



UNDSS

UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT
OF SAFETY AND SECURITY

PROTECTING THE PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR A BETTER WORLD

CHAPTER IV

Security Management

Section P

IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES (IEDS)



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A. Introduction

1. The use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) has increased by threat actors in many areas where the United Nations has operations. The United Nations has been the target of IEDs, including Person-Borne and Vehicle-Borne IEDs to devastating effect, and it can be expected that the United Nations will be targeted again by such weapons. An IED is a uniquely dangerous weapon due to its versatility, adaptability and method of employment.
2. Nevertheless, United Nations system entities are required to implement programmes and activities in areas where IEDs are currently employed or may be employed in the future, including where IEDs deliberately or indirectly threaten United Nations personnel, property and programmes. Some United Nations entities have been requested to engage in the removal of IEDs still operational with little policy guidance about the security risks this might entail. For these reasons, there is a clear need for a policy on the United Nations' approach to managing the security risk posed by IEDs.¹

B. Purpose

3. The purpose of this policy is to outline the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) approach to managing the security risk posed by IEDs that directly or indirectly threaten United Nations personnel, property or programmes and to delineate the roles, responsibilities and limitations within the United Nations system for the management of these security risks².

C. Application/Scope

4. This policy is applicable to all UNSMS entities (herein “United Nations entities”), including all individuals defined in Chapter III of the *Security Policy Manual* (SPM) (“Applicability of Security Arrangements”) (herein “United Nations personnel”). This policy does not cover members of formed military or police units when deployed with their contingent or unit in United Nations missions.
5. The scope of this policy is confined to IEDs that directly or indirectly threaten United Nations personnel, property or programmes. This policy does not address the United Nations' approach to, and management of, the effect of IEDs on others, including civilian populations.
6. Details on specific IED security risk management measures and related technical procedures will be covered in separate UNSMS standards and procedures.

¹ On 13 July 2010, the Secretary-General's Policy Committee decided that “DSS will, in consultation with DPKO, DPA and all other relevant UN agencies, coordinate and facilitate the development of a comprehensive policy on the UN's approach to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) that are part of active hostilities and target UN personnel and facilities.”

² Please refer to *Security Policy Manual* Chapter IV, Section A, Policy on Security Risk Management.

D. IED Definitions

7. For the purposes of this policy, an IED is defined as an explosive device fabricated in an improvised manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic or incendiary chemicals and designed to kill, injure, damage, harass or distract. IEDs are often made from commercially available products and/or military munitions, are simple in design and are usually cheap in labour and cost to produce.
8. IEDs are highly versatile weapons due to the multiple methods available for their construction, delivery and initiation. This versatility allows them to be rapidly adapted to achieve different effects against varying targets, defeat the tactics and counter-measures employed by opponents and/or changes in the supply of raw material for their construction. The versatility and adaptability of IEDs, combined with their simplicity and low cost in manufacture, have made them a preferred weapons choice of certain threat actors who have used them to either attack larger and better equipped security forces (often with an indiscriminate impact on the civilian population) or to target civilians directly (including the United Nations).
9. United Nations entities working in complex threat environments have long been confronted with various types of weapons, including explosive weapons. In most cases, the United Nations has dealt with explosive weapons that were abandoned or unexploded ordnance, including “explosive remnants of war” (ERW) that have ceased to have value for those who deployed them. However, explosive weapons, including IEDs, that are not remnants are considered “operational” (see below) and of some value to those who deploy or use them.

E. Remnant and Operational IEDs

10. For the purpose of this policy, IEDs are categorized as either a “Remnant IED” or an “Operational IED”.
11. For the purpose of this policy, a “Remnant IED” is defined as an IED that has been declared so through the official procedures governing such decisions within the United Nations system, involving the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, in consultation with the United Nations Country Team and mine-action advice, if necessary. Such decision-making processes will consider the political, humanitarian, legal and other issues of the context in which the IEDs are found.
12. For the purpose of this policy, an “Operational IED” is defined as an IED that has **not** been officially declared a Remnant IED by the process described in paragraph 11 above. If there is any doubt as to whether an IED has been officially declared a Remnant IED, it shall be assumed to be an Operational IED by default.
13. Various United Nations entities have a mandate and clear policies and guidelines for dealing with explosive remnants, for example the International Mine Action Standards

(IMAS) that include safety principles for dealing with these explosive hazards.³ These safety principles, as well as advice from mine action advisers, are the basis of the United Nations strategy for lowering the risk posed by Remnant IEDs.

F. Managing the Security Risk posed by IEDs

14. IEDs can create a significant safety and security risk to the United Nations if not addressed. The security risk posed by IEDs that deliberately or indirectly threatens United Nations personnel, property or programmes will be managed through existing Security Risk Management policy⁴ and manual. The strategy of the United Nations for managing the security risk from IED threats is one of both **prevention** and **mitigation**, and can include any prevention and/or mitigation measure except activities prohibited in paragraph 16 below.
15. **Prevention** entails physical, procedural and training measures intended to lower the likelihood of an IED incident occurring and affecting the United Nations. Prevention measures available to United Nations entities, include, but are not limited to, information exchange and management, travel planning, security-awareness programmes and electronic countermeasures. **Mitigation** entails physical, procedural and training measures intended to lower the impact of an IED incident once it has occurred. Mitigation measures available to United Nations entities, include, but are not limited to, defensive measures such as blast/ballistic protection and stand-off distance and crisis response plans and preparations for rapid medical attention. Approved IED security risk management measures will be included in the country-specific Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS).
16. United Nations entities and/or personnel covered by the provisions of this policy, as laid out in paragraph 4 above, cannot directly engage in, support or fund activities primarily meant to disarm, remove or destroy an Operational IED. This provision is founded on the understanding that interference with the active weapons systems of threat actors may create the intention and perceived justification for violent action against the United Nations. This provision is further reinforced in situations of armed conflict by the humanitarian principle of neutrality, as enshrined in international humanitarian law and other provisions of international law. This policy should not preclude United Nations personnel from conducting capacity development of national security authorities for the protection of civilians.
17. Nevertheless, nothing in this policy is meant to contravene the provisions of the United Nations “Use of Force Policy” (see *Security Policy Manual* (SPM), Chapter IV, Section H) as it may apply to defensive actions that may be deemed necessary in emergency situations meant to negate an imminent threat to the United Nations from an IED.

³ See, for example, IMAS 10.10 – 10.70, “Mine Action Safety and Occupational Health” at <http://www.mineactionstandards.org/international-standards/imas-in-english/list-of-imas/>.

⁴ Please refer to the Security Policy Manual, Chapter IV, Section A on “Security Risk Management” which entered into force on 18 April 2016 and Security Risk Management Manual of 11 December 2015..

18. The primary responsibility for the management of IEDs, especially Operational IEDs, rests with the host Government or any other authority in control, including occupying powers or foreign forces operating in support of the authorities. Managing the security risk from Operational IEDs that directly target the United Nations may require the assistance of the host country, United Nations peacekeeping mission police/military assets and/or other international military/police forces, including to engage in activities prohibited to United Nations personnel as per paragraph 16 above.
19. If after prevention and mitigation measures are implemented the residual security risk from IEDs is deemed unacceptable,⁵ then the only option is to avoid the risk by temporarily removing United Nations personnel or assets from the danger as per *Security Policy Manual* (SPM), Chapter IV, Section D (“Relocation, Evacuation and Alternate Work Modalities – Measures to Avoid Risk”).

G. Roles and Responsibilities

20. In the management of the security risks posed by IEDs, officials of the UNSMS in-country, including the Designated Official (DO), members of the Security Management Team, and UNSMS Advisers, must fulfil their responsibilities as per the Framework of Accountability⁶ for security and all other existing security management policies, including those governing Security Risk Management, with special reference to Section F above.
21. DOs have special responsibility to liaise with host country or other applicable authorities in relation to IEDs on behalf of the United Nations and to consult, as necessary, with the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security in implementing a workable IED security risk management plan.
22. Heads of United Nations entities are responsible for informing their respective personnel of the threats and risks posed by IEDs and for properly implementing the Security Risk Management measures included in this policy (and approved by the DO) to lower the risk to their personnel, property and programmes.
23. DOs and heads of United Nations entities are to ensure that appropriate financial resources are forecasted and allocated to implement the approved IED security risk management measures.
24. United Nations Security Advisers shall advise on whether all required and approved IED security risk measures and procedures are in place and effective, including, but not limited to, physical protection, access control, training, contingency/crisis plans and information management and analysis.
25. All United Nations personnel shall be familiar with and abide by all United Nations IED risk management measures and procedures established in-country. Personnel covered by

⁵ See *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter IV, Section D. “Relocation, Evacuation and Alternate Work Modalities – Measures to Avoid Risk”.

⁶ See *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter II, Section A, “Framework of Accountability”.

the provisions of this policy have a special responsibility to refrain from any activities outlined in paragraph 16 above and to report to their respective headquarters any attempts to force or persuade them to do so.

H. Enforcement

26. In the event of an investigation into an IED-related incident, findings that any United Nations personnel failed to abide by the terms of this policy may lead to administrative or disciplinary proceedings.

I. Final Provisions

27. This policy is meant to be made available to all United Nations personnel.

28. This policy enters into effect on 8 November 2012.