

CHAPTER IV

Security Management



Section D

RISK AVOIDANCE: ALTERNATE WORK MODALITIES, AND PERSONNEL AND FAMILY RESTRICTIONS (RELOCATION AND EVACUATION)

Promulgation: 8 April 2011

**Promulgation of Revised
Version: 23 February 2024**

A. Introduction

1. The United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) policy on Security Risk Management (SRM) categorizes decisions on how to manage security risk as accept, control, avoid and/or transfer (see *Security Policy Manual (SPM)*, Chapter IV, “Policy on Security Risk Management”, paragraph 14). As part of a broader security risk management strategy, the Designated Official (DO), in consultation with the Security Management Team (SMT), can temporarily remove and/or restrict personnel and/or eligible family members from an area or situation as a means of managing the risk to them. This chapter lays out the parameters, as well as the roles and responsibilities of relevant actors, regarding the basic “Risk Avoidance” measures used by the United Nations Security Management System:
 - (a) Alternate Work Modalities; and
 - (b) Personnel and family restrictions (relocation and evacuation).

B. Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to lay out the parameters of measures to avoid risk as part of SRM, including alternate work modalities, relocation and/or evacuation, and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of relevant UNSMS actors in decisions regarding these measures.

C. Application/Scope

3. The policy is applicable to all individuals covered by the UNSMS, as defined in Chapter III of the *Security Policy Manual* (“Applicability of United Nations Security Management System”).

D. Conceptual Framework

4. The SRM process is the fundamental UNSMS tool for managing security risk. It assesses the level of security risk of specific threats to the UNSMS Organizations. Based on the SRM process, different security measures may be implemented to reduce risks to acceptable levels and enable UNSMS Organizations to continue operations.
5. “Risk Avoidance” is a security risk management option meant to minimize or eliminate the exposure to threats by temporarily removing or restricting persons from a situation, place, event or timing (including through distance, changing location/timings, and/or non-participation) by using alternate work modalities, relocation or evacuation (or their combination). Furthermore, until the situation improves or proper measures to control and lower security risks to acceptable levels are put in place, avoiding risk is the only option (see “UNSMS Security Risk Management (SRM) Manual”, Step 8: Acceptable Risk).

6. Any decision to avoid risk must take into consideration the impact of the removal of personnel and/or eligible family members on programmes and activities of UNSMS organizations, including security and/or business continuity plans. Avoiding risk is best suited for situations when limitations prevent the implementation of required risk control measures to reduce risk to an acceptable level or when more time is needed to implement required risk control measures (for details on risk control, see “UNSMS Security Risk Management (SRM) Manual”).

E. Alternate Work Modalities

7. For the purpose of this policy, “Alternate Work Modalities” are defined as risk avoidance measures, put in place to enable the continuation of programmes, short of establishing Personnel Restrictions and/or Family Restrictions (security relocation or security evacuation). Alternate Work Modalities include temporarily limiting the number of personnel at UNSMS premises through working from home or alternate locations, or creating restricted areas or times¹.
8. Decisions on Alternate Work Modalities that involve temporarily closing offices or work-from-home arrangements should be made in accordance with the human resources rules and regulations of respective UNSMS organizations.

F. Personnel and Family Restrictions

9. “Personnel Restrictions” are risk avoidance measures, beyond Alternate Work Modalities, for situations where the DO needs to place restrictions on the presence of any or all UNSMS personnel for a given area. The use of personnel restrictions must be supported by security risk and programme criticality assessments. Because the UNSMS is committed to staying and implementing its critical programmes and activities, the use of Personnel Restrictions should be considered carefully in regard to the possible impact on the ability to deliver these critical programmes. Personnel Restrictions should only be used where all other possible security risk management measures are not able to reduce risks to acceptable levels.
10. “Family Restrictions” are risk avoidance measures, beyond Alternate Work Modalities, for situations where the DO needs to place restrictions on the presence of any or all eligible family members of UNSMS personnel for a given area.
11. Options for Personnel and/or Family Restrictions are relocation and evacuation, or restricting presence in the first place.
12. Relocation is defined as the official movement of any personnel or eligible family members from their normal place of residence, assignment or place of work to another location within their country of assignment for the purpose of avoiding risk. Relocation

¹ Any organizational administrative “work from home”, or similar, decision that is not meant to minimize or eliminate exposure to security threats are not Alternate Work Modalities, as defined in this policy.

- is a risk avoidance measure that can be applied to all personnel and eligible family members.
13. Evacuation is defined as the official movement of any personnel or eligible family member from their place of assignment to a location outside of their country of assignment (safe haven country, home country or third country) for the purpose of avoiding risk. Except in the situation outlined in paragraph 14 below, evacuation is a risk avoidance measure that can be applied only to internationally recruited personnel and eligible family members of internationally recruited personnel. The evacuation of eligible family members of internationally recruited personnel is governed by the same eligibility conditions as for the payment of evacuation allowances.²
 14. Locally recruited personnel (and/or their eligible family members) may be evacuated from a country only in the most exceptional cases where their situation of unacceptable risk is a direct consequence of their employment by a UNSMS organization. A decision in this regard can only be made by the Secretary-General, as recommended by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, based on a recommendation by the DO, in consultation with the head of the concerned UNSMS organization and, as appropriate, the SMT.
 15. Individuals not covered by paragraphs 13 and 14 above may also be assisted to leave the country by the UNSMS and its organizations, to the extent feasible.

G. Roles and Responsibilities

16. The DO, in consultation with the SMT and based on the advice of the most senior security professional directly supporting the DO,³ may institute planned or ad hoc Alternate Work Modalities for UNSMS personnel and eligible family members in accordance with Section E above. Contingencies for Alternate Work Modalities should be included in the Security Plan and any ongoing Alternate Work Modality should be an approved SRM measure.
17. Representatives of UNSMS organizations can also institute Alternate Work Modalities solely for their personnel (and eligible family members) in response to organization-specific security risks. This derives from their responsibility and authority in the UNSMS Framework of Accountability. Representatives wishing to implement such measures should examine any possible negative impact these measures would have on security and/or business continuity plans. They should also inform the DO and consult with other members of the SMT to examine whether these decisions would have any negative impact on the security of other UNSMS personnel in the country.

² As per the *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter VI, Section A (“Remuneration of United Nations System Staff and Eligible Family members on Relocation/Evacuation Status”).

³ This is usually the Chief Security Adviser (CSA) or a Security Adviser (SA), including their officer-in-charge *a.i.* Where a CSA or SA is not present, this term is equivalent to the titles of Chief Security Officer, Chief of Security and Safety Services, Country Security Focal Point (CSFP) or Local Security Assistant (if necessary) in countries where no international professional security adviser has been assigned or is present.

18. The DO, in consultation with the SMT, may recommend the implementation of Personnel and/or Family Restrictions when the SRM process establishes risks as unacceptable (in accordance with Step 8 of the SRM Process). This recommendation is submitted through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security to the Secretary-General. After assessing the situation, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security makes a recommendation to the Secretary-General for approval of the implementation of the Personnel and/or Family Restrictions.
19. On behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security issues an “All UNSMS Communiqué” to the United Nations System announcing the details and parameters of the Personnel and/or Family Restrictions.
20. In the event that there is an impasse or life-threatening exigencies that impact the ability of the DO and SMT to make timely security risk avoidance decisions, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security can recommend to the Secretary-General to take such decisions, including by consulting, as necessary, the Executive Group on Security to advise and assist in rapid decision-making.
21. In the event of a breakdown of communication, the DO is authorized to use their best judgment to relocate and/or evacuate UNSMS personnel and/or eligible family members and report such action immediately thereafter to the Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security.⁴
22. If the DO, in consultation with the SMT, recommends that Personnel and/or Family Restrictions are no longer needed in any circumstance or area, it is the Secretary-General, on the advice of the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, who decides when and how personnel and eligible family members can return.
23. Decisions to implement Personnel and/or Family Restrictions are clearly decisions to control the number of personnel and eligible family members as explained in paragraph 2(c) of *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter V, Section A (“Security Clearance Policy and the Travel Request Information Process (TRIP)”). Therefore, DOs must institute “manual” security clearance procedures⁵ for all locations where Personnel and/or Family Restrictions are in effect. Notwithstanding the above, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security may retain the security clearance authority for areas subject to Personnel and/or Family Restrictions.

H. Implementing Personnel and/or Family Restrictions

24. Once the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security authorizes Personnel and/or Family Restrictions, and in accordance with the details and parameters of the communiqué issued in accordance with paragraph 19 above, the DO shall take the following steps:

⁴ As per paragraph 20 of the *Framework of Accountability*, the Area Security Coordinator (ASC) may, in exigent circumstances and where it has not been possible to communicate with the DO, use their best judgment in implementing additional measures, possibly including carrying out relocations/evacuations and report immediately thereafter.

⁵ See paragraph 18 of Chapter V, Section A (“Security Clearance Policy and the Travel Request Information Process (TRIP)”) for details on “manual” and “automatic” security clearance procedures.

- (a) Decide, in consultation with the SMT, to which personnel and/or eligible family members the Personnel and/or Family Restrictions apply and, therefore, who must be relocated and/or evacuated. The decision as to who remains is based on the “Acceptable Risk Model” (Step 8 of the SRM Process) and associated mechanisms for determining Programme Criticality and personnel requirements for critical programmes. Personnel who are unable to carry out their assigned tasks effectively due to the security situation and level of security risk should also be relocated/evacuated. The DO, in consultation with the SMT, may determine who would be subject to Personnel and/or Family Restrictions prior to any official authorization, including as part of contingency planning or in anticipation of such authorization. Personnel not subject to Personnel Restrictions shall be referred to as “programme-critical personnel”.
 - (b) If applicable, ensure that all personnel and/or eligible family members, as decided as per paragraph 24(a) above, move to one or more concentration points. The DO in consultation with the SMT may undertake this step prior to any official authorization in anticipation of such authorization.
 - (c) If applicable, relocate all personnel and/or their eligible family members, as decided as per paragraph 24(a) above, to alternate locations within the country. The temporary concentration and/or internal relocation of locally recruited personnel and eligible family members is contingent on their desire to avail themselves of this option.
 - (d) If applicable, evacuate all internationally recruited personnel and/or their eligible family members, as decided as per paragraph 24(a) above.
25. Movements resulting from the implementation of Personnel and/or Family Restrictions are official travel, so the TRIP Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) must be updated regarding the movements of personnel and eligible family members.⁶
26. Before the evacuation of any personnel or eligible family members, the DO, in consultation with the SMT, shall take all of the following actions:
- (a) Notify the host Government and appropriate local authorities, and request assistance as necessary.
 - (b) Consult with the DO in any country to which, or through which, affected personnel and/or eligible family member will travel.
 - (c) Notify Area Security Coordinators and wardens to instruct all affected personnel and/or their eligible family members on actions to be taken.

⁶ It should be noted that responsibility to update TRIP is twofold: 1) personnel need to update their personal information in the system; 2) UNDSS updates the travel advisory at the country-level.

- (d) Brief Area Security Coordinators and wardens, as necessary, on further steps that may be required.
- (e) Collectively review financial arrangements, including for the payment of salary advances, allowances, or other essential payments as necessary, in accordance with respective administrative rules and regulations.
- (f) Adjust lists of UNSMS personnel and eligible family members accordingly.
- (g) Notify all other UNSMS personnel in the country of these developments, through the Area Security Coordinator, if applicable.
- (h) Ensure that all applicable UNSMS organizations complete required actions in the Security Plan.

I. Cancellation of Personnel and/or Family Restrictions:

27. The Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, can authorize the return of any personnel subject to Personnel Restriction, by:

- (a) Canceling or adjusting the Personnel Restrictions on the recommendation of the DO, in consultation with the SMT, in accordance with paragraph 23 above; or
- (b) Approving, based on a Programme Criticality Assessment and the SRM process (as outlined in paragraph 24(a) above), the return of certain personnel to support the delivery of the respective output/activity.

28. Establishment of Family Restrictions for a certain location means that eligible family members who are subject to the Family Restrictions, are not authorized to be present in that location until the Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, cancels the Family Restrictions on the recommendation of the DO, in consultation with the SMT, in accordance with paragraph 23 above. Compliance is mandatory.⁷

29. Decisions in this regard, including in support to programme delivery, can involve consultation with the Executive Group on Security to advise and assist.

J. Final provisions:

30. *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter IV, Section D (2017) is hereby amended.

⁷ The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, on behalf of the Secretary-General, may authorize travel to, and the temporary presence of, eligible family members at locations with Family Restrictions in place. Authorization shall only be granted in rare and extraordinary situations where UNSMS personnel may need urgent family assistance, including in circumstances involving medical conditions, repatriation, or unfortunate accidents or incidents.