

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
MANAGEMENT OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT BY HEADQUARTERS
CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM (CRT)

Introduction

1. The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to outline the immediate response to be taken at headquarters New York by key persons who will manage the response to a critical incident or crisis affecting UNFPA in field locations.¹ Critical incidents are security incidents, major crisis or a combination of both, as defined below:

- i) Security incidents that directly impact UNFPA premises, conference/recreational venues or operations causing severe damage resulting in fatalities and injuries to UNFPA personnel
- ii) Major crises that impact on UNFPA mandate and continuity in programming subsequently requiring humanitarian response/assistance.

2. As directed by the Secretary-General, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) will normally take the lead in coordinating a cohesive response to critical security incidents. The UNDSS is the primary organization responsible for coordinating the overall United Nations response to critical security incidents affecting United Nations premises and operations, under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General (USG) UNDSS. UNDSS convenes an ad-hoc Crisis Management Group (CMG), chaired by the USG, UNDSS with representation from affected United Nations Secretariat Departments, Agencies, Funds and Programmes. UNFPA representative at the UNDSS CMG is the Chief, Office of Security Coordinator (OSC) or/the Deputy Chief.

3. In humanitarian situations, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) will lead in the global coordination of humanitarian response. UNFPA will be represented by the Chief, Humanitarian and Fragile Contexts Branch (HFCB), Programme Division.

4. The primary objective of this SOP is to ensure immediate, effective and coordinated response.

Notification of Critical Incidents

5. On notification of a critical security incident or major crisis, the Chief, OSC or/Deputy Chief will alert the Chair of UNFPA Security Management Group (SMG).

6. On notification of a major crisis with a humanitarian component, led by the ERC, and after consultation with the country and regional offices, the Chief, HFCB will alert the Executive

¹ Field Locations include: Country, Regional, Sub-Regional and Liaison Offices.

Director (ED)/Deputy Executive Director (DED) of a crisis, requiring a major and concerted humanitarian response from UNFPA.

7. The Chair, SMG, after consultation with the ED and DED (Programme) will determine whether to activate the UNFPA Crisis Response Team (CRT), based on the scope and magnitude of the incident/crisis.

UNFPA Crisis Response Team (CRT)

8. The UNFPA Crisis Response Team will comprise primarily of the following:

- a. Office of the Executive Director (DED, Management, Chair);
- b. OED - Chief of Staff, member;
- c. Chief, Office of the Security Coordinator, member ;
- d. Director/Chief of affected office;
- e. Division for Human Resources (DHR);
- f. Media and Communications Branch, especially the Crisis Communications Team;
- g. Chief HFCB, when there is a humanitarian crisis;
- h. Ad-Hoc members, as determined by the Chair, CRT and depending on the nature of the crisis.

9. The CRT will be operational on a 24/7 basis as required and can be expected to be engaged for an extended period of time. Meetings will be coordinated immediately following UNDSS CMG meetings and as required. It should be noted that the response to a critical incident/crisis is extremely intense and particularly so within the first 72 hours of the occurrence of the incident/crisis. Therefore, members of the CRT should be physically and psychologically prepared to meet this challenge.

Responsibilities of Respective Organizational Units

10. Respective organizational units will be responsible for providing inputs on their area of expertise and specifically:

- a. Executive Office. Leadership and final decision-making related to critical security incident and management of internal communication related to critical security incident in close collaboration with media relations.
- b. Office of the Security Coordinator. The Chief, OSC will be the primary interlocutor with UNDSS and represent UNFPA at the CMG. She/he will provide input into UNDSS on all aspects related to staff accountability and will assist with the coordination of Critical Incident Stress Management. She/he will coordinate the immediate deployment of a Security Specialist to the affected country in support of UNFPA/UNDSS response.

- c. Divisional Director. The relevant Divisional/Departmental Director will act as the primary focal point for contact with the affected country office and provide input on all programme operations and office activities. She/he will also coordinate the deployment of an international staff member from within their cadre of personnel to represent UNFPA in-country and to take the lead in providing the country level response to the critical security incident and in support of UNFPA personnel and their families. She/he will liaise with DHR on all matters pertaining to personnel and staff welfare.
- d. Human Resources. The DHR will ensure the provision of up to date personnel data including lists and details of next-of-kin. DHR will coordinate the next-of-kin notification and all insurance related elements to critical security incidents. In addition, DHR is responsible for liaising with appropriate United Nations departments for the provision of medical and psychosocial support to staff members and their families as well as liaising with Divisional/Departmental Directors and Finance Branch regarding personnel matters and financial support to personnel and their families.
- e. Division of Communications and Strategic Partnership (DCS), Media and Communications Branch (MCB). MCB will liaise with the Secretary-General's Spokesperson office to ensure that all media communication is coordinated through this office. In responding to critical security incidents the primary and immediate objective is to determine the staffing levels in country, including staff on mission, and to account for each personnel member. Therefore, until all staff are accounted for, it is imperative that information regarding staff members is treated with the strictest of confidentiality. In the event of loss of life or critical injury of UNFPA personnel members, this has to first be communicated to the next-of-kin and the Secretary-General once formal identification has taken place. Only following this can UNFPA personnel more broadly be informed.
- f. Finance Branch. The Division for Management Services (DMS) will ensure the provision of financial resources as required.
- g. MIS Branch. The Management Information Services (MIS) Branch will coordinate the requirement of both communication channels to UNFPA staff on the incident as well as providing business continuity support to the country office.
- h. Humanitarian and Fragile Context Branch (HFCB) will be the Secretariat for coordination of humanitarian response and support from HQ. It will also provide technical guidance and updates derived from global coordination meetings. HFCB will also provide advice on emerging humanitarian gaps and follow up with various branches and divisions to provide support as necessary.

Resumption of Normal Operations

11. The CRT will continue to meet on a regular basis until such time the incident/crisis has been resolved or as decided by the Chair, CRT.