

Security in the Field

Information for staff members of the United Nations system

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I. [The United Nations security management system](#)

[Introduction](#)

In each country the primary responsibility for the security and protection of staff members of the United Nations, their spouse and dependants rests with the host government. This responsibility flows from every government's function of maintaining order and protecting persons and property within its jurisdiction. In the case of international organizations, their officials and property, the government is considered to have a special responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations or the government's agreements with individual organizations.

In spite of these responsibilities, there may be instances where the security and protection factors will be uncertain. To deal with these situations, the organizations of the United Nations have put in place a system for planning and managing security issues which is aimed at ensuring that there is a coordinated approach for the protection of staff.

This information booklet has been prepared for distribution to all staff members of the United Nations, as well as United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, to inform them of the existing security arrangements and their individual responsibility in this regard. It is based on the *Field Security Handbook*, a comprehensive policy document, which has been endorsed by the organizations of the United Nations system and which is for the use of officials concerned with security. This booklet also contains information regarding practical, common-sense measures which each staff member can take to minimize the risks he/she may face.

The security planning and management system of the United Nations comprises several "actors" at different levels. Some are based at the country level, while others are based at different headquarters levels. The functioning of this security planning and management system depends on the collaborative interaction of the various actors in the United Nations system.

[The United Nations Security Coordinator](#)

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has appointed a senior official as the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD). This official reports directly to the Secretary-General and serves as his coordinator at United Nations Headquarters. The UNSECOORD is responsible for:

- ❑ All policy and procedural matters related to security;
- ❑ Ensuring a coherent response by the United Nations to any emergency situation;
- ❑ Formulating detailed recommendations aimed at ensuring the security and safety of staff and eligible dependants of the United Nations system;
- ❑ Coordinating, planning and implementing inter-agency security and safety programmes and for acting as the focal point for inter-agency cooperation concerning all security matters;

- ❑ Assessing on a continuing basis the extent to which staff of the United Nations system and operations worldwide are exposed or vulnerable to security problems;
- ❑ Reviewing security plans formulated for United Nations staff in each country and ensuring that each duty station has an adequate state of preparedness regarding contingency planning;
- ❑ On behalf of the Secretary-General, taking all decisions relating to the relocation/evacuation of staff members and their eligible dependants from very insecure areas.

Headquarters of United Nations Agencies Programmes and Funds

The Executive Head of each United Nations organization appoints a Field Security Coordinator at its headquarters to ensure the necessary liaison between the United Nations Security Coordinator, the respective organization headquarters and its offices in the field. These individual organization Field Security Coordinators:

- ❑ Act as the security focal points for the management of security with respect to their organizations;
- ❑ Keep UNSECOORD informed of any security information which comes to their attention;
- ❑ Support their field offices through periodic contact;
- ❑ Participate in joint inter-agency security assessment missions;
- ❑ Ensure that the staff of their organizations comply with system-wide security instructions.

Responsibility for security at the country level

Designated Official

At each duty station, the Secretary-General, in consultation with the executive heads of the other organizations, appoints one senior official, normally the Resident Coordinator, who is called the Designated Official for Security. This individual has special responsibility for the security and protection of all staff members of the organizations and their eligible dependants at the duty station. The Designated Official shall:

- ❑ Ensure the security and safety of United Nations personnel in the country;
- ❑ In this regard, be accountable and responsible to the Secretary-General through UNSECOORD;
- ❑ Constitute a Security Management Team (SMT) to advise him/her on all security-related matters;

- ❑ Prepare, in consultation with the Security Management Team, a security plan for the country;
- ❑ Report all security matters to UNSECOORD;
- ❑ If there is a security phase in effect, grant security clearance for United Nations staff and their dependants, if applicable, to enter the country whether on mission or on assignment;
- ❑ Ensure that all staff members and their dependants are briefed on security measures in place at the duty station;
- ❑ Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the security of locally recruited staff members;
- ❑ Give appropriate security directives to staff members in the expectation that they will be followed.

Alternate Designated Official

In the absence of the Designated Official, his/her functions will be assumed by an Alternate Designated Official, nominated by the Designated Official and Security Management Team and appointed by UNSECOORD.

Representatives of organizations

At the country level representatives of organizations shall:

- ❑ Consult with and assist the Designated Official on all matters concerning security and the implementation of the country-specific security plan;
- ❑ Ensure that the Designated Official is provided at all times with updated lists of all staff members and their eligible family members;
- ❑ Ensure that the Designated Official is at all times informed of the whereabouts and movements of the organization's staff members and their dependants especially in countries where insecurity is high;
- ❑ Report all incidents which have security implications to the Designated Official;
- ❑ Comply with all decisions of the Security Management Team.

Field Security Officer

At duty stations where a full-time security officer is not warranted, one international staff member will serve as the Field Security Officer. For those duty stations where security is tenuous, a full-time Field Security Officer will be appointed to assist the Designated Official. The Field Security Officer plays a key role in organizing and implementing relocations/evacuations of United Nations staff and their eligible dependants in times of crisis. The Field Security Officer shall:

- ❑ Assist the Designated Official in carrying out his/her responsibilities with regard to the security of staff members and their dependants;

- ❑ Ensure that all staff members and their dependants are kept fully informed on matters affecting their security;
- ❑ Conduct security surveys of residential areas and premises;
- ❑ Coordinate United Nations responses to crisis situations on behalf of the Designated Official;
- ❑ Report all cases in which staff members and their dependants have been victims of conventional crime and submit a quarterly incident report recording these cases

Area Coordinators

Some of the larger countries have specific areas which are separate from the capital city in terms of both distance and exposure to emergencies. For such areas, the Designated Official and Security Management Team will appoint Area Coordinators who, on behalf of the Designated Official, will coordinate and control the security arrangements for the area. Area Coordinators will have responsibilities similar to those of the Designated Official in their respective area. In addition, he/she will keep the Designated Official informed of all incidents or developments which have a bearing on the security and protection of staff members and their dependants.

Wardens

In order to facilitate coordination of the security arrangements, information and instructions, the Designated Official and Security Management Team will appoint Wardens and Deputy Wardens to ensure the proper implementation of security in particular, predetermined zones of the city. The zones covered by a Warden will not be larger than that which would enable him/her to reach staff members on foot in case of an emergency. Wardens shall:

- ❑ Ensure the proper implementation of the security plan in their zone of responsibility;
- ❑ Visit periodically all domiciles/families of staff members for whom the warden is responsible;
- ❑ Function as a channel of communication between the Designated Official and staff members in their zones;
- ❑ Ensure that staff members and their dependants in their zones are informed with regard to security arrangements and security phases in effect;
- ❑ Ensure that security instructions are being followed;
- ❑ Ensure that United Nations visitors residing temporarily at hotels within their respective zone are included in security arrangements.

The Security Management Team

The Security Management Team shall be constituted by the Designated Official to advise him/her on all security-related matters. The composition and size of the team may vary; however, most representatives of United Nations agencies, programmes and funds at the duty

station are expected to participate. For duty stations where there are a large number of organizations represented, the Designated Official may select a limited number of representatives to assist him/her in planning and managing security matters.

Applicability of security arrangements

Security arrangements apply, in varying degrees, to a wide number of categories of individuals connected with the work of United Nations organizations. Security arrangements detailed in the *Field Security Handbook* are primarily focused on internationally recruited staff members of the United Nations, their spouse and their dependants, as well as taking into account the situation of locally recruited staff members, whether nationals or non-nationals of the host country. Most of the security arrangements are intended to apply to:

- ❑ All persons in the employ of the organizations, except those who are both locally recruited and paid by the hour, their spouse and dependants who are authorized to be at the duty station;
- ❑ Consultants, officials or experts, including transient personnel, on mission for the organizations of the United Nations system;
- ❑ United Nations volunteers, their spouse and recognized dependants who are authorized to be at the duty station; and
- ❑ United Nations fellows, either non-resident fellows studying in the country, or nationals who are on leave from the country of study.

Peacekeeping forces

With respect to United Nations peacekeeping and special missions, military and civilian personnel are under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and/or the Force Commander or Chief of Staff, as applicable. Under the terms of their contracts, staff members who are included in the civilian component of the mission are obliged to serve wherever the Organization considers necessary.

The Security Plan

The primary management tool for security preparedness at the duty station is the Security Plan, which must be established by each designated Official and Security Management Team. It describes the various security measures to be taken and arrangements to be followed in the event of serious criminality or emergency situations such as hostilities, internal disorder or natural disasters. The aim of a Security Plan is to detail the responsibilities of specific individuals, the actions to be carried out and the sequence to be followed to ensure the security of staff members and their eligible family members.

Security phases

The United Nations employs five specific security phases to describe those security measures to be implemented based on the prevailing security conditions in a given country or in parts

of a country. These five phases are standard for all duty stations and must be included in all Security Plans. Following consultation with the Security Management Team the Designated Official may declare Phases One and Two at his/her own discretion and notify UNSECOORD accordingly. Phases Three and Four, normally, will be declared by the Designated Official only with the authorization of UNSECOORD; and Phase Five normally will be declared by the Designated Official only when the authorization of the Secretary-General has been obtained through UNSECOORD.

Phases may be implemented in sequential order or as the situation dictates. Situations may occur where one part of the country is under a different phase than the remainder of the country. A "return to normal" may be implemented by the Designated Official with respect to Phases One and Two. If Phases Three, Four or Five have been implemented, the decision to return to a lower phase will be taken by UNSECOORD on the advice of the Designated Official.

The five Phases of the Security Plan are:

Phase One, Precautionary

This phase is designed to warn staff members that the security situation in the country or a portion of the country is such that caution should be exercised. All travel into the duty station requires advance clearance from the Designated Official.

Phase Two, Restricted movement

This phase signifies a much higher level of alert and imposes major restrictions on the movement of all staff members and their families. During Phase Two all staff members and their families will be required to remain at home unless otherwise instructed. No travel, either incoming or within the country, will occur unless specifically authorized by the Designated Official as essential travel. Phase Two is generally of short duration, after which the Phase will return to less restrictive terms or will be increased because of the threat.

Phase Three, Relocation

Phase Three indicates a substantial deterioration in the security situation, which may result in the relocation of staff members or their eligible dependants. When recommending Phase Three to UNSECOORD, the Designated Official and Security Management Team may recommend any of the following mandatory actions:

- ☐ Temporary concentration of all internationally recruited staff members and/or their eligible dependants in one or more sites within a particular area;
- ☐ Relocation of all internationally recruited staff members and/or their eligible dependants to alternative locations within the country; and/or
- ☐ Relocation outside the country of all eligible dependants of internationally recruited staff members and/or non-essential internationally recruited staff members. The determination

of essential staff members for security purposes will be made jointly by the Designated Official and the individual representative of the agencies, programmes or funds at the duty station.

Special Note: As a result of a recent amendment to the *Field Security Handbook*, spouses of internationally recruited staff members may remain, on a voluntary basis and subject to the approval of the Designated Official, at a duty station where Phase Three has been declared. Should this option be exercised, *no evacuation allowances* would be payable for the individual concerned. *This option applies only to Phase Three and only to spouses of internationally recruited staff members, never to other dependants.*

Phase Four, Programme suspension

Phase Four is to enable the Designated Official to recommend to the Secretary-General, through the UNSECOORD, the relocation outside the country of all remaining internationally recruited staff members except those directly concerned with *emergency or humanitarian relief operations or security matters*. All other internationally recruited staff members who heretofore were considered essential to maintain programme activities will be evacuated at this time.

Phase Five, Evacuation

The decision to initiate Phase Five – which can only be declared following approval by the Secretary-General – signifies that the situation has deteriorated to such a point that all remaining internationally recruited staff members are required to leave.

The relocation/evacuation of internationally recruited staff members and/or their eligible family members will, in the first instance, normally be to a designated safe haven, either inside the country or in another country approved by UNSECOORD. Staff members and/or dependants who are relocated/evacuated from a duty station may be entitled to evacuation allowances. (For more information regarding this matter, please contact your administrative officer.)

Following the relocation/evacuation, a decision will be taken within 30 days to:

- ☐ Authorize their return to the duty station;
- ☐ Reassign staff members, temporarily or otherwise;
- ☐ Authorize their return to their respective home country.

Security of locally recruited staff members

The question of assistance to locally recruited staff members in times of crisis is of great concern to the organizations. Under the existing policy, outlined in the *Field Security Handbook*, locally recruited staff members may be evacuated from the duty station in only the most exceptional cases in which their security is endangered as a direct consequence of their employment by the organizations of the United Nations. A decision in this regard can only be made by the Secretary-General, as recommended by UNSECOORD, based on a

recommendation by the Designated Official.

There are, however, security arrangements which the Designated Official and Security Management Team must put into place to assist locally recruited staff, as follows:

- ❑ Maintain an updated list of locally recruited staff members and their eligible dependants at the duty station. This information includes the name, nationality, title, index number, address, telephone number and names of eligible dependants.
- ❑ Establish a warden system at the duty station to cover all locally recruited staff members and their eligible dependants. Where possible, this warden system is to be integrated into the warden system for internationally recruited staff.
- ❑ Assist any locally recruited staff member who may request house identification with United Nations markings.

Security phase measures for locally recruited staff

During the various phases of the Security Plan, the following measures will apply to locally recruited staff members:

Phase One (Precautionary):

Locally recruited staff will be alerted in the same manner as internationally recruited staff;

Phase Two (Restricted movement):

Locally recruited staff do not report to work unless otherwise instructed;

Phases Three (Relocation), Four (Programme suspension) and Five (Evacuation):

Depending on the actual situation, and in consultation with UNSECOORD, the Designated Official may:

- ❑ Exceptionally permit local staff to absent themselves from the duty station on special leave with pay or may relocate them to a safe area within the country and authorize payment of Daily Subsistence Allowance for a period of up to 30 days;
- ❑ Give three months salary in advance and, if necessary, a grant to cover transportation costs for themselves and their eligible dependants.

Arrest and detention of staff and/or dependants

Regrettably, it is commonplace for United Nations staff members or their dependants to be arrested. It is therefore important that all staff members understand their rights as members of the United Nations in order to handle more effectively any situation in which these rights are violated. Standard procedures have been established to ensure that if any staff member or consultant or immediate family member, whether local or international, is arrested or detained, an immediate report with all the required information is provided to the UNSECOORD and to the employing organization.

The Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 February 1946, governs the rights of United Nations staff and their eligible dependants. The relevant sections are:

Article II, Section 3:

“The premises of the United Nations shall be inviolable. The property and assets of the United Nations, wherever located and by whomever held, shall be immune from the search, requisition, confiscations, expropriation and any other form of interference, whether by executive, administrative, judicial or legislative action.”

Article V, Section 18:

“Officials of the United Nations shall:

- (a) be immune from legal process in respect of words spoken or written and all acts performed by them in their official capacity ...”

Article VI, Section 22:

“Experts (other than officials coming within the scope of Article V) performing missions for the United Nations shall be accorded such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions during the period of their missions, including the time spent on journeys in connection with their missions ...”

When a governmental authority arrests or detains a United Nations staff member – whether internationally or locally recruited – or other agent of the United Nations, the United Nations has the right to:

- ☐ Visit the staff member or agent;
- ☐ Converse with the staff member or agent;
- ☐ Be apprised of the grounds for the arrest or detention, including the main facts and formal charges;
- ☐ Assist the staff member or agent in arranging legal counsel for his/her defense;

- ❑ Appear in legal proceedings to defend any United Nations interest affected by the arrest or detention.
- ❑ In addition to immediately reporting the incident to United Nations Headquarters, the Designated Official will contact the government authorities to request:
- ❑ All relevant information regarding the arrest or detention, including legal grounds or charges against the staff member;
- ❑ Immediate access to the detainee by United Nations representatives;
- ❑ Immediate access to the detainee by a doctor to evaluate his/her medical condition.

Your responsibilities

The protection that will be afforded by the host government in no way impairs your responsibilities to the organization you serve and, in particular, the requirement that you shall not seek nor receive instructions from any government or authority external to the organization which you serve. If you are given instructions by authorities of the host country relative to security or protection which differ from those of the Designated Official, he/she should be informed immediately. Within these limitations, you should cooperate with the host government and the organizations in their efforts to assure your security and protection as well as those of your family members and your property.

Relocations/evacuations ordered by the Secretary-General do not necessarily coincide in extent and timing with those recommended by embassies represented at the duty station. If facilities are offered by a government other than the host government, the Designated Official should be consulted before the facilities are accepted. If you follow embassy instructions without prior approval of the Designated Official, you could be subject to disciplinary action.

Before you travel to the duty station

If you are travelling to a new duty station on assignment or on mission, you should consider the following:

- ❑ Make sure your documentation is in order. Make copies of all important documents, bring one set to the duty station and leave one set outside the duty station with family or friends;
- ❑ Draw up a power of attorney and give it to a trusted friend/family member in your home country;
- ❑ Draw up a valid will for each adult family member which specifies arrangements for permanent guardianship of minor children in the event both parents die;
- ❑ Ensure that you are properly equipped for the duty station;

- ❑ Check the Security Phase in effect at the duty station, if any, and ensure that you have the required security clearances;
- ❑ Ensure that the duty station is aware of your travel plans and, if necessary, will meet you and your family upon arrival.

Once you arrive at the duty station

Once you arrive at your new duty station, *do* the following:

- ❑ Ensure that you receive a security briefing regarding conditions at the duty station and the precautions you should take;
- ❑ Ask who your warden is. If your warden does not make contact with you, ask to meet him/her as soon as possible to discuss the security and evacuation plan as it applies to you;
- ❑ Ensure you have the telephone numbers and addresses of all officials responsible for security at the duty station;
- ❑ If you are issued with a walkie-talkie, make sure you know how it works, how to keep it operational and the list of call signs at the duty station;
- ❑ Complete the record of internationally recruited staff members and their eligible dependants which records information regarding your address and telephone number, the names of your dependants, the names of your children's schools, the numbers of your passports and laissez-passers, your vehicle registration and licence numbers and information regarding any medical conditions;
- ❑ Ensure that you have completed and provided your organization's headquarters with a copy of your Inventory of furniture, household effects, automobiles and valuables. This form is mandatory if you require compensation for loss of personal effects or for insurance purposes.

Always be prepared

You should at all times ensure:

- ❑ Your passports, laissez-passers, ID cards, visas, family certificates, health certificates and any return travel tickets are valid;
- ❑ You have a supply of cash (both local currency and US Dollars) and travellers cheques on hand;
- ❑ You have a 14-day supply of food, water, candles, flashlights and first-aid kits available;
- ❑ Your vehicle is in good working order and has all the necessary equipment. Get in the habit of refilling your gas tank when it is half full.

Your actions during Security Phases

Phase One (Precautionary):

- ☐ No unnecessary movement;
- ☐ Check the validity of your documents;
- ☐ Inform the Designated Official and your warden if you have any special medical requirements;
- ☐ Ensure your vehicles (both official and private) are refuelled and in good working order;
- ☐ Check your food/water supplies;
- ☐ Check your other essential supplies.

Phase Two (Restricted movement):

- ☐ Take your children out of school;
- ☐ Pack one suitcase per person (maximum weight 15 kgs). Consider carefully items you will need – you may find yourself changing climates abruptly;
- ☐ Label each suitcase with your name and the name of your organization;
- ☐ Prepare food and water reserves;
- ☐ Update your inventory;
- ☐ Plan arrangements for any pets you may have.

Phases Three (Relocation), Four (Programme suspension) and Five (Evacuation):

- ☐ Comply with all security instructions given by your warden, Designated Official or other security officials;
- ☐ Leave packing instructions or lists and specify what you wish to be done with your personal effects. If items are for local sale, specify your preferred price;
- ☐ Leave details regarding your private vehicles, including location, shipping instructions or local sale price; ensure that you have copies of all relevant documentation and a spare set of keys;
- ☐ Ensure that you have records of rental contracts, payments and deposits for utilities, school fees and bank accounts;
- ☐ Ensure that you provide the Designated Official with written instructions giving him/her the authority to arrange bank transfers as required;
- ☐ Make arrangements for pets – they will not be evacuated.

II. *Personal security guidelines*

Introduction

Personal security is an individual responsibility. The security risk can be reduced by using common sense and precautionary actions. You – the individual – play the most important role in maintaining your personal security. These guidelines are provided to assist you in developing good security practices. *They are not all-inclusive* and staff members who have further concerns should contact the Security Officer or Designated Official at their duty station. You should adapt these guidelines to your own duty station, situation and abilities and use them to assist you in security planning. Although locally recruited staff members are generally well-versed in dealing with the security and safety aspects of life in their homeland and city, some of the measures outlined herein may also be of interest to them.

General

The best way to be safe is to avoid trouble in the first place, rather than try to extract yourself later. This means that you should develop a strong sense of security awareness and adjust your behaviour to take into account the environment in which you find yourself and the possible risks related to it. Consideration of the following points will increase your own personal security awareness:

Do:

- ☐ Follow your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable about a location or a situation, leave immediately;
- ☐ Learn to notice details about people. In the event of an incident, this will help in giving a good description;
- ☐ Always know where you are going. Always behave as though you know where you are going. Demonstrate a confidence that you may not necessarily feel;
- ☐ Become knowledgeable about your neighbourhood. Where is the nearest police station? Which stores, restaurants, businesses are open late at night? Is there a telephone nearby?
- ☐ Keep a low profile;
- ☐ Establish several routes to work and vary your selection of them and the time you depart for work and return home. Most incidents take place as the individual either leaves or returns home;
- ☐ Identify routines, such as the regular game of tennis, jogging, social events, etc., and change the time at which they occur. Also, beware of routines that cannot be avoided such as picking up children at school;
- ☐ Be alert to any evidence of surveillance of your house, office or travel route between the two; serious attacks are usually preceded by a period of surveillance;
- ☐ Know your own ability. Be honest with yourself and be aware of your capabilities. You should always try to maintain yourself in good physical condition;

- ☐ Call attention to yourself if you are in danger; shout, blow the horn of your vehicle;
- ☐ Be sure that you know what specific security arrangements are in place at your duty station; know how the walkie-talkie system operates;
- ☐ At a new duty station find out about customs, how to behave, potential threats and areas to avoid;
- ☐ Learn a few phrases in the local language so that you can signal your need for help; also, learn a few phrases in the local language about the United Nations and its role in the country;
- ☐ Rehearse what actions you would take if you were to be confronted. There is no right or wrong way to respond to an attack. Each situation will be different. Whether to resist an attacker or not can only be your decision. Generally, the following options will be open to you: talk your way out of it; give in to the demands made of you; shout for help or yell "fire"; flee; fight. *Remember, your life is not worth losing for material possessions*; and
- ☐ Make sure your level of security is balanced by the level of threat at your duty station.

Do not:

- ☐ Place yourself in situations which may be expected to attract threats, e.g., political rallies;
- ☐ Ignore unusual or strange circumstances;
- ☐ Display cash, keys or other valuables, as this may attract potential robbers;
- ☐ Establish routines, as they make your movements easy to predict for any observer.

At home

Do not be complacent about your security because you are at home! Your home may be the target of robbers who might harm you during the commission of crime. You should carefully assess the physical security of your home and make improvements as necessary. Considering the following points will increase your home security:

Do:

- ☐ Be sure your doors and locks are strong, and lock your doors, even if you are home and even if you leave only for a few minutes;
- ☐ Make sure your entrance area is well-lit;
- ☐ Consider making one area of your home a safe haven – some place where you and your family can secure yourselves against attack and call for help. This might be a bedroom with a strong door and a bolt, or possibly a bathroom. Make sure you have a possible fire exit;
- ☐ Place shades, curtains or blinds on every window;

- ❑ Ensure that servants know what security measures you want implemented, such as identifying all callers before opening doors; never allowing access to unauthorized visitors without your specific approval; never providing information about you over the telephone to anyone; never discussing your affairs with anyone; alerting you if they see someone suspicious near the residence;
- ❑ Ensure your guard knows exactly what you expect: what his patrol should include, how often he should patrol and how he should give an alarm in case of trouble. The guard must also know what to do in case he is forced to leave the property by intruders, where he should go and what he should do when he gets there;
- ❑ Get to know your neighbours;
- ❑ Place telephones away from windows and doors through which you can be observed;
- ❑ Be wary of unexpected visitors, especially after dark;
- ❑ Cut back or remove bushes/trees close to the house which might hide an intruder;
- ❑ In an elevator, stand near the control panel. If threatened, hit the alarm button and press as many buttons as you can reach, enabling the door to open at any of several floors;
- ❑ Before hiring servants, do a background check on the person. Ask for references and check them; and
- ❑ If you find a servant to be dishonest or a thief, dismiss him or her immediately and escort the person out of the house. Immediately notify all places where the servant may be purchasing on your account (such as stores) that the servant has been fired.

Do not:

- ❑ Put your name on a mailbox or on a gate post;
- ❑ Leave valuable items outside and do not leave potential tools for criminals to use against you where they can find them, e.g., if you have a ladder, lock it up;
- ❑ Open your door to strangers;
- ❑ Permit a stranger to use your telephone; offer to make the call for the person;
- ❑ Sleep with your windows open unless they have secure bars; and
- ❑ Entrust servants with keys to your residence; if this is unavoidable, have a special lock to which your servants do not have a key and use this lock when you are at home.

Travelling

Travellers are often exposed to particular risk, as they are known to be carrying money, passports and valuables. They are vulnerable because they are often disoriented and unsure of the safety of their surroundings. Consideration of the following points will improve your security while travelling:

- ❑ Always check the security phase of the country to which you are travelling and ensure that you have the proper security clearances, as required;
- ❑ Always inform the United Nations office of your arrival and local contact numbers. Remain in touch with the office; ensure you have the telephone number of the Designated Official and his/her Deputy;
- ❑ Before you leave home, let someone know your plans. Leave contact numbers. If you change plans, let someone know;
- ❑ Stay alert – watch your luggage and briefcase. Keep your passport, laissez-passer, airline tickets, money and travellers cheques safe; it is preferable to keep them on your person;
- ❑ Photocopy airline tickets, passport identification page and relevant visa page, driver's license and credit cards you plan to take. Leave one set at home and keep another with you in a separate place from the valuables. Leave a copy of traveller cheque serial numbers at home and take a copy with you;
- ❑ If possible, schedule direct flights. Try to minimize time spent in unsecured airport public areas. Move quickly from the check-in counter to the secured area;
- ❑ At the airport be calm, do not allow people to rush you, keep your possessions under control;
- ❑ Know exactly how you will travel from the airport to the hotel or first business appointment. If you are being met at the airport, does the person waiting for you have proper identification?
- ❑ Stay in larger hotels which have more elaborate security;
- ❑ Choose a room near the elevator to avoid having to walk down a long, empty corridor. If you feel uncomfortable, ask a hotel employee to escort you to your room;
- ❑ Keep the balcony door or window locked and draw the curtains;
- ❑ Use a rubber doorstop for added safety (recommended that you carry one as part of your luggage). If not available, use a chair to jam the door;
- ❑ Upon arrival in your room, find the nearest fire escape. Walk from your room counting the doors until the fire escape. Imagine how you would reach it if you were crawling in darkness and smoke. Read the hotel's fire instructions;
- ❑ Park in well-lit areas;
- ❑ If you are attending a conference, remove your name tag as soon as possible to avoid being identified;
- ❑ When first entering your room, check the closets, bathroom and balcony to make sure they are not occupied;
- ❑ Be wary of con artists and people offering to exchange money for you at black market rates;

- ❑ Beware of individuals posing as police or security officers who want you to accompany them to another location. Obtain proper identification and call the local police to verify. Ask the hotel desk to assist you in verifying identities. Before you accompany them, call the Designated Official and advise him/her of the situation.
- ❑ If someone knocks on your door, assume the person is who he/she claims to be; call the desk to double-check. Always use the deadbolt and chain;
- ❑ Enter your room if you find the door open or unlocked. Return to the desk and ask someone to accompany you to your room;
- ❑ Stay on the ground floor or in a room facing an outside corridor. If possible, book a room between the second and seventh floors – above ground level to prevent easy entrance from outside and low enough for fire equipment to reach in an emergency;
- ❑ Display your room key to strangers; and
- ❑ Leave the “Please clean my room” sign on your door. It tells people the room is empty. Call housekeeping instead.

Walking

By considering the following points, you will improve your security while walking:

Do:

- ❑ As you prepare to go out, check that all closures on your bags are shut. Put your wallet in a front pocket or under clothing. Carry only the cash you need and divide it;
- ❑ Always be aware and alert to your surroundings;
- ❑ Walk nearer to the curb to avoid passing too close to shrubbery, dark doorways and other places of concealment;
- ❑ If you must use a personal stereo, i.e., a Walkman, keep the volume down low enough so that you can hear your surroundings;
- ❑ Keep only those keys on your key chain that you use;
- ❑ If someone suspicious is behind you or ahead of you, cross and recross the street to the other side. If in doubt, use whatever means necessary to draw attention to yourself and remember that it is much better to suffer the embarrassment of being wrong than to fail to take action if you feel threatened;
- ❑ Mark your keys so they can be identified in the dark; this makes it easier to find the appropriate keys quickly;
- ❑ Carry identification, preferably with blood type indicated.

Do not:

- ❑ Approach the vehicle if a driver pulls up next to you asking for directions, and beware of the suggestion to “look at this map”;

- ☐ Be afraid to yell and run in the opposite direction if a car approaches and the driver threatens you;
- ☐ Hitchhike or accept a ride from a stranger;
- ☐ Jiggle your keys in your hand unnecessarily, it announces that you are on your way home;
- ☐ Take shortcuts through isolated areas;
- ☐ Walk alone at night;
- ☐ Talk to strangers;
- ☐ Have your name or address on your key chain.

Driving

Being in a vehicle can give you a false sense of security and can possibly make you a target of hijackers. Following the tips below can improve your security:

Do:

- ☐ Whenever possible, travel on well-lit, populated streets. Keep windows rolled up, except for a small ventilation space. *Keep doors locked;*
- ☐ Be especially alert when you are at a red light or a stop sign. Develop the habit of adjusting driving speed to avoid stopping at traffic lights. Be prepared to drive away, sounding the horn, if you are threatened;
- ☐ Keep your car in good working order. Make sure you have a full tank of gas, flashlight, inflated spare tire, jack, tire iron, basic tool kit, jumper cables, folding shovel, first-aid kit and a gallon of potable water. Know where you are going and how to get there. Carry a map with you;
- ☐ When parking at night, select a place that will be lit when you return. Check for loiterers before leaving the car. Do not park your car on the street if you have access to a garage or a security parking area;
- ☐ Before getting into your car, look inside first to make sure no one is hiding in the back seat. Check underneath the car from a distance. When leaving your car, make sure it is locked;
- ☐ Think twice before deciding to offer assistance to what may appear to be a stranded motorist, regardless of gender.

Do not:

- ☐ *Drive into your own driveway or park in a deserted area* if you suspect that someone is following you. Make a few turns down active streets. If the car continues to follow you, drive to a location where you know you can get help, such as the nearest police station;
- ☐ Drive alone at night;

- ❑ Panic if someone attempts to force you off the road. Blow your horn constantly to attract attention. If you are forced over, as soon as you stop, put your car in reverse and back away. Blow your horn and keep the car in motion;
- ❑ Pick up hitchhiker

Public transportation

Considering the following points will improve your security while using public transportation:

Do:

- ❑ Wait for your train in a designated waiting area during off-hours;
- ❑ Sit in the train car that is occupied by the conductor or driver;
- ❑ Know the hours of operation of the trains you are using so that you do not need to wait on deserted platforms. Avoid taking the last train to your destination;
- ❑ After getting off the bus or leaving a subway station, always look around to see whether you are being followed.

Do not:

- ❑ Ride in compartments of trains which are deserted.

III. Surviving as a hostage

Introduction

Over the past few years the number of staff members who have been kidnapped or taken hostage has increased substantially. Every hostage or kidnap situation is different. There are no strict rules of behaviour; however, there are a number of steps which you can take to minimize the effects of detention and enhance your ability to cope and to see the incident through to a successful release.

Survival considerations

These techniques have been successfully employed by others who have been taken hostage:

- ❑ No one can tell an individual whether he or she should resist or not if taken hostage/kidnapped. This decision must be made by each person's own assessment of the circumstances. Resisting the attempt may be extremely risky. You may be injured if you attempt to resist armed individuals. It is possible that you will immediately be blindfolded and drugged.
- ❑ Being taken hostage is probably one of the most devastating experiences a staff member can undergo. The first 15 to 45 minutes of a hostage situation are the most dangerous. Follow the instructions of your captors. They are in a highly emotional state, regardless of whether they are psychologically unstable or caught in an untenable situation. They are in a fight or flight reactive state and could strike out. Your job is to survive. After the

initial shock wears off, your captors are able to better recognize their position. Be certain you can explain everything on your person.

- ❑ Immediately after you have been taken, pause, take a deep breath and try to relax. Fear of death or injury is a normal reaction to this situation. Recognizing your reactions may help you adapt more effectively. A hostage usually experiences greatest anxiety in the hours following the incident. This anxiety will begin to decline when the person realizes he/she is still alive – at least for now – and a certain routine sets in. Feelings of depression and helplessness will continue throughout captivity and most hostages will feel deeply humiliated by what they undergo during captivity. Most hostages, however, will quickly adapt to the situation. Remember your responsibility is to survive.
- ❑ Do not be a hero; do not talk back or act “tough”. Accept your situation. Any action on your part could bring a violent reaction from your captors.
- ❑ Keep a low profile. Avoid appearing to study your abductors, although, to the extent possible, you should make mental notes about their mannerisms, clothes and apparent rank structure. This may help the authorities after your release.
- ❑ Be cooperative and obey hostage-takers’ demands without appearing either servile or antagonistic. Be conscious of your body language as well as your speech. Do not say or do anything to arouse the hostility or suspicions of your captors. Do not be argumentative. Act neutral and be a good listener to your captors. Do not speak unless spoken to and then only when necessary. Be cautious about making suggestions to your captors, as you may be held responsible if something you suggest goes wrong.
- ❑ Anticipate isolation and possible efforts by the hostage-takers to disorient you. Your watch may be taken away so you are unable to determine whether it is night or day. Nevertheless, try to maintain a routine.
- ❑ Try to keep cool by focusing your mind on pleasant scenes or memories or prayers. Try to recall the plots of movies or books. This will keep you mentally active. You must try to think positively. Try to maintain a sense of humour. It will lessen anxiety.
- ❑ Ask for anything you need or want (medicines, books, paper). All they can say is no.
- ❑ Build rapport with your captors. Find areas of mutual interest which emphasize personal rather than political interests. An excellent topic of discussion is family and children. If you speak their language, use it – it will enhance communications and rapport.
- ❑ Bear in mind that hostages often develop a positive attitude towards their captors. This is known as “Stockholm Syndrome”, after an incident involving hostages at a Swedish bank. In addition, as the hostage identifies with his/her captors, a negative attitude towards those on the outside may develop.
- ❑ You may be asked to sign notes verifying that you are alive or you may be asked to write a “confession” that you or the organization have been involved in nefarious activities. The decision to sign these is an individual one based on the situation. Some hostages refuse to sign unless the language of the note is changed. This may help bolster your morale and make you feel less helpless. It can also serve to command a certain degree of respect from the captors.

- ❑ Exercise daily. Develop a daily physical fitness programme and stick to it. If possible, stay well-groomed and clean.
- ❑ As a result of the hostage situation, you may have difficulty retaining fluids and may experience a loss of appetite and weight. Try to drink water and eat even if you are not hungry. It is important to maintain your strength.
- ❑ Do not make threats against hostage-takers or give any indication that you would testify against them. If hostage-takers are attempting to conceal their identity, give no indication that you recognize them.
- ❑ Try to think of persuasive reasons why hostage-takers should not harm you. Encourage them to let authorities know your whereabouts and condition. Suggest ways in which you may benefit your captors in negotiations that would free you. It is important that your abductors view you as a person worthy of compassion and mercy. Never beg, plead or cry. You must gain your captors' respect as well as sympathy.
- ❑ If you end up serving as a negotiator between hostage-takers and authorities, make sure the messages are conveyed accurately. Be prepared to speak on the radio or telephone.
- ❑ Escape only if you are sure you will be successful. If you are caught, your captors may use violence to teach you and others a lesson.
- ❑ At every opportunity, emphasize that, as a United Nations staff member, you are neutral and not involved in politics.
- ❑ If there is a rescue attempt by force, drop quickly to the floor and seek cover. Keep your hands over your head. When appropriate, identify yourself.
- ❑ Be patient.

Victim of an airline hijacking

Statistics seem to indicate that airline hijacking is on the decline. However, in order to reduce the trauma and stress related to this experience, all travellers should be prepared for this eventuality. Should you be hijacked, the following suggestions can help you handle the situation:

Do:

- ❑ Consider requesting a window or centre seat since passengers in such seats are less accessible to the questions and interests of hijackers. In addition, should there be a rescue, those sitting in window or centre seats will be less vulnerable to gunfire in the aisles. On the other hand, it is easier to exit an aircraft if you are sitting in an aisle seat;
- ❑ Get rid of anything that you cannot explain or which might offend the hijackers. If you are wearing or carrying anything which could provoke or irritate the hijackers, discreetly remove it and get rid of it;
- ❑ Try to remain calm and obey the hijackers;

- ❑ Have your passport protected with a leather passport case to make the nationality less prominent if hijackers order passengers to place their passports in a box which is carried down the aisle in order to determine the nationalities of the passengers;
- ❑ Respond simply if you are asked questions by the hijackers;
- ❑ Try to appear uninterested as to what is going on around you. Sleep, read a book, etc. When so occupied, you will be less influenced by what is going on around you, and hijackers do not bother people who are not a threat to them;
- ❑ Try to maintain your composure. Fear of death or injury is natural. Recognizing this may help you manage the crisis more effectively. Pause, take a breath and attempt to organize your thoughts;
- ❑ Attempt to do exercises in your seat if the hijacking continues beyond a day; such exercises will keep your mind off the incident and will keep your body stimulated;
- ❑ In the event of a rescue attempt, slide down in your seat as far as you can or get on the floor, and cover your head and arms with a pillow to avoid being injured.

Do not:

- ❑ Say or do anything which might cause the hijackers to take an interest in you;
- ❑ Resist the hijackers. Past experience shows that those who react aggressively place themselves at greater risk than those who behave passively;
- ❑ Make the fact known that you speak the hijackers' language, if this is the case. Although it is often assumed that speaking the language could enhance your rapport with the hijacker, prior experience indicates that you are better off speaking your native tongue and acquiring information by listening to the hijackers' conversations. This could also provide you with information as to what the hijackers intend to do next;
- ❑ Appear sullen or uncommunicative. Doing so depersonalizes you in the eyes of the hijackers and could increase your risks.

Post-release reactions

In many cases, former hostages feel bitter about the treatment they receive after their release. Most hostages feel a strong need to tell their story in detail. If assistance in this regard is not provided, request a post-traumatic stress debriefing. Bear in mind that the emotional problems of a former hostage do not appear immediately. Sometimes they appear months later. Whatever happens, readjustment after the incident is a slow process requiring patience and understanding. As soon as the

hostage realizes that he or she is a normal person having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation, the healing process can begin.

IV. Security for children

Introduction

It is important to remember that at most duty stations children are present. Special efforts must be made to ensure that the children are protected.

Rules for children

Children must be taught:

- ☐ To keep a parent in sight in public places and to go to a policeman or store clerk if lost and in need of help;
- ☐ Not to go anywhere with anyone without a parent's permission;
- ☐ A password known only to family and close friends;
- ☐ Not to accept packages or letters from people they don't know;
- ☐ To know at least key phrases in the local language;
- ☐ To let someone know their location and plans;
- ☐ To travel in groups or, at a minimum, in pairs;
- ☐ To use heavily travelled streets and avoid isolated areas to the extent possible;
- ☐ To report immediately anyone who molests or annoys them.

Rules for parents

Parents need to:

- ☐ Teach your child never to get into a car or go into a house without your permission. *Never* leave your child alone in a public place;
- ☐ Teach your child your home address and telephone number. Children should know how to use public telephones. Keep a list of emergency numbers by your phone and make children aware of them;

- ☐ Train children not to give personal information over the phone, even though the caller purports to be a friend;
- ☐ Explain the importance of never divulging any information in front of strangers;
- ☐ Caution children to always keep doors locked and never to unlock a door to a stranger without adult approval;
- ☐ Listen when your child tells you he/she does not want to be with someone – there may be a reason. Have the child present when you interview a servant/babysitter who will be caring for him/her; observe the child's reaction.

Checklist for baby-sitters

Baby-sitters and/or care-givers should be instructed to:

- ☐ Ensure that all doors and windows are locked and that doors are not opened to anyone;
- ☐ Not give out any information over the telephone. They should simply state that Mr./Mrs. X cannot come to the phone right now, and they should take a message;
- ☐ Never leave children alone, even for one minute;
- ☐ Know the dangers to children posed by matches, gasoline, stoves, deep water, poison and falls;
- ☐ Know the locations of all exits (stairs, doors, windows, fire escapes) and telephones in case of emergency;
- ☐ Ask the parents to leave a telephone number where they can be reached;
- ☐ Know the names and ages of the children.

Child-watch checklist

Post an information list by each telephone. Your baby-sitter/care-giver should be familiar with every item, if applicable at the duty station.

- ☐ Family name;
- ☐ Address;
- ☐ Telephone number;
- ☐ Fire;
- ☐ Police;
- ☐ Medical;
- ☐ Parents' office numbers;

- ❑ Poison-control centre;
- ❑ Neighbours' name, telephone and address.

V. Security concerns for women

Introduction

In spite of all the security precautions which are taken, it is possible that you will become a victim. The following section outlines some specific concerns ranging from sexual harassment to rape. The purpose of this section is to increase your awareness and understanding of these issues and provide you with information which may be useful should you or anyone you know be affected by such incidents.

Sexual harassment on the street

You are sitting on a bus. The man opposite is staring hard. His eyes follow you as you get off. You are waiting at a stoplight. A man brushes past, lets loose a mouthful of obscenities and melts into the crowd. You are walking home at night. You hear soft footsteps behind you, footsteps that quicken when yours do.

There probably isn't a woman alive who hasn't had one or more of these experiences. In crowded cities they are often a way of life. "Psychological rape" is the term one sociologist uses to describe these actions – the stares, leers, crude remarks and other behaviour with which men terrorize and intimidate women without laying a finger on them. Emotionally, it can be as destructive as its physical counterpart.

The reaction of women – fear, anger, humiliation, vulnerability – is common. Part of the distress springs from the impersonality of the attack. It is degrading.

How do you cope with stares, leers, muttered obscenities and the like? The only hard and fast rule is *stay out of danger*. If, however, you are reasonably safe, you may consider responding with the following:

- (a) Ignore the advance. If a man is just trying to get a reaction from you and finds he can't, he may stop;
- (b) If you are in a familiar environment, you may consider answering in kind. If a man is trying to shock you with his words, a response in a similar vein may stop him. However, ensure you are not within striking distance when you do this;
- (c) Confront him. If you stop and politely ask, "Were you speaking to me?", the annoying party may feel embarrassed, especially if his acts were based on fear or insecurity; and

(d) Most important, release your feelings of anger and indignity fast so that you can put the incident out of your mind as soon as possible.

Sexual harassment at work

Sexual harassment extends to a range of behaviour. In all cases, it refers to conduct which is unwanted by the recipient. It can be defined as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment is contrary to the provisions of the United Nations Charter and therefore contrary to the policies of the organizations of the United Nations system. A number of organizations have, in fact, adopted informal and formal procedures for dealing with cases of sexual harassment. These may be obtained from local personnel offices. In order to assist you in looking for things which might be signs of sexual harassment, a checklist has been developed by the Working Women's Institute, New York. The basic tactic is to be alert and prepared.

Indications of sexual harassment

What is the attitude towards women in your workplace? Are there jokes, comments, graffiti or cartoons that put women down? Are you referred to as someone's "girl" or called "honey" instead of your name?

Are you taken seriously as a worker? Are you treated like someone's daughter, wife, girlfriend, mother? Are you complimented more for your looks than for your work? Are you told that a job is too dangerous or complicated for you? Are you accused of taking a job away from a man?

Does your supervisor, co-worker, colleague use hugs, pats on your back, arm around your shoulder to make a business-related point? Are sexually suggestive tones, descriptions or body language a part of work-related discussions?

Are you asked questions about your social or personal life or told about theirs? Is there a supervisor, co-worker or colleague known for his "harmless flirtation" or "playboy reputation"? Is there a high rate of turnover among women working for the same man? Do you hear constant compliments about your clothing, looks, body?

Some common forms of sexual harassment are:

- ☐ Constant invitations for drinks, dinner, dates;
- ☐ Close physical contact while you work;
- ☐ Kisses at office parties;

- ☐ Receiving lewd cartoons, cards, presents;
- ☐ Obvious sexual gestures directed at you;
- ☐ Uninvited visits to your hotel room during out-of-town trips/missions;
- ☐ Staring at your breasts or other parts of your body;
- ☐ Touches or grabs at your body;
- ☐ Sexual invitations or remarks;
- ☐ Obvious graffiti;
- ☐ Threats or physical assault; and
- ☐ Subtle or forced pressure for sexual favours.
- ☐ Some common work-related problems that may follow objections to sexual harassment are:
- ☐ Sudden criticism of your work;
- ☐ No work/too much work/dangerous work;
- ☐ Denial of training or educational opportunities;
- ☐ Written up for insubordination or issued warnings;
- ☐ Pressure to quit;
- ☐ Inaccurate job evaluation;
- ☐ Refusal of co-workers to provide training or information; and
- ☐ Denial of increment or promotion.

In facing sexual harassment on the job, remember that each job situation is unique. In deciding what action to take in the short and long term, take time to think about what you want as an outcome and what risks are involved. Make sure that you feel comfortable with the strategies you decide to follow. What works best for someone else may not work for you or in your circumstances.

Do let your objections to the sexual harassment be known as soon as possible. *Tell the harasser directly that you do not like what he is doing.* How you will phrase it and when you will say it is up to you, but don't ignore sexual harassment it won't go away.

If the harasser is not your supervisor, discuss the issue with your immediate supervisor, being specific as to the type, time and place of the incident. You may also wish to share your experience with someone in whom you have confidence. This would not only alleviate isolation and self-doubt, and perhaps be a source of helpful advice, but communicating the information to a third party would also help corroborate your

statements if a formal complaint is made afterwards. However, until you are certain of what you want to do and what your rights are, don't move too fast or hint at any of your intentions. Trust your instincts and make decisions that make sense for your situation.

It is essential that you document each incident. Keep a personal log or diary of incidents, dates, actual conversations, witnesses. Don't leave it at work. Keep lewd cards, notes, presents; take pictures of graffiti. Voice your objections to the harasser verbally and, if possible, do so in the presence of a witness. Include statements that indicate your discomfort and link it to the comments or behaviour which interfere with your job. Follow this up with some form of written correspondence summarizing this objection. Keep copies for your records. If you have an answering machine/voice mail which provides you with evidence of sexual harassment, keep the tapes.

Get copies of positive work evaluations or other evidence indicating you are doing a good job. Keep copies of reports completed; take pictures of projects completed. Think about the way sexual harassment is affecting you. What combination of emotional/physical/job-related stress symptoms are you feeling? Seek medical attention from a private doctor and have these job-related stress symptoms indicated in your records. If necessary, go up the ladder and make a complaint about sexual harassment verbally and in writing. Keep a record of your correspondence. Test the waters for sympathetic co-workers. Find out if other women have experienced sexual harassment.

Rape awareness

Introduction

The information contained in this section was prepared with the assistance of St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Centre Rape Crisis Programme, New York, New York. Its primary goal is to educate you about the issues associated with rape and sexual assault in order to reduce the possibilities of your becoming a victim. Rape is considered the second most violent crime. Homicide is number one. Rape is psychologically devastating, and it can take years for the victim to recover. Only recently has it become acceptable to openly discuss this problem. As a result, misconceptions concerning rape and sexual assault and its victims are being identified and dealt with.

The following terms are working definitions commonly used by professionals who deal with sexual assault. They are not legal definitions.

Sexual assault:

- ❑ Any non-consensual sexual act which is forced by one or more persons upon another.

Rape:

- ❑ Sexual intercourse which is achieved without the victim's consent.

Everyone is a potential victim of sexual assault. Sexual assault is a threat to all women. Rape and other sexual assaults have been documented against people as young as two months and as old as 97 years. No one can afford to believe that it could never happen to

them. It can.

Sexual assault is a crime of violence. Sexual assault is any sexual act committed against the will of another person. This can include physical force and coercion. People who force sex on others are not motivated by sex; they are acting out their desire to hurt and control another person.

Most sexual assaults are committed by an acquaintance of the victim. Sexual offenders are not always strangers. Many victims have had some prior contact with their attackers. Sex offenders may be casual acquaintances, neighbours, dates or family members. Knowing the attacker does not make it any less a violent crime.

Sexual assault is one of the most under-reported of all violent crimes. Sexual assault is not an infrequent crime. It is just infrequently reported.

Tactics used by rapists

The sexual assault attack cycle is divided into five parts:

- *Victim selection:*

Depending on his motivation, the would-be offender selects his victim. The individual is either preselected or the target of opportunity. In either case, the offender will wait until the potential victim is *vulnerable or isolated*;

- *Approach the victim:*

The would-be offender approaches his victim by (1) tricking the victim into accompanying the offender; (2) overwhelming the victim; (3) surprising and jumping the victim;

- *Initiation of the assault:*

The offender maintains control of the victim through mere presence, threats, force;

The assault;

The push-off:

It is here that the attacker decides whether to further physically punish or kill his victim.

Common psychological motivations of the rapist

No single profile provides an answer to why rape occurs. Opportunity, emotional illness, lust – it happens for all of those reasons, yet often for none of them. Anger is a common thread among all the types of sexual assault. Broadly speaking, offenders fall into four types: anger, power, sadistic and opportunistic rapists.

The *anger rapist* is the most ruthless. Sexual assault becomes a means of expressing and discharging feelings of intense anger, rage, contempt, hatred and frustration; the assault is

characterized by excessive brutality. Far more physical force is used in the commission of the offense than would be required simply to overpower and subdue the victim. Sexual assault for this type of offender appears impulsive more than premeditated. Quite often a precipitating stress can be identified which involves a significant woman in the offender's life – his mother, wife, girlfriend. The resulting fury is released and discharged in a sexual assault against a victim who may not be the actual person towards whom the offender harbours such feelings. Sex becomes a weapon, and rape is the means by which he can hurt and degrade his victim and, through her, the significant other. Satisfaction and relief result from the discharge of anger rather than from sexual gratification.

The *power rapist* employs whatever force is necessary to overpower his victim and gain control over her. The offender places his victim in a situation through verbal threat, intimidation with a weapon and/or physical force where she cannot refuse him or resist him, and this provides the offender with a reassuring sense of power, security, strength, mastery and control. In this fashion, he compensates for underlying feelings of inadequacy, vulnerability and helplessness. Rapes committed under war conditions usually fall in this category.

The assault is usually premeditated and preceded by an obsessional fantasy in which, although the victim may initially resist him, once overpowered, she will submit gratefully. A power rapist may actually look for an easy victim.

The *sadistic rapist* eroticizes aggression through a sexual assault. The offender derives satisfaction in the abuse of his victim. This assault is deliberate, calculated and premeditated. For this offender, anger and control become sexualized in terms of the offender's finding intense gratification in controlling, hurting and degrading his victim.

Perhaps the most common reason for rape is opportunity. Frequently, the *opportunistic rapist* carries out the assault during the commission of another crime, e.g., a robbery or car-jacking.

Options for the victim during an assault

A rape victim may choose to take any of a number of actions during an assault. In considering what action to take, the victim must take into consideration the type of rapist, the environment and the person's own capabilities. A victim may choose one or a combination of the following options:

- *Submit:*

The victims are in fear of losing their lives. The objective here is to survive;

- *Passive resistance:*

Do or say anything to ruin the attacker's desire to have sexual contact with you; and

- *Active resistance:*

Any type of physical force used to fight off the attacker; includes shouting for help, running away or fighting back.

Pros/cons of self-defense and use of weapons

There are conflicting opinions regarding self-defense and the use of weapons. The following considerations must be borne in mind.

- *Self-defense techniques:*

Require training and practice. It is a personal decision which each staff member must make. It gives you self-confidence and cannot be used against you. It is legal and always accessible.

- *Improvised weapons:*

This can be anything accessible. It requires no special training.

- *Mace:*

There are local laws regarding the use of mace which must be respected. It requires familiarity and training. Mace has a limited shelf-life. It is not always accessible when you need it.

- *Guns:*

It is against United Nations policy for a staff member to carry a weapon unless it is an official part of his/her job. Staff members who decide to have a weapon in their homes must be in compliance with the local laws of the duty station. Use of weapons requires continuous training, and they are not necessarily accessible when you need them. They need to be maintained and carefully stored to avoid accidents. Weapons can give you a false sense of security and could be used against you.

It must be stressed that the use of mace or firearms could result in criminal charges and/or a civil claim being lodged against the user even if the individual felt justified in its use.

After an attack

After a woman is raped, she must make the decision whether to report the crime. If she chooses to do so, in most cases the police will question her very carefully on the circumstances of the event. Sometimes the police are very professional, treat the victim with dignity and respect and explain exactly why they must ask certain questions. In other instances, policemen have been known to be less sensitive to the victim.

After talking to the police, the individual will be taken to a hospital for an examination which may help to prove that a rape occurred. It is critical that she try to preserve any evidence of the rape, including clothing. A rape victim should not wash until after she has been examined. Following the examination, she will be provided with treatment for any injuries as well as for venereal disease. In some hospitals, she will be given an injection of penicillin as a preventive

measure against venereal disease. She may be offered information about preventing pregnancy. In some locations, information about AIDS may also be provided. Some hospitals may offer counselling; however, this is extremely rare. Counselling may be arranged through the United Nations Designated Official or the parent organization of the staff member.

In most cases, if the rapist is caught, the victim can choose to prosecute. If she does, she is in for a long ordeal in the courts. Rape is a difficult crime to prove. During any eventual trial, every effort is made by the defense to exculpate its client regardless of the means. Often this includes delving into the woman's sexual past and bringing out anything to cast doubt on her story. Many victims feel that the trauma of a trial is more than they are willing to risk.

If a woman does not choose to report her rape to the police, one can only guess what happens to her. It is well-known that many women do not report the crime because of the difficulties with the police they have heard about or because they are feeling too guilty, upset, frightened or weak to talk about the rape. Sometimes these women seek help on their own, but they usually keep their experiences to themselves.

Stages of recovery

The emotional impact of rape on its victims was first studied in the 1970s. It was found that most of the victims suffered from an acute stress reaction to a life-threatening situation. While each victim's specific emotional and physical symptoms varied, they fell into a discernable pattern which became known as the Rape Trauma Syndrome. It is virtually identical to Critical Incident Stress. There are four stages the victim must go through to recover from the experience:

Acute phase: disorganization

The woman may experience an extremely wide range of emotions. The impact of the rape may be so severe that feelings of shock or disbelief are expressed. Feelings of fear, anger and anxiety may show through such behaviour as crying, sobbing, smiling, restlessness and tenseness. Alternatively, the woman may be controlled with her feelings masked or hidden and a calm, composed or subdued demeanor exhibited.

In many cases, the victim is in a state of shock, is simply unable to believe that the attack has happened. Some women experience a detached, super-alert state during or just after the attack. Even while it is occurring they may be memorizing their assailants' physical features or details about his clothing. While this may be a victim's way of distancing herself from the experience, it also has real survival benefits. Physical symptoms during the first several weeks following a sexual assault may be evident:

- ❑ Physical trauma from the physical attack;
- ❑ Skeletal muscle tension;
- ❑ Tension headaches and fatigue;

- ❑ Disruption of sleep pattern;
- ❑ Irritability; and/or
- ❑ Gastro-intestinal problems.

Emotional reactions will also be apparent. Women express a wide gamut of feelings as they begin to deal with the after-effects of rape. These feelings range from fear, humiliation and embarrassment to anger, revenge and self-blame. Fear of physical violence and death may also be manifested.

The victim should be encouraged to talk about the assault as much as possible to her friends and family or, if this would be embarrassing for her, to someone she trusts. As the victim turns from fantasy to handling the realistic problems, there may be a decline in non-specific anxiety.

Outward adjustment

The victim appears to have dealt successfully with the experience, but this phase contains a heavy measure of denial and suppression. The victim begins to resume her normal activities, and this healthy response should be encouraged. This is perhaps the most problematic time and the stage most likely to last, because it is heavily dependent on the victim's state of mind prior to the assault and because she is extremely vulnerable to the opinions of those around her. She may feel guilty, blaming herself endlessly for walking down a certain street or acknowledging a greeting. In other words, she turns her anger at the assailant inward.

Long-term process: reorganization

All victims will experience disorganization in their lifestyles following the sexual assault. Various factors will affect their coping behaviour regarding the trauma, e.g., ego strength, social network support and the way people treat them. This coping and reorganization process begins at different times for different women. The same symptoms are not experienced in the same sequence. This stage is characterized by:

- ❑ A need to change residences;
- ❑ A need to change telephone numbers;
- ❑ Nightmares;
- ❑ Fear of indoors;
- ❑ Fear of outdoors (seclusion);
- ❑ Fear of crowds;
- ❑ Fear of people behind them;

- ☐ Sexual fears;
- ☐ Extreme depression;
- ☐ Anxiety;
- ☐ Insomnia;
- ☐ Apathy; and/or
- ☐ An almost total inability to function normally.

Resolution

During this phase the victim is able to cope with her trauma and integrate the experience into her emotional make-up. The victim stops wondering “Why did this thing happen to me?” and instead says “Such things happen. It happened, it’s over and now I’m going on.” She also learns to direct her rage at the assailant and not at herself.

VI. Coping with stress

Introduction

The occupational stress inherent in the activities of the United Nations system is an issue which can no longer be ignored. Staff of the system are increasingly being asked to confront situations without having developed the appropriate skills to cope with them. There is insufficient awareness of the impact on alertness, performance and judgement and the resulting negative implications in terms of operational mistakes and harmful effects on the health of staff exposed to stressful situations. Police, fire-fighters and emergency medical personnel all experience strong emotional reactions to the emergency and disaster situations which they are required to manage. For that reason, it is now standard operating procedure in many countries for these individuals to be provided with appropriate training to enable them to carry out their functions without adverse effect.

United Nations staff are often exposed to the same types of traumatic situations. It is therefore essential that all personnel serving in the field be fully briefed regarding all aspects of stress and stress management. Until such time as all United Nations system staff have been provided with appropriate training, this document has been prepared to provide some basic information regarding stress management.

Definition of terms

Stress:

Any demand or change that the human system (mind, body, spirit) is required to meet or to respond to.

Distress:

Any stress that occurs too often (frequency), lasts too long (duration) and is too severe (intensity).

Critical incident:

An event outside the range of normal human experience which is distressing to almost everyone. Such events are usually sudden and life-threatening, and often involve physical or emotional loss.

Cumulative stress:

Stress which builds up over time. Some issues may be large and of long duration, while others may be small or just part of the problems of everyday life.

Defusing:

A process which allows those individuals involved in a critical incident to describe what happened and to talk about their reactions directly after the event; defusing is usually carried out by one's peers who have been trained in this area.

Debriefing:

A process designed to lessen the impact of a critical incident. It is a structured intervention by specially trained personnel. It occurs in an organized group meeting and is designed to allow and encourage those involved in a critical incident to discuss their thoughts and reactions in a safe, non-threatening environment. Ideally, it takes place 48 to 72 hours after the critical incident.

What is stress?

Stress can be defined as any change or demand that the human system (mind, body and spirit) is required to meet or to respond to. There are normal stressors such as those consistent with life: breathing, blood circulation, walking, eating, talking and playing. These functions are common to everyone and are part of everyday life. Without these stressors and other physical demands on the human system, you would not continue to live.

The more you know and understand about stress, the better prepared you will be to manage and control its effects. Stress becomes a problem when it occurs too often (frequency), lasts too long (duration), and is too severe (intensity). In these circumstances, distress occurs. It is extremely important to note that what may be distressful for one person may not necessarily be distressful for someone else. Your perception of the event, the degree of threat you feel and the amount of control you have over the circumstances most often determine the degree of distress you will experience.

Some factors which influence your perception and your control of distress are who you are and what your past experiences have been. Your education, your skills, your philosophical approach to life, your age, your sex, your level of physical fitness and your personal esteem

are all factors which can influence the degree to which you will be affected by a given distressful event or a series of events.

Given the frequency, intensity and duration of a situation, anyone can become a victim of stress. In 1936 Dr. Hans Seyle made an important discovery: when threatened, the body always reacts with the same general adaptive mechanism. He defined this concept as follows:

The alarm phase

In order to understand the effects of both useful and harmful stress, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms of a basic life-protecting reaction. In the presence of a threatening or dangerous situation, the person reacts with the “fight or flight” response. This is a reaction which causes our adrenaline to increase and prepares us to run or to fight. If we respond in a physical manner, such as by running, fighting or even with verbal aggression, much of the stress-produced fear, anger or hostility can be greatly reduced or dissipated altogether. The “fight or flight” response is a primitive physical protective reaction. In today’s society, it may not be appropriate to respond to some threats in a physical manner.

The adaptation phase

When a stressor continues without being resolved, the intensity of the alarm stimulus is often lessened but not lost, and the person enters what Seyle calls the Adaptation Phase. In this phase, vital biochemical, physiological, psychological and spiritual resources are spent to sustain the person against the original distressors. However, adaptation or adjustment to the situation is not a solution.

The exhaustion phase

After an undetermined period of time, which varies from person to person, as a consequence of long-term distressors or daily cumulative stress, an individual may begin to exhibit signs of breaking down. This may be manifested in the form of physical, mental or behavioural syndromes which are symptoms of long-term, unresolved distress. Some common symptoms are:

<i>Physical</i>	<i>Psychological</i>	<i>Behavioural</i>
Fatigue;	Memory loss;	Verbal outburst;
Back pain;	Poor concentration;	Increased smoking;
Headache;	Decrease in esteem;	Increased alcohol use;
Ulcer;	Depression;	Eating disorders.

Cumulative stress management

What can be done about stress? Most people suffer from cumulative stress which results from a build-up of stress over time. Some issues may be large and of long duration. Others may be small stressors of everyday life. Cumulative stress must be recognized before it leads to burn-out. Some of the small daily frustrations which can lead to cumulative stress are, *inter alia*:

- ❑ Housing (lack of privacy or comfort, noise, shortage of water, cold heat);
- ❑ Travel (risks, threats, roadblocks);
- ❑ Food (shortages, lack of variety);
- ❑ Immobility or lack of activity; and
- ❑ Colleagues.

What should you do?

Cumulative stress first leads to unproductive hyperactivity, then to physical and emotional exhaustion and finally to burn-out. You must be self-disciplined and know your limits. Accept the fact that you cannot take care of others without also taking care of yourself, and be aware that everyone is primarily responsible for his/her own stress. Understand that stress is inherent to duty in the field.

To manage stress, it is important to learn which distressors affect you most. Once the major sources of distress are known, a management and control strategy can be developed to help you avoid the potential distressors. As a rule, stress management plans will include learning to do some old tasks in a new way. The following guidelines have been effective in stress management strategy development:

- ❑ Learn your major distressors;
- ❑ Become assertive, not aggressive;
- ❑ Manage your time well;
- ❑ Get the sleep you require;
- ❑ Exercise for endurance and strength at least three times a week;
- ❑ Eat a balanced diet – portions consistent with your activities;
- ❑ Avoid excessive use of alcohol, caffeine and nicotine;
- ❑ Know and practice your philosophical approach to life;

- ❑ Accept creative challenges;
- ❑ Plan your free time constructively and productively;
- ❑ Learn the healing value of relaxation and meditation; and
- ❑ The more healthy, fit and well you are, the more resilient you will be against all types of distress.

Critical incident stress management

Critical incident stress is an event outside the range of normal experience which is sudden and unexpected, disrupts one's sense of control, involves the perception of a threat to life and may include elements of physical or emotional loss. Examples of Critical Incidents are:

- ❑ Natural disasters;
- ❑ Multiple casualty accidents;
- ❑ Sexual or other assault;
- ❑ Death of a child;
- ❑ Hostage-taking;
- ❑ Suicide;
- ❑ Traumatic death in family;
- ❑ Duty-related death of co-worker;
- ❑ War-related civilian deaths;
- ❑ Bombing of buildings, mining of roads;
- ❑ Attacks on vehicles/convoys;
- ❑ Armed attacks/robberies; and
- ❑ Direct/indirect intimidation/threats.

While a critical incident may occur anywhere, anytime, there are occupational groups which are at increased risk of exposure to psychologically traumatic events, including:

- ❑ Fire-fighters;
- ❑ Emergency medical personnel;
- ❑ Police officers;
- ❑ Search and rescue personnel;
- ❑ Disaster relief and humanitarian aid workers; and

- ❑ United Nations system staff.

Critical incident stress is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. Reactions may be physical, cognitive or emotional. Reactions may also develop over time. The table below outlines normal immediate and delayed reactions to a critical incident:

Immediate reactions

<i>Physical</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>
Nausea;	Anxiety;	Confusion;
Muscle tremors;	Anger;	Inability to decide;
Sweating;	Fear;	Impaired thinking;
Dizziness;	Irritability;	Memory loss.
Chills;	Guilt;	
Rapid heart rate;	Grief;	
Hyperventilation;	Hopelessness;	
High blood pressure;		

Delayed reactions

<i>Physical</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>
Fatigue;	Feeling abandoned;	Decreased attention span;
Startle response;	Resentment;	Poor concentration;
Substance abuse;	Alienation;	Memory problems;
Sleep difficulties;	Withdrawal;	Flashbacks.
Nightmares;	Numbness;	
Restlessness;	Depression;	

The severity of an individual's reactions to a critical incident depends on several factors:

<i>Factors related to the incident</i>	<i>Factors related to the person</i>
Suddenness;	Past experience;
Intensity;	Personal loss;
Duration;	Perception of threat;
Available social support.	Personal coping abilities.

Research and experience provide a variety of techniques to assist you both during and after the event.

During the critical incident:

- ❑ Recognize the signs of critical incident stress;
- ❑ Maintain a positive attitude;
- ❑ Try to control breathing – slow and regular;
- ❑ Focus on immediate task;
- ❑ Stay in contact with others by talking;
- ❑ Care for yourself – food, water, clothing, rest; and
- ❑ If prolonged exposure, take breaks and rotate tasks.

After a critical incident:

- ❑ Talk about the event, what you saw, heard, smelled, did;
- ❑ Talk about your reactions, particularly how you felt;
- ❑ Practice stress management techniques, such as:
 - ❑ Deep-breathing exercises;
 - ❑ Progressive relaxation;
 - ❑ Meditation;
 - ❑ Physical activity;
 - ❑ Music, reading;
 - ❑ Humour, to facilitate acceptance of reactions; and
- ❑ Participate in critical incident stress defusing as soon as possible after the event and later in critical incident stress debriefing.

Critical incident stress defusing

Critical incident stress defusing occurs in a group meeting of those involved, directly after the event. The purpose of critical incident stress defusing is to allow those involved to describe what happened and to talk about their reactions, as well as to provide information about normal stress reaction, support services and details of the follow-up critical incident stress debriefing.

Critical incident stress debriefing

Debriefing is a military term for a report which a subordinate submits on his mission and the conclusions drawn by his supervisor. By extension, it is used in psychology to describe the detailed account which is given on return from a mission, concerning the facts and emotions experienced in the field and the thought to which they give rise. Critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) is a process designed to lessen the impact of a critical incident. It is not designed to provide counselling, but rather to provide a safe opportunity to deal with immediate reactions to a stressful, traumatic situation. It includes:

- (a) A structured intervention by specially trained members of a critical incident stress team; and
- (b) An organized group meeting which allows and encourages those involved in a critical incident to openly discuss their thoughts and reactions in a safe, non-threatening environment 48 to 72 hours after the critical incident.

For most people, most symptoms will diminish both in intensity and in frequency within a few days or weeks. The process will be greatly assisted by a formal debriefing and by discussing concerns with trusted family members and friends.

Post-traumatic stress disorder

If the above symptoms last more than a month, they may lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is a more serious condition, a complication of psychological stress which could be compared to a wound that will not heal naturally. To be diagnosed, the following factors must be present:

Trauma;

- ☐ A persistent tendency to relive the trauma in the form of memories, nightmares, flashbacks or intense emotional reactions to any event reminiscent of the trauma;
- ☐ A tendency to avoid any thought, emotion or activity which reminds one of the traumatic event;
- ☐ A marked hyperactivity, accompanied by an exaggerated startle reaction, a quick temper and sleep disorders, particularly upon falling asleep; and
- ☐ A persistence of these symptoms for at least a month. Diagnosis and treatment of PTSD must be carried out by a specialist.

Suggestions for family and friends

Anyone who has undergone a traumatic experience will be changed by what he/she has experienced. In the aftermath of this incident, the various emotions which the individual experiences are perfectly normal. It is the experience/event which is

abnormal. The emotional reaction to this experience should be considered as a psychological wound. As with all wounds, you can best help the individual by:

- ☐ Listening carefully. A person who has overcome a traumatic experience must learn to talk about the event and the emotions he/she felt at the time with those closest to him/her;
- ☐ Spending time with the affected person;
- ☐ Offering your assistance and listening ear;
- ☐ Reassuring them that they are safe and normal;
- ☐ Helping them with routine tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for the family;
- ☐ Allowing them some private time;
- ☐ Not taking their anger or other feelings personally;
- ☐ Telling them you are sorry such an event has occurred, and you want to understand and assist them; and
- ☐ Calling for help or support as soon as you feel you need it.