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**Guidelines on the Use of  
Armed Security Services from  
Private Security Companies**

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*These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the United Nations  
Policy on Armed Private Security Companies*

## **A. Introduction**

1. The primary responsibility for the security and protection of United Nations personnel, their eligible family members, and the premises and property of United Nations Security Management System organizations rests with the host Government. In ensuring such safety and security, certain circumstances may arise where armed security services become necessary. When the host Government is unwilling or unable to provide such protection, as determined by the United Nations in consultation with the relevant authorities, armed security services will normally be provided by alternate member States or the appropriate security entity within the United Nations system.
2. On an exceptional basis to meet its obligations, the United Nations Security Management System may use private companies to provide armed security services when the threat conditions and programme needs warrant it.
3. The fundamental principle in guiding when to use armed security services from a private security company is that these may be considered only when there is no possible provision of adequate and appropriate armed security from the host Government, alternate member State(s), or internal United Nations system resources such as the Security and Safety Services or security officers recruited directly by a mission or through another United Nations Security Management System organization.
4. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter IV, Section I, “Armed Private Security Companies”.

## **B. Aim**

5. In circumstances where a United Nations Security Management System organization determines that armed security services from a private security company are required, the engagement and use of such services will be governed by a clear accountability and responsibility framework and clear operational standards and oversight.
6. These guidelines provide further details and descriptions of the requirements and processes outlined in the Policy on Armed Private Security Companies.

## **C. Services which may be contracted from an Armed Private Security Company**

7. The objective of armed security services from a private security company is to provide a visible deterrent to potential attackers and an armed response to repel any attack in manner consistent with the United Nations “Use of Force Policy”, the respective host country legislation and international law.

8. Armed security service from a private security company may not be contracted, except on an exceptional basis for the following purposes:
  - a. To protect United Nations personnel, premises and property.
  - b. To provide mobile protection for United Nations personnel and property.

*Static Protection of United Nations Personnel, Premises and Property*

9. Armed personnel employed by a private security company contracted by the United Nations for the static protection of personnel, premises and property can provide the following basic functions:
  - a. Conduct access control of vehicles and pedestrians to the designated premises or area
    - i. Use of electronic body and package search equipment
    - ii. Personnel searches
    - iii. Vehicle searches
    - iv. Building searches for suspected explosive devices
    - v. Visitor control systems
    - vi. Badge issuance and control
    - vii. Mail screening
  - b. Patrol the designated premises or area
    - i. Identify and report suspicious persons or objects which may cause a security concern
    - ii. Subsequently contain or remove suspicious persons or objects which may cause a security concern
  - c. Monitor and respond to intrusion and safety alarms
  - d. Maintain guard post records and logs and preparation of incident reports
  - e. Provide First Aid to United Nations personnel in the event of incidents
10. Armed response during the course of delivering basic functions:
  - a. Protect United Nations personnel, premises and property within the designated premises or area in accordance with the Use of Force Policy developed by the private security company, developed according to the provisions of paragraph 34 of these guidelines.

*Mobile Protection of United Nations Personnel and Property*

11. Armed personnel employed by a private security company contracted by the United Nations for the mobile protection of personnel and property can provide the following basic functions:
  - a. Plan and monitor road movements by United Nations personnel in the respective location/Mission area requiring armed support
  - b. Present a visible deterrent to deter hostile elements from interrupting the movement of a convoy and:
    - i. Use vehicle driving techniques to maintain convoy progression
    - ii. Prevent additional vehicles from intercepting the convoy
    - iii. Extract convoy from ambush sites
  - c. Conduct a reconnaissance of route options for the convoy movement and:
    - i. Identify possible ambush sites and escape routes
    - ii. Identify possible safe havens en route
  - d. Advance and clear the route for the convoy movement
  - e. Operate, monitor and maintain communications platform for convoy vehicles and personnel
  - f. Preparation of incident reports
  - g. Provide First Aid to United Nations personnel in the event of an incident
12. Armed response during the course of delivering basic functions:
  - a. Protect United Nations personnel and vehicles of the convoy in accordance with the Use of Force Policy developed by the private security company, developed according to the provisions of paragraph 34 of these guidelines.
13. When approved, these armed security services from a private security company may be considered for use by specific members of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS), or as a shared resource for such members.

## D. Criteria for the Designated Official and Security Management Team

### *Assessment*

14. To enable the Designated Official (DO) and Security Management Team (SMT) to make a recommendation with regard to the need for armed security personnel, the senior-most United Nations security professionals advising the DO<sup>1</sup> must first conduct a Security Risk Assessment (SRA). This must determine the threats and the level of risk faced by the United Nations system (personnel, premises and operations) at the respective location and what measures are required to lower these risks. A menu of risk management options should be developed to include armed security personnel, starting with the lowest number and lowest calibre of approved firearms possible and gradually increasing until the needs of the system designed to protect the United Nations system are achieved.
15. The Security Risk Assessment will be conducted in accordance with *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter IV, Section A, “Policy and Conceptual Overview of the Security Risk Management Process.”
16. The use of armed security personnel is a security risk management measure that provides two main functions: a visible deterrent to potential attackers (raising their perceived risk from targeting the protected target) and as an armed response to repel any attack not deterred. To provide these two functions, armed security personnel must be properly trained, equipped (including with the appropriate firearms), supervised and integrated into the wider security system.
17. Where the SRA indicates that armed security personnel are required to mitigate the risks posed by the identified threats to acceptable levels, the DO, SMT and Security Advisor will review and assess the capacity of the Host Country to provide United Nations system personnel, premises and operations with the required standard of armed protection; the primary responsibility for the security and protection of the United Nations rests with the Host Country.
18. In the absence of a Host Country capacity to provide the necessary level of armed protection, alternate provisions from Member States or through employing United Nations system recruited Security Officials must first be explored and discussed by the DO, SMT and Security Advisor.

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<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this policy, this is usually the Chief Security Advisor (CSA), Security Advisor (SA), Chief of Security and Safety Services, or their respective officer-in-charge *ad interim*.

19. Where the DO and SMT identify strong reasons, which are to be recorded in the SRA, as to why the delivery of armed protection by the Host Country, an alternate Member State or States, or by United Nations system recruited Security Officials is not preferable or feasible, the option to use an armed private security company may also be evaluated where the following criteria are met.

*Security Risk Management criteria to be met before armed security services by a private security company can be considered*

- a. The level of programme criticality for the activity which is being considered to be supported by the use of armed personnel from a private security company must warrant this usage.
- b. In addition to the Security Risk Assessment, the responsible senior-most security official identified by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, usually the Designated Official supported by the Security Management Team must evaluate any potential negative impacts the contracting of armed security services from a private security company could have on the United Nations system and its programmes. The analysis of the potential negative impacts should encompass, inter alia, the prevailing usage of private security companies in the area of operations as well as globally, host country and local community acceptance of armed security services of private security companies and the local history of negative impact of incidents involving private security companies and their armed security services<sup>2</sup>.
- c. The DO and SMT must further recommend whether a local private security company or international private security company is better placed to provide armed protection to the necessary standard. This recommendation will then be reviewed by the relevant procurement division of the contracting organization, and necessary approvals have to be obtained in case international competition is to be limited or excluded.

## **E. Decision Making Framework**

20. When the DO and SMT agree that the use of armed personnel from a private security company is justified, a request for approval must be submitted to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security for consideration. The Executive Heads of the affected agencies, funds and programmes or the head of Department for Secretariat led field operations must be copied on this request.
21. The approval request will include the related Security Risk Assessment, explanations of why armed security services cannot or should not be provided by the host country, other member states or internal United Nations Security Management System resources and details of the assessment of the potential negative impacts of engaging armed security services from a private security company.

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<sup>2</sup>For examples of the humanitarian considerations in this analysis, reference should be made to IASC Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys, found at: [\[web link to be provided\]](#).

22. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security shall reply in writing as to whether he/she approves the request for the use of armed security services provided by private security companies, and shall notify all Agencies, Funds Programmes and Organizations of the United Nations system within 48 hours of the decision.
23. Once approval has been obtained in writing from the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, the UNSMS organization in question can contract a private security company, which meets the criteria outlined below.
24. In cases where approval for the use of armed security services provided by private security companies is granted, at each contract renewal the full approval process must be implemented, including a new assessment of the primary options of host Government, alternate member State or internal United Nations system resources for such provision.

#### **F. Selection and management of armed Private Security Companies (APSC), including selection of company personnel**

##### *Pre-eligibility and selection*

25. Mandatory requirements for possible selection:
  - a. The APSC must be a member company to the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers<sup>3</sup>(the “Code”)
  - b. The APSC must have been in the business of providing armed security services for at least five years prior to submission of its proposal
  - c. The APSC must have valid and current licences to provide armed security services in their Home State as defined by the Montreux Document (the State where the APSC is registered or incorporated)
  - d. The APSC must have valid and current licences to provide armed security services and import, carry and use firearms and ammunition in the Territorial State, as defined by the Montreux Document (the States on whose territory the APSC will operate)
  - e. The APSC must have started the registration process to become a registered United Nations Procurement Division vendor and will only be eligible for contract award subject to the successful completion of registration at the appropriate level
  - f. The APSC must be able to substantially comply with the Scope of Work
26. The selection of the APSC shall be undertaken in accordance with the United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules.

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<sup>3</sup>See <http://www.icoc-psp.org/>

### *Screening of Contracted Personnel*

27. The APSC must conduct the below-outlined screening of all personnel who are to be employed by the APSC to provide the armed security services to the UNSMS organization in question.
28. The APSC must undertake all reasonable steps, to the satisfaction of the UNSMS organization in question, to verify with the relevant national authorities that any potential personnel (i) has not been convicted of any national criminal offences including by a military tribunal, or found by a national or international authority to have breached international criminal or humanitarian law in any jurisdiction, and (ii) is not subject to any ongoing judicial proceedings, including military, in respect of such offences or violations. This screening process will include the following:
  - a. a criminal background record check with the national police and military services of the person's current country of residence, the country of current employment and the country(ies) of nationality; and
  - b. a verification of the person's place of employment for the past five years including where relevant, a background check with all military or law enforcement employers

### *The Screening Process*

29. The APSC shall confirm to the UNSMS organization in question, in writing, that the above-outlined Screening Process has been conducted and that only personnel who meet the above-mentioned requirements are to be engaged to provide armed security services.
30. In circumstances where the nation state of the personnel to be screened does not have the necessary mechanisms in place to determine the extent of criminal background or employment, the APSC is required to either employ alternate personnel or develop and submit alternate and equivalent screening certification to include the use of an independent third party screening company.
31. The APSC shall promptly inform the UNSMS organization in question of any material change in information obtained under the above-outlined Screening Process during the provision of services by the personnel. When so requested by the UNSMS organization in question, the APSC shall immediately replace any such personnel at no cost to such organization.
32. The APSC will provide a complete and accurate name list of the personnel to be employed on the specific contract to the Contracting Officer.
33. The UNSMS organization in question shall review the list of personnel to be employed by the APSC to provide services against relevant resolutions of the Security Council, which impose sanctions against individuals and against any other internal sources of information.

## G. Use of Force, Weapons Manual and Standard Operating Procedures

34. In accordance with the United Nations Policy on Armed Private Security Companies, the APSC is required to develop and implement its own Use of Force Policy consistent with the applicable national laws of the State in which the services are to be provided and, to the extent consistent with the applicable national law, with the United Nations “Use of Force Policy” as found in *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter IV, Section H (which shall be made available to the private security company for reference). However, the Use of Force Policy of the private security company must be as or more restrictive than the “United Nations Use of Force Policy”. The private security company’s Use of Force Policy shall not be less restrictive than the “United Nations Use of Force Policy”. In addition, the private security company’s Use of Force Policy shall be consistent with the *International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers*.
35. In accordance with the United Nations Policy on Armed Private Security Companies, the APSC is required to develop and implement its own firearms management procedures and “Weapons Manual” consistent with the applicable national laws of the State in which the services are to be provided and, to the extent consistent with the applicable national law, with the “United Nations Department of Safety and Security Manual of Instruction on Use of Force Equipment, including Firearms” (which shall be made available to the private security company for reference). However, the private security company’s Weapons Manual must be as or more restrictive than the “United Nations Department of Safety and Security Manual of Instruction on Use of Force Equipment, including Firearms”. The private security company’s Weapons Manual shall not be less restrictive than the “United Nations Department of Safety and Security Manual of Instruction on Use of Force Equipment, including Firearms”. In addition, the private security company’s firearms management procedures and Weapons Manual should also be consistent with the *International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers*.
36. In accordance with the United Nations Policy on Armed Private Security Companies, the APSC is required to develop and implement, in consultation with the UNSMS organization in question, the necessary standard operating procedures for the implementation of the contract with the organization (“Standard Operating Procedures”).
37. All Standard Operating Procedures may be reviewed by the UNSMS organization in question. The UNSMS organization in question has the authority to direct the APSC to change the Standing Operating Procedures.

## H. Training Standards

38. The APSC is required to engage personnel with the requisite skills and experience to perform the services in accordance with the contract and the Standard Operating Procedures implemented by the APSC.

39. Prior to commencing services under the contract, the APSC will provide the following training to each of its personnel on the International Code of Conduct, the APSC Use of Force Policy and the APSC Weapons Manual and also the following:
- a. firearms handling
  - b. radio communications
  - c. premises access control of the UNSMS organization in question
  - d. counter-terrorist search
  - e. First Responder medical training
  - f. training on the use of specific equipment to be utilized
  - g. hostile surveillance and reconnaissance detection training
  - h. convoy escort/protection if applicable
  - i. supervisory and management skills
  - j. cultural sensitivity training
  - k. Human Rights Law and application
  - l. Use of Force training
  - m. management of workplace conflict resolution
  - n. integrity and ethical awareness
  - o. preventing sexual harassment
  - p. an overview of the United Nations security management system relevant to their duties
40. The APSC must certify to the UNSMS organization in question that each personnel has undergone the above training and demonstrated the necessary level of skill before commencing the provision of services for the organization.
41. The APSC must demonstrate to the UNSMS organization in question that a programme of refresher training is implemented for each personnel.

## I. Management and Oversight of the Armed Private Security Companies

42. The United Nations will maintain an oversight of the delivery of the contract by the APSC. The day-to-day management of the contract is the function of the requisitioner and a Contracting Officer from the requisitioning office of the UNSMS organization in question must be assigned. The Contracting Officer will ensure that the terms of the contract are being adhered to. Contract administration such as amendments, contract extensions and termination and any changes to the contractual document will be executed by the Procurement Division, United Nations Headquarters.
43. The performance quality of the APSC shall also be regularly overseen and reviewed by the applicable United Nations security professional. This oversight must be integrated with the performance review performed by the Contracting Officer.
44. The performance review of the APSC shall be undertaken at least by the two following mechanisms:
  - a. Daily Operations Review
  - b. Monthly Review

### *Daily Operations Review*

45. The United Nations shall conduct a daily on site inspection of the APSC.
46. In circumstances where the APSC is hired for use by common United Nations facilities and/or common United Nations operations in the country/region, it is the responsibility of the DSS Chief Security Adviser/ Security Adviser to ensure that the Daily Operations Review is completed. The inspection may be delegated to members of the Security Cell, but the DSS Chief Security Adviser/Security Adviser will remain accountable for its completion and content.
47. In circumstances where the APSC is hired for use by a specific United Nations Agency, Fund or Programme, it is the responsibility of that United Nations entity to appoint an officer responsible for the Daily Operations Review of the APSC. The United Nations entity's Field Security Officer (FSO) would normally perform this task.
48. In the event that the United Nations agency concerned does not employ a dedicated FSO for its operations in the country/region of operation of the selected APSC, then the Country Representative of the UNSMS organization in question may assign an alternate, in-country Agency Security Focal Point or make a request to DSS that an officer be assigned.
49. The Daily Operations Review of the performance of the APSC should include, as a minimum, an inspection of the following:
  - a. safe handling and storage of firearms and ammunition

- b. required equipment is being carried
  - c. equipment is functional
  - d. physical condition of security posts / stations
  - e. personal appearance and condition of the security force
  - f. continuity of APSC personnel
  - g. availability of all required personnel
  - h. that the conduct and demeanor of APSC personnel reflects United Nations requirements
  - i. quality of response to spot test training questions and readiness drills
  - j. quality of response to actual situations arising during the day / shift
  - k. review of the security log as maintained by the on-duty APSC security supervisor for accuracy and completeness
  - l. explore concerns raised by the recipients of the services of the APSC
50. The person responsible for the Daily Operations review must keep a written record of the review.

#### *Monthly Review*

51. DSS shall conduct a monthly review of the APSC, which will combine both a review of records and an on site inspection.
52. In all circumstances, the DSS Chief Security Adviser/Security Adviser is responsible for ensuring that the Monthly Review of the performance of the APSC is completed. The Monthly Review may be delegated to members of the Security Cell, but the DSS Chief Security Adviser/Security Adviser will remain accountable for its completion and content.
53. The Monthly Review of the performance of the APSC should include, as a minimum, an assessment of the following :
- a. all incident reports submitted during the assessed period
  - b. all reports on use of force (armed or non-lethal) by the APSC
  - c. all convoy protection reports to the areas with High Risk and above environment
  - d. selected daily SITREPs on protection of the premises and staff in question

- e. operation support documents (Threat Assessments, Risk Analysis, etc)
  - f. current year training programme and records on personnel training attendance
  - g. selected individual personnel performance reports
  - h. compliance with the terms of the contract between the APSC and the UNSMS organization in question
54. A written report of the findings and recommendations from the Monthly Review must be submitted by the DSS Security Advisor to the Designated Official in all circumstances and, if the APSC is contracted for use by a specific United Nations Agency, Fund or Programme, the Country Representative as applicable.
55. Copies of the written reports will be provided to the DSS Regional Desk (NY HQ) and the Agency Security Focal Point at the Agency Headquarters quarterly.

#### *Performance Issues*

56. The senior-most security professional directly supporting the Designated Official and the Contracting Official of the UNSMS organization in question must immediately submit a joint report of any performance issues or concerns identified, along with recommended remedial action, to the Designated Official and the Country Representative of the organization concerned for approval.

#### **J. Conclusion**

57. These guidelines provide further detail in support of the policy provisions for the use of APSCs. A model statement of work and model contract are also attached which are to be used by the UNSMS organization in question when developing their contract with a Private Security Company for the provision of armed security officers, when so approved to do so.

#### **Annexes**

- A Model Statement of Work
- B Model Contract