

CHAPTER IV

Security Management

Section J

ARMING OF SECURITY PERSONNEL



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A. Introduction

1. The primary responsibility for the security and protection of United Nations personnel and other individuals covered by the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) rests with the host Government. However, circumstances may arise where it may be mandated or otherwise necessary to supplement existing host Government capacity with, inter alia, armed United Nations peacekeepers, including United Nations guard units provided by Member States or private security services.¹ Under certain circumstances, when such options are not available, applicable, appropriate or sufficient, the arming of trained² security professionals may be considered in order to protect UNSMS personnel. In those instances, there are specific principles and procedures established in this policy that must be followed.

B. Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to outline the strict framework under which UNSMS security personnel, designated under paragraph 4 below, may be authorized to carry arms. Detailed provisions, including guidelines, procedures and standards, for arming such personnel are found in the United Nations Department of Safety and Security's (UNDSS) *Manual of Instruction on Use of Force Equipment, including Firearms* ("*Manual of Instruction*").³ The *Manual of Instruction* shall be read in conjunction with this policy, but it shall not be interpreted as limiting or prejudicing this policy in any way.

C. Applicability

3. This policy is applicable to all organizations participating in the UNSMS.
4. This policy contains specific provisions applicable to the following categories of UNSMS security personnel:
 - UNSMS security personnel assigned under UNDSS/Division of Headquarters Security and Safety Services (DHSSS);⁴
 - All other UNSMS security personnel with specific protection functions, such as Close Protection Officers,⁵ guard force managers, guards or security personnel performing escort operations; and
 - All other UNSMS security personnel who do not normally have protection

¹ See UNSMS *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter IV, Section I, "Armed Private Security Companies".

² For the purpose of this policy, training refers to the specific training in use of firearms, including safety, technical qualification and unit tactics.

³ The Terms of Reference for the Weapons Committee are found under Annex B of the UNDSS *Manual of Instruction of Use of Force Equipment, including Firearms*.

⁴ This includes all UNSMS security personnel assigned globally under UNDSS Security and Safety Services (SSS).

⁵ See UNSMS *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter IV, Section G, "Close Protection Services".

functions, who may be temporarily assigned protection functions under exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the strict provisions contained in this policy.

D. Principles

5. Arming of United Nations security personnel shall be subject to national and local laws and regulations, as applicable, as well as any existing agreements between the United Nations and the host Government, such as Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) or Status of Mission Agreements (SOMAs).
6. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security may authorize the arming of UNSMS security personnel in a Designated Area, based on their specific functions, as outlined in paragraph 4 above. Such authorization constitutes a Security Risk Management (SRM) measure⁶ and therefore, the security considerations for arming UNSMS security personnel shall be based upon the approved SRM process for the Designated Area when there are risks that cannot be mitigated by the host Government, United Nations guard units provided by Member States or private security services, or when such options are not available, applicable, appropriate or sufficient.
7. Arming of UNSMS security personnel shall be subject to a formal recommendation and authorization process, as detailed in this policy, as well as strict compliance and oversight mechanisms. Authorization shall only be granted to UNSMS security personnel who are trained and certified⁷ to carry arms issued by UNSMS organizations.
 - a) Regarding the arming of DHSSS personnel, it is recognized that Security Officers assigned under DHSSS are required to carry arms whenever on duty.⁸ The roles and responsibilities of such personnel are detailed in the *Manual of Instruction*. The recommendation and authorization process for arming such personnel, along with the revocation process for such personnel once armed, shall continue to be governed by the *Manual of Instruction*.
 - b) With regard to other UNSMS security personnel, this policy distinguishes between the following two categories:
 - i. UNSMS security personnel whose primary role or responsibility is to perform a protection function, such as Close Protection Officers,⁹ guard force managers or security personnel performing escort operations; such personnel may be armed in accordance with the Recommendation and Authorization Process

⁶ Please refer to UNSMS Security Policy Manual Chapter IV, Section A, Policy on Security Risk Management, which entered into force on 18 April 2016.

⁷ In accordance with the *Manual of Instruction* and specific provisions contained in this policy (see footnotes 2 and 11 and section H "Training Framework").

⁸ See Secretary-General's report A/56/848, paragraph 34(b) ("It is a standard requirement that all United Nations security officers carry firearms when on duty").

⁹ See UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV ("Security Management"), Section G ("Close Protection Services").

- found in this policy (see Section F, “Recommendation and Authorization Process”); and
- ii. UNSMS security personnel whose primary role or responsibility does not normally involve a protection function; such personnel may only be armed under exceptional circumstances in a Designated Area and only to the extent required to perform a specific protection function, including, but not limited to, circumstances where there is an imminent threat to life. Such personnel shall be assigned protection functions and armed in accordance with the Recommendation and Authorization Process found in this policy (see Section F, “Recommendation and Authorization Process”), if appropriately trained¹⁰ and certified to carry a firearm for the period specified.
8. Given UNSMS organizations’ accountability and responsibility for their personnel, in line with the *Framework of Accountability*,
- UNSMS organizations are required to promulgate their internal policies in line with this policy, the *Manual of Instruction* and the *Use of Force Policy*, qualifying if their security personnel are authorized to carry out protection functions or further restricting or barring them from carrying arms under any circumstances.
 - UNSMS organizations may also determine that UNSMS security personnel authorized to carry a firearm do not carry their weapon when accompanying their personnel, entering their premises or utilizing their assets (e.g., vehicles and aircraft), particularly if doing so would violate their organization’s policies, as identified above, or would harm an organization’s ability to deliver its programmes or fulfil its mandates.

E. Roles and Responsibilities

Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security

9. Through this policy, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security has authority to authorize the possession and use of arms for UNSMS security personnel, in order to strengthen the safety and security of UNSMS personnel.
10. In exercising this authority, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security shall be responsible for authorising, in writing, inter alia, the following:
- Specific Designated Areas, in which UNSMS security personnel, designated under paragraphs 7b above, may carry arms. Such personnel shall be personally identified, including their specific functions or titles, and the duration and circumstances of their authorization;

¹⁰ Training in use of firearms for this function includes safety, technical qualification and unit tactics.

- Specific types of standard or alternative weapons, weapon systems or ammunition that such personnel may carry, dependent upon their current training certification for the weapons indicated.
11. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security shall be the final decision maker regarding all requests to arm UNSMS security personnel in a Designated Area, in accordance with this policy, the *Manual of Instruction* and relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

UNDSS Weapons Committee

12. The UNDSS Weapons Committee shall report to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, through the Director of DHSSS as Chair of the Weapons Committee, and shall adhere to the provisions of this policy, the *Manual of Instruction* and relevant SOPs.¹¹ The Weapons Committee serves as a technical advisory body and is responsible for, *inter alia*, the following:¹²
- Reviewing requests to authorize the arming of UNSMS security personnel based on their specific functions in a Designated Area as outlined in this policy and taking into consideration UNDSS' Division of Regional Operations (UNDSS/DRO) final request, including input from Security Focal Points (SFPs) of UNSMS organizations with a presence in the Designated Area and making appropriate recommendations to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security to grant or deny such requests in accordance with the SRM process;
 - Reviewing requests to add or remove standard or alternative weapons, weapon systems or ammunition in a Designated Area and making appropriate recommendations to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security to grant or deny such requests in accordance with the SRM process;
 - Conducting an annual review of weapons, weapon systems and ammunition as found under Annex D of the *Manual of Instruction*;
 - Providing input on policies, procedures, guidelines and standards related to weapons, weapons systems and ammunition; and
 - Monitoring trends and advances in protective weapons and weapon systems technology.

¹¹ Including, but not limited to, UNDSS Headquarters Standing Operating Procedure (SOP), "Requests to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security to Approve the Carriage of Firearms," dated 18 March 2015.

¹² UNDSS *Manual of Instruction of Use of Force Equipment, including Firearms*, paragraphs 1.19-1.20.

13. UNSMS organizations shall collectively designate a representative from the IASMN to the Weapons Committee when required.

UNDSS' Division of Regional Operations

14. UNDSS/DRO shall be responsible for the following:

- Communicating the DO initial request to arm UNSMS security personnel in a Designated Area to Security Focal Points (SFPs) of UNSMS organizations with a presence in the Designated Area for their input;
- Validating that the request is in line with the SRM process, including that there is no other alternative mitigation measure to provide protection functions.
- Validating that the staff assigned to the functions proposed to be armed are supported by UNDSS/DRO on the condition that the required United Nations training and certification for the type of weapons proposed is successfully completed.
- Reviewing the DO's initial request, taking into consideration the input of SFPs of relevant UNSMS organizations;
- Submitting a final, written request to authorize the arming of UNSMS security personnel to the Chair of the UNDSS Weapons Committee. Such personnel shall be identified by name with their specific functions or titles, the duration and circumstances for their authorization shall be indicated;
- Maintaining close oversight over all aspects of implementation and operations for armed security personnel, including any revocation instituted by the Chief Security Adviser/Security Adviser (CSA/SA) or Chief Security Officer (CSO) in the field.
- Establishing a fact-finding investigation in all instances of discharge of weapons for any reason other than at a recognized and approved range training area for certification and training purposes.

Designated Official for Security/Security Management Team (SMT)

15. Under the Framework of Accountability, the DO for Security, advised and supported by the SMT, is responsible for the safety and security of UNSMS personnel, premises and assets in the Designated Area.
16. In fulfilling this responsibility, the DO, advised and supported by the SMT, shall be responsible for, *inter alia*, the following:

- Considering and balancing any negative consequences of arming UNSMS security personnel, including with respect to the delivery of United Nations programmes and fulfilment of United Nations mandates, and recording them in the SMT minutes;
- Requesting to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security in writing, the arming of UNSMS security personnel based on specific functions in a Designated Area, as outlined in this policy and as determined through the SRM process, where there is no alternative mitigation measure that can be employed immediately;
- Approving and issuing a *Firearms Carry Standard Operating Procedure* and other relevant SOPs for the Designated Area based on this policy, the Use of Force policy and the *Manual of Instruction*; and
- Ensuring adherence to international, national and local laws and regulations as well as any existing agreements between the United Nations and the host Government.

Chief of Security (UNDSS/DHSSS)

17. The roles and responsibilities of the Chief of Security (COS), UNDSS/DHSSS are detailed in the *Manual of Instruction*.

Chief Security Adviser/Security Adviser and Chief Security Officer for Peacekeeping Missions¹³

18. Under the Framework of Accountability, the CSA/SA or CSO for Peacekeeping Missions,¹⁴ as applicable, is responsible for advising the DO and the SMT with respect to their security functions.¹⁵

19. In fulfilling this responsibility, the CSA/SA or CSO shall be responsible for, inter alia, the following:

- Recommending to the DO/SMT, in writing, the arming of UNSMS security personnel that should be armed, based on their specific required functions in a Designated Area, as defined under paragraph 7b of this policy, in accordance with the SRM process; such personnel shall be identified by name, their specific

¹³ May include UNDSS/DHSSS' Chief of Security (COS) when simultaneously serving as the Chief Security Adviser (CSA)/Security Adviser (SA) for a Designated Area.

¹⁴ For the purposes of this policy, any reference to Chief Security Officer (CSO) applies solely in the context of non-integrated Peacekeeping Missions.

¹⁵ May be supported by UNDSS/DHSSS' Chief of Security (COS) if he or she is not simultaneously serving as CSA/SA.

functions or titles and the duration of their authorization (maximum 3 months); and other mitigation alternatives;

- Developing and implementing a local *Firearms Carry Standard Operating Procedure* and other relevant SOPs;
- Ensuring all UNSMS security personnel, authorized to carry arms in the Designated Area have been appropriately trained and certified to carry and use such arms for the environment required;
- Conducting, where feasible, appropriate background checks for UNSMS security personnel prior to recommending the carriage of arms or attendance of training in the use of weapons;
- Ensuring appropriate mechanisms exist to manage and secure all approved weapons, weapon systems and ammunition;
- Ensuring that relevant UNSMS security personnel authorized by the USG, UNDSS to carry arms in a Designated Area are issued approved distinctive badges, insignia, markings or uniforms to be publicly displayed or worn whenever armed while on official business, as required;
- Ensuring that UNSMS security personnel authorized to carry arms by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security do not carry such arms whenever the specific security situation or function to be performed does not warrant the carriage of arms;
- Ensuring that UNSMS security personnel permitted to carry personal arms under international, national, and local laws and regulations, yet not authorized to do so by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, do not carry such arms whenever on official business, including when accompanying UNSMS personnel, entering UNSMS premises or utilizing UNSMS assets (e.g., vehicles and aircraft); and
- Ensuring compliance with this policy, UNDSS *Manual of Instruction*, local *Firearms Carry Standard Operating Procedure* and other relevant SOPs, including through the development of oversight mechanisms and reporting any non-compliance immediately to UNDSS/DRO;
- Notifying Saving Lives Together partners at the field level when firearms authorization has been granted by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security.

Armed UNSMS Security Personnel

20. Armed UNSMS security personnel shall be responsible for the following:

- Abiding by all UNSMS policies and those of their respective parent organization;¹⁶
- Exercising good judgment at all times and complying strictly with this policy and the terms of the authorization;
- Ensuring maintenance of training and proper certification for the types of weapons they are authorized to carry;
- Carrying distinctive badges, insignia, markings or uniforms to be publicly displayed or worn whenever armed while on official business, as required by their functions;
- Refraining from carrying or retaining possession of weapons when off-duty and when not performing the protection function for which the authorization was issued; and
- Respecting and adhering to an individual UNSMS organization’s requirement that armed UNSMS security personnel does not carry their arms when accompanying their personnel, entering their premises, or utilizing their assets (e.g., vehicles, aircraft), particularly if doing so would violate the organization’s policies or harm the organization’s ability to deliver its programmes or fulfil its mandates.

21. Security professionals who have an advisory and managerial role are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate with their function even if they have been granted authorization by the USG, UNDDSS to carry firearms. They are required to perform their primary advisory role at all times.

F. Recommendation and Authorization Process¹⁷

22. The CSA/SA or CSO shall submit an initial, written recommendation to the DO/SMT, which shall be based upon or include the following:

- SRM Process: The SRM process must be followed with respect to a Designated Area or a specific mission, whereby the types of threats and the level

¹⁶ The Framework of Accountability (Chapter II, Section A, paragraph 28, states: “Personnel employed by the organizations of the United Nations system are accountable to their respective organizations. All such personnel, regardless of the rank or level, have the responsibility to abide by security policies, guidelines, directives, plans and procedures of the United Nations security management system and their organizations.”

¹⁷ See Annex A (“Flowchart of the Recommendation and Authorization Process”).

of risk facing United Nations personnel as well as existing and potential risk management measures are considered;

- Detailed assessment of existing or potential host Government capacity, along with, *inter alia*, armed United Nations peacekeepers, United Nations guard units or private security services, as applicable, to provide for the safety and security of United Nations personnel, premises and assets in a Designated Area or on the specific mission;

- Specific recommendation containing the following:

22...1. UNSMS security personnel, that should be armed, based on the required functions in a Designated Area such personnel shall be identified by name, their specific functions or titles and the duration of their authorization;

22...2. Types of weapons, weapon systems and ammunition that should be issued;

22...3. Geographical areas where such personnel should be armed;

22...4. Duration that such personnel should be armed; and

22...5. Reasons why such personnel should be armed, in accordance with the SRM process.

- Detailed assessment of existing support mechanisms for procuring the recommended types of weapons, weapon systems and ammunition as well as training and certifying UNSMS security personnel, as required; and
- Detailed assessment of adherence to international, national, and local laws and regulations as well as any existing agreements between the United Nations and the host Government, including but not limited to, SOFAs or SOMAs.

23. The DO, advised and supported by the SMT, shall review the CSA/SA or CSO initial recommendation and, upon agreeing with or modifying its content, submit an initial request to authorize the arming of UNSMS security personnel to UNDSS/DRO. The SMT should be asked to detail the negative consequences of arming UNSMS security personnel, including on the delivery of United Nations programmes and fulfilment of United Nations mandates. The DO's request shall be in writing and shall include the final recommendation, all required assessments under paragraph 22 of this policy, and all dissenting views expressed within the SMT.

24. UNDSS/DRO shall communicate the DO's initial request to SFPs of UNSMS organizations with a presence in the Designated Area for their input. UNDSS/DRO shall subsequently review the DO's initial request, taking into consideration the input of SFPs of relevant UNSMS organizations. Upon agreeing with or modifying its content, UNDSS/DRO may submit a final,

written request to authorize the arming of UNSMS security personnel to the Chair of the UNDSS Weapons Committee; such personnel shall be identified by their name, specific functions or titles and the duration of their authorization.

25. The UNDSS Weapons Committee shall review the final request to authorize the arming of UNSMS security personnel, recognised under the Framework of Accountability, based on their specific functions in a Designated Area and make appropriate recommendations to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security to grant, modify or deny such a request. Similarly, it shall review a final request to add or remove standard or alternative weapons, weapon systems or ammunition in a Designated Area and make appropriate recommendations to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security to grant, modify or deny such requests.
26. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security shall respond to the final request in writing with the advice and support of the UNDSS Weapons Committee. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security may authorize the request, with or without modification, or deny the request. The authorization shall indicate the name of the personnel, the rationale and timeframe for the authorization.
27. The CSA/SA or CSO shall not issue any weapons, weapon systems and ammunition prior to obtaining written authorization from the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security. Any issuance of arms must be in accordance with the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security' written authorization and the *Manual of Instruction*.

G. Revocation and Suspension Authority

28. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security shall maintain the right to permanently revoke or modify, in writing, a previously granted authorization at any time with the advice and support of the UNDSS Weapons Committee.
29. UNDSS/DHSS, UNDSS/DRO or UNSMS Security Focal Points may recommend to UNDSS Weapons Committee, in writing, that a previously granted authorization be permanently revoked or modified. The underlying reasons for revocation or modification must be included in the recommendation. Such a recommendation may be initiated at the headquarters level (i.e., by UNDSS/DHSS or UNDSS/DRO, as applicable) or field level (i.e., by the CSA/SA, CSO or COS, as applicable, through the DO). The UNDSS Weapons Committee shall subsequently make appropriate recommendations to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security to permanently revoke or modify the previously granted authorization.
30. UNDSS/DHSS and UNDSS/DRO shall maintain the right to temporarily suspend a previously granted authorization for individual UNSMS security personnel. Such a suspension may be initiated at the headquarters level (i.e., by UNDSS/DHSS or UNDSS/DRO, as applicable) or field level (i.e., by the CSA/SA, CSO or COS, as applicable).

H. Training Framework

31. UNDSS shall maintain a Joint Working Group on Firearms Training, which shall develop the required training standards, competencies and training courses for the various weapons, weapon systems and ammunition employed by the United Nations. UNDSS shall coordinate the delivery of such training courses.
32. Firearms training for security personnel performing protection functions, as indicated in paragraph 7b, shall include safety, technical qualification and unit tactics.

I. Use of Force

33. The use of force shall be governed by the UNSMS Use of Force Policy.¹⁸
34. Any discharge of firearm¹⁹ (other than during an approved training session) must be reported immediately to the CSA/CSO, including the time, date and location of the incident and any relevant details. A written report must follow as soon as feasible but no later than 24 hours after the incident.
35. In the event of an investigation into an alleged incident involving UNSMS security personnel and the possession or use of arms (i.e., weapons, weapon systems or ammunition authorized under this policy), the failure of such personnel to abide by the provisions of this policy or other UNSMS policies may warrant administrative or disciplinary action.
36. Investigations will be guided by ST/AI/371/Amend. 1 Disciplinary Measures and Procedures; or respective organizations policies and instructions; and policies of the UNSMS.

J. Final Provisions

37. This policy shall be made available to all UNSMS organizations and to all individuals covered under the UNSMS.²⁰
38. This policy enters into force on 18 April 2016.
39. The IASMN and UNSMS organizations will ensure that the *Manual of Instruction, Use of Force Policy* and relevant Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) are revised in line with this policy and the UNSMS Security Policy Manual (SPM).

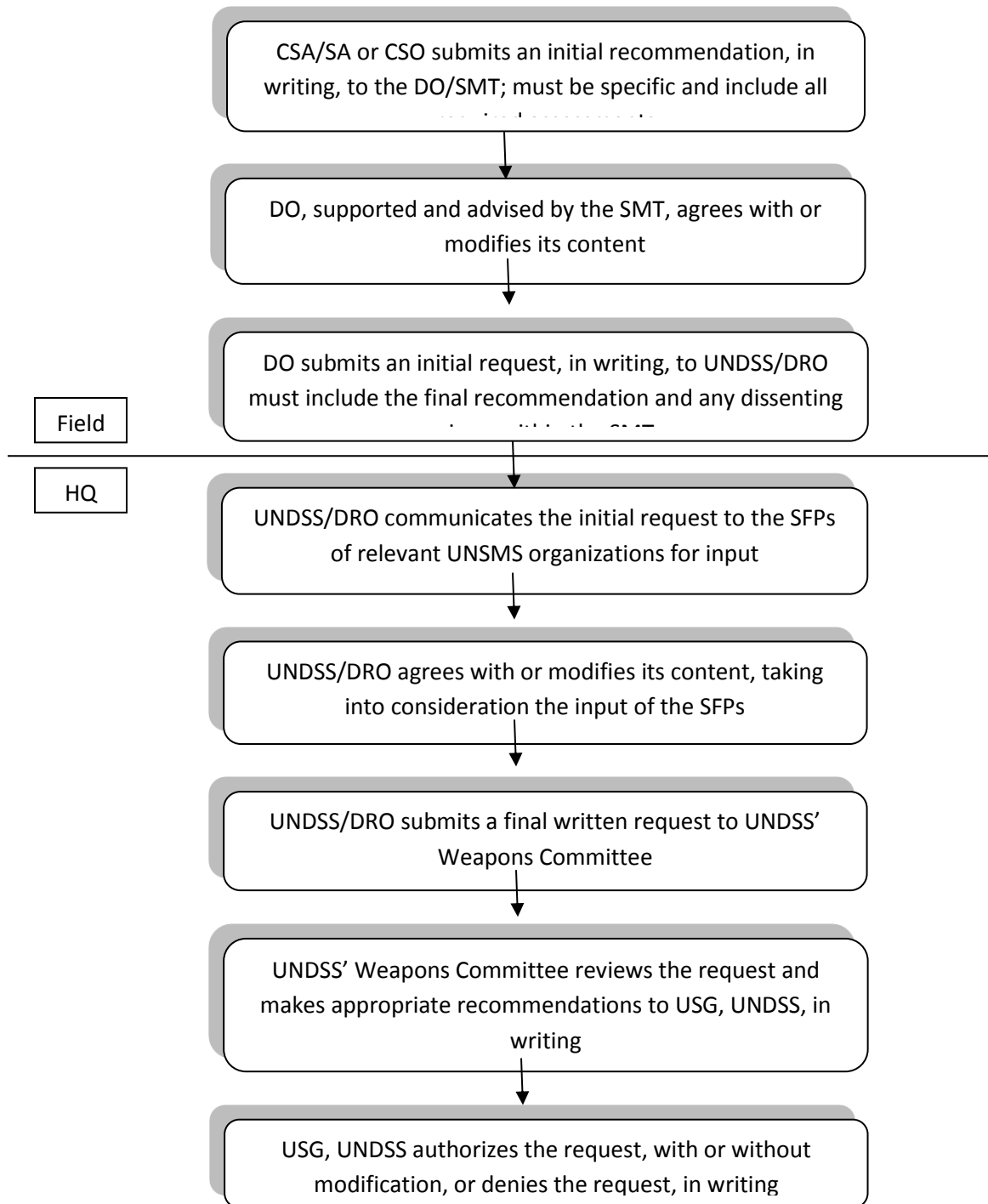
¹⁸ See UNSMS *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter IV, Section H (“Use of Force Policy”).

¹⁹ See the *Manual of Instruction on Use of Force Equipment, including Firearms* for further guidance.

²⁰ See UNSMS *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter III (“Applicability of the United Nations Security Management System”).

Annex A

Flowchart of the Recommendation and Authorization Process²¹



²¹ See the *Manual of Instruction on Use of Force Equipment, including Firearms* for the Recommendation and Authorization Process applicable to UNSMS security personnel assigned under UNDSS/DHSSS.