly force. This includes any physical effort used to control or restrain another, or to overcome the resistance of another.

¹ Detailed guidance on the implementation of the Use of Force Policy is set out in the United Nations Department of Safety and Security *Manual of Instruction on Use of Force Equipment including Firearms*. The full range of options in the use of force is covered in training.

² Reference is made to the Memorandum dated 21 June 2007 from the Assistant Secretary-General of Legal Affairs to the Deputy Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security. It is noted that specific host country use of force laws and policies may impact this United Nations policy. United Nations security officials responsible for the implementation of this policy should confer with their local legal counsel.

7. Serious Bodily Injury means physical injury which creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes serious and protracted (i.e., long-term) disfigurement, protracted impairment of health or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ.
8. Bodily Injury means any physical injury other than that which is considered serious bodily injury.

E. Essential Criteria for the Use of Force

9. The following essential criteria must be applied:
 - (a) The force is reasonable, proportional to the threat offered and the minimum required to negate the threat;
 - (b) The force is necessary, under all the circumstances known at the time, to negate the threat;
 - (c) There is no other reasonable alternative available.

F. Criteria for the Use of Non-Deadly Force

10. Based on the three essential criteria above, a United Nations security official may use Non-Deadly Force:
 - (a) In defence of him/herself, other United Nations personnel and/or others against imminent threat of bodily injury;
 - (b) To maintain order and security within and/or restrict access to United Nations premises; and prevent damage to United Nations premises or property;
 - (c) To detain³ and/or prevent the escape of a person who constitutes a threat to order and security and/or who has committed a serious crime.

G. Criteria for the use of Deadly Force

11. Based on the three essential criteria in 9 above, a United Nations security official may only use Deadly Force:
 - (a) To defend him/herself, other United Nations personnel and/or others against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury and there is no other reasonable alternative available.

H. Additional Considerations

Decision to Use Force

12. As a first step in the use of force, security officials will audibly instruct the subject to comply. If, however, giving such an instruction would pose a risk to the security official or others, it need not be given. When a decision is made to use force the security official should act decisively and without hesitation, using force proportional to the threat and the

³ The right to detain is set out in ST/AI/309/Rev 2, dated 18 February 1997

minimum required to negate the threat. A United Nations security official is not required to place him/herself or others in unreasonable danger before acting.

Post Application of Force

13. Once force has been applied and the threat negated, the security official must:
 - (a) Where feasible, arrange for appropriate medical aid to the person subjected to the use of force; and
 - (b) Follow all relevant procedures, including reporting the incident to the supervisor, and cooperate with United Nations investigations.
14. A security official involved in the application of non-deadly or deadly force may be provided with stress and medical counselling as appropriate.