

UN-CMCoord

**UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN
CIVIL-MILITARY COORDINATION**

Facilitating the right assistance, to the right people,
at the right time, in the most appropriate way

UN-CMCoord

Field Handbook

Version 2.0 (2018)



OCHA

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October 2018
Field HB / V2.0 / 2018

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Introductory Remarks

In the multi-faceted and evolving nature of humanitarian civil-military coordination (UN-CMCoord or CMCoord), humanitarian-military dialogue at all levels remains the sine qua non of effective humanitarian action in field operations.

Version 2.0 of the UN-CMCoord Field Handbook reflects a number of evolving and emerging topics and products since the last version was disseminated in October 2015. A major evolution has been in the connections between UN-CMCoord, access, protection and security. While they are distinct areas, CMCoord personnel across the world have had to take on additional tasks and roles in these domains, faced with reality and the nature of today's field operations.

To respond to the need expressed by our field-based colleagues, the working paper 'Operational Guidance for Humanitarian Notification Systems for Deconfliction' (HNS4D) was recently released. A major process under the auspices of the multi-stakeholder UN-CMCoord Consultative Group resulted in a consensus document entitled 'Recommended Practices for Effective Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination of Foreign Military Assets in Natural and Man-Made Disasters'.

At the general request of our CMCoord network, we have also made reference to and linked a number of documents that can assist in gaining additional knowledge and expertise in precise areas and contexts.

We are grateful to the Czech Republic Fire Rescue Service who hosted a workshop in Prague in November 2017. This allowed us to bring together 12 of our fellow civilian, military and humanitarian field practitioners from a broad range of agencies, organizations and institutions, to brainstorm and draw up the body for the revision. A great thank you also to these and the many other colleagues and CMCoord Officers and Focal Points who shared their ground experience and provided inputs and practical tips.

We hope that version 2.0 of the UN-CMCoord Field Handbook has captured current evolutions and challenges and that it will be of assistance to UN-CMCoord Officers and Focal Points, and also to the wider networks and partners that unavoidably touch on civil-military interaction in their daily undertakings.

OCHA Civil-Military
Coordination Service (CMCS)
October 2018

How to Use this Handbook

The UN-CMCoord Field Handbook is a toolbox for CMCoord Officers and Focal Points (hereafter referred to as CMCoord Officers) and other practitioners working in the field of CMCoord who generally interact with military and other armed actors. It provides practical guidance, good practices and links to legal and technical references and tools pertaining to the CMCoord function. To make full use of its functions, the Handbook is best used online (<http://dialoguing.org>) to allow access to the multiple linked documents and references.

- **Chapters 1 and 2** summarize key humanitarian concepts, basic legal provisions and coordination mechanisms.
- **Chapter 3** is an aide memoire of the relevant CMCoord guidelines and principles; it summarizes general key considerations and explains the roles and responsibilities of OCHA and CMCoord Officers in implementing the guidelines.
- **Chapter 4** gives an overview of the basic legal provisions regulating the conduct of the military and other armed actors and describes their various organizations and associated concepts.
- **Chapters 5 and 6** provide CMCoord guidance and good practices on how to implement the CMCoord tasks in disasters in peacetime and complex emergencies, respectively.

This Handbook does not replace CMCoord training courses or guidelines. It is a reference guide to supplement the UN-CMCoord Training Programme and related guidance documents. Version 2.0 contains updates and recent tools to help practitioners adjust to current operational challenges.



For more: *The magnifying glass contains links to further guidance and reference.*



Good to know: *The light bulb highlights top tips and important elements.*

Key Terms and Definitions are included in the chapters in blue boxes.

Case studies, good practices and examples from the field are highlighted in coloured boxes.

What is UN-CMCoord?

UN-CMCoord is the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from [cooperation](#) to [co-existence](#). Coordination is a [shared responsibility](#) facilitated by liaison and common training.

The key coordination elements in natural disasters and complex emergencies are information sharing, task division and planning. The scope and modus operandi of these key elements will change depending on the context and interlocutors. The CMCoord function encompasses, but is not exclusive to, the following CMCoord tasks:

1. Establish and sustain dialogue with military and other armed actors.
2. Establish mechanisms for information exchange and humanitarian interaction with military forces and other armed actors.
3. Assist in negotiations in critical areas of interaction between humanitarian workers and military forces and other armed actors.
4. Support the development and dissemination of context-specific guidance for the interaction of the humanitarian community with military forces and other armed actors.
5. Observe the activity of military forces and other armed actors to ensure that distinction is maintained and to avoid negative impact on humanitarian action.

See also chapter 3

Chapter 1: Humanitarian Action

Humanitarian action comprises assistance, protection and advocacy actions in response to human needs resulting from complex emergencies and disasters. The CMCoord function is a humanitarian function, and the CMCoord Officer plays a role of 'ambassador' for the humanitarian community. It is essential, therefore, that the main concepts and provisions pertaining to humanitarian action are well understood. Chapter 1 outlines the foundations of humanitarian action and provides links to relevant legal and technical references and guidance. It includes:

- Important definitions pertaining to humanitarian action.
- Basic legal provisions pertaining to humanitarian action.
- A recap of humanitarian principles.
- Useful tools and concepts pertaining to the humanitarian operating environment.

1.1 Humanitarian Assistance

Humanitarian assistance seeks to meet people's essential needs in times of crisis such as disaster or armed conflict. It focuses on short-term emergency relief, providing the basics for survival, such as food, water, and shelter. The state has the primary responsibility to meet the essential needs of persons on its territory or under its control. In armed conflicts, non-state armed groups also have the responsibility to meet the needs of civilians under their control.

A state affected by disaster or party to a conflict may expressly seek outside assistance, or impartial humanitarian organizations may offer to provide assistance. Humanitarian organizations play a key role in the delivery of assistance to persons affected by disaster or armed conflict.

Humanitarian assistance is provided in adherence to humanitarian principles. The delivery of humanitarian assistance must be based on needs alone (impartial), non-discriminatory, and must not take any sides (neutral). Humanitarian organizations must also remain independent from political or military objectives. Failing to adhere to humanitarian principles can have an impact on the organization's credibility and acceptance, which, in turn, can compromise the delivery of assistance. See also section 1.3 in this chapter.



What is a humanitarian actor? Humanitarian actors are civilians engaged in humanitarian activities with a clear commitment to humanitarian principles. This commitment is usually laid down in their legal mandates, mission statements and/or statutes.

Military forces that deliver aid – whether fulfilling obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL), offering assistance to affected populations as part of a wider stabilization mandate, in extremis, or in support of humanitarian operations – are not humanitarian actors.

Humanitarian assistance must take into account the local capacity already in place. It complements local services and capacity on a short-term basis to meet their essential needs. New initiatives have started over the past few years to support the localization of humanitarian assistance.

One of the core guiding documents for humanitarian assistance is UN General Assembly (GA) resolution 46/182 on strengthening of the UN coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance. In addition to establishing the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the resolution formulates guiding principles for humanitarian assistance.



- [UNGA Res 46/182](#)
- [OCHA on Message on UNGA Res 46/182 \(2012\)](#)
- [OCHA on Message on Humanitarian Access \(2017\)](#)

1.1.1 Consent to Humanitarian Operations

Impartial humanitarian relief operations are undertaken subject to the consent of the state on whose territory the relief operation is carried out. When people's essential needs are not met, consent to offers of impartial humanitarian relief operations may not be arbitrarily withheld. In situations of occupation, the occupying power has no latitude to withhold consent if the essential needs of the civilian population are not being met. The consent of a non-state armed group (NSAG) will also be required when humanitarian relief is to be delivered to civilians under its control. See also section 1.5 in this chapter.

1.1.2 Duty to Allow and Facilitate Passage

Once consent has been granted, a disaster-affected state and parties to armed conflict must allow and facilitate rapid passage of humanitarian relief and ensure freedom of movement of relief personnel. This can entail simplified entry visa procedures or waivers of customs and duties, among other measures. While the affected

state or parties to conflict can prescribe technical arrangements, for instance to designate routes and times to travel, these arrangements must not prevent the delivery of assistance in a principled manner. See also section 1.5 in this chapter.



[Oxford Guidance on the Law Relating to Humanitarian Relief Operations in Situations of Armed Conflict \(2016\)](#)

1.1.3 Standards and Codes of Conduct in Humanitarian Assistance

In order to provide the best quality humanitarian assistance possible, several initiatives define minimal sets of non-binding internationally recognized Codes of Conduct and International Standards. These Codes of Conduct and International Standards ensure quality programming and strengthened performance while also providing accountability to donors, peers and affected populations. Some of the most important reference documents are:

- The 2014 [Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#) seeks to harmonize standards with communities and affected people at the centre and humanitarian principles as the foundation.
- The [Sphere Project and its Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(the Sphere Handbook\)](#) outline considerations of quality and accountability in humanitarian response, through a rights-based and people-centred approach and minimum standards in programming and life-saving activities. A new edition of the Sphere Handbook will be available in 2018.
- [The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief](#) seeks to maintain minimum standards of behaviour. It is a voluntary code. In case of an armed conflict, the Code of Conduct should be interpreted in conformity with IHL.

1.2 Basic Legal Framework for Humanitarian Action

Areas of international law with particular relevance to humanitarian action include International Humanitarian Law (IHL)/Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and Refugee Law.

1.2.1 International Humanitarian Law / Law of Armed Conflict (IHL / LoAC)

International Humanitarian Law (IHL), also known as the Law of Armed Conflict (LoAC) or *jus in bello*, binds states and non-state armed groups who are parties to armed conflict. It regulates means and methods of warfare and the protection of persons not or no longer participating in hostilities. It also sets out rules on the delivery of impartial humanitarian relief for civilians in need. The most important treaty sources are the [Hague Conventions](#), the [Geneva Conventions](#) (GC) and [their Additional Protocols](#) (AP). A large number of IHL rules form part of customary international law, especially as the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 have been universally ratified. International Human Rights Law (IHRL) continues to apply during armed conflict.

Humanitarian actors often refer to IHL, while the military refer to LoAC, although they constitute the same set of norms. This body of law is referred to as IHL throughout the Handbook.

The classification of a situation of violence as an armed conflict (international or non-international) will determine which body of rules applies to the conduct of the parties. The Hague Conventions and the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocol I (if ratified) apply in cases of international armed conflict (IAC), i.e. armed conflict between states. Common Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 applies in non-international armed conflict (NIAC), i.e. armed conflict between a state and one or more non-state armed groups, or between such armed groups. For a situation of violence to amount to a NIAC, the non-state armed group(s) must have a certain level of organization and the fighting must meet a certain threshold of intensity. Additional Protocol II (if ratified) supplements Common Article 3, but only if the NIAC takes place between the armed forces of a state party and a non-state armed group that controls part of the territory (i.e. not when the NIAC is between non-state armed groups).

See also chapter 4, sections 4.1 and 4.4.1, and chapter 6, section 6.1.



- [ICRC, What is IHL? \(2014\)](#)
- [ICRC, International Humanitarian Law: A Comprehensive Introduction \(2016\)](#)
- [The ICRC Casebook provides definitions of key terms and references pertaining to situations of conflict or other situations of violence.](#)
- [The Rule of Law in Armed Conflict \(RULAC\) website is a useful resource that qualifies situations of armed violence.](#)
- [ICRC IHL Database Customary IHL](#)



Main treaties:

- [The 1907 Hague Convention](#)
- [The 1949 Geneva Conventions I, II, III, IV](#)
- [The 1977 Additional Protocols I and II](#)

1.2.2 International Human Rights Law

Human rights are inherent to all human beings, without discrimination. The first international recognition lies in the [1945 UN Charter](#). The [1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) provides the first definition and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR) and the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (ICESCR) are the first universal human rights treaties. Multiple regional treaties complement these, as do a number of additional international treaties. By becoming parties to human rights treaties, states must respect, protect and fulfill human rights.

However, in a declared state of emergency that threatens the life of the nation, such as civil unrest or conflict, states can temporarily suspend certain rights (under stringent conditions), whereas IHL cannot be suspended in times of armed conflict. However, certain human rights are non-derogable at any time, such as the prohibition of torture and inhuman punishment or treatment, the outlawing of slavery or servitude, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The right to life is considered non-derogable but limitable (e.g. self-defence in law enforcement or in armed conflict against legitimate targets). Human rights instruments usually specify if and under what conditions provisions can be derogated.

While IHL is only applicable in situations of armed conflict, human rights law applies at all times, including in armed conflict. At times, IHL can inform how IHRL will be interpreted. At other times, they will apply in parallel (for example, IHL will apply to the targeting of military objectives, while IHRL will apply in law enforcement operations, e.g. in quelling riots). Determining which legal framework applies in a given situation may, at times, pose a challenge or present a question of debate.

See also chapter 4, section 4.1 for more on the interplay between IHL and IHRL.



Main International Human Rights Treaties and Conventions:

- [1945 UN Charter \(not a treaty\)](#)
- [1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\) \(1976\)](#)
- [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(ICESCR\) \(1966\)](#)



Regional Instruments

- [European Convention on Human Rights \(1950\)](#)
- [Inter-American Convention on Human Rights \(1969\)](#)
- [African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights \(1981\)](#)

[OHCHR website](#)



- [UNHCR website](#)
- [IOM website](#)
- [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre \(IDMC\) website](#)

1.2.3 Refugee Law

In armed conflict and other situations of violence, civilians are often compelled to leave their home for reasons related to the fighting. When they have fled their home and remain in their country, they are internally displaced persons (IDPs). When they have fled across an international border because of conflict or persecution, they become asylum seekers. When a person's asylum claim is granted, that person is a refugee.

International refugee law - set out in the [Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees from 1951](#) and its Protocol from 1967 – is the branch of international law that deals with the rights and protection of refugees. It is also complementary to IHL and IHRL. This law serves to safeguard the fundamental rights of refugees and the regulation of their status in their countries of asylum. Refugee is a legal term applicable only if a person has crossed an internationally recognized state border and has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Even if an individual fulfills the conditions to be considered a refugee, granting refugee status remains at state discretion, in conformity with state sovereignty. Nevertheless, it is prohibited to return refugees and asylum-seekers to territories where their life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. This is the principle of non-refoulement.

IDPs are not protected under refugee law, but do benefit from the protections afforded under IHRL and IHL. The only IDP-specific instrument that legally binds governments to protect the rights and well-being of IDPs is the [African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa \(also known as the Kampala Convention\)](#). See also chapter 2, section 2.1.1.3.



- [1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol](#)
- [2009 Kampala Convention](#)
- [OCHA on Message: Internal Displacement \(2018\)](#)
- [UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement \(OCHA 2004\)](#)

1.2.4 Disaster Response Law, Rules and Principles

In contexts of natural disasters, there are a number of global and national instruments. The International Disaster Response Law ([IDRL Guidelines](#)) for the national facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance assist governments to improve their own disaster laws with respect to incoming international relief, ensuring better coordination and quality. In 2008, the UN General Assembly adopted three resolutions (63/139, 63/141, and 63/137) encouraging states to make use of the IDRL Guidelines. In 2016, the International Law Commission adopted [Draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters, along with a commentary](#).



- [2007 IDRL Guidelines](#)
- [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief \(1994\)](#)
- [UN Draft Article on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters \(2016\)](#)

1.3 Humanitarian Principles

Humanity	Neutrality	Impartiality	Operational Independence
Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.	Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.	Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.	Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

Table 1: Humanitarian Principles

Humanitarian principles are central to establishing and maintaining access to affected populations whether in a context of disaster in peacetime, armed conflict or other type of complex emergency.

- The seven Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement were adopted in 1965: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. They are spelled out in the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and in the Humanitarian Charter of the Sphere Handbook.
- The four United Nations humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and (operational) independence are enshrined General Assembly Resolutions ([46/182 of 1991](#) and [58/114](#)) of 2004.

Humanitarian organizations must commit to at least the four core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and (operational) independence. Humanitarian principles have practical and operational relevance. It is crucial for humanitarians to stay neutral, impartial and independent and, very importantly, to be perceived as such. Humanitarian actors must “walk the talk” and behave in a principled manner with all civilian, military and other armed actors.



The CMCoord function is guided by humanitarian principles. As an ambassador for the humanitarian community, the CMCoord Officer has a major role in their promotion and safeguarding. This includes sensitizing the military and other armed actors about humanitarian principles and key considerations of humanitarian interaction with military actors. It also involves raising awareness of and promoting a coherent approach by the humanitarian community in its engagement with the military and other armed actors.



- [OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Principles \(2012\)](#)
- [General Assembly Resolution 46/182 \(1991\)](#)
- [General Assembly Resolution 58/114 \(2004\)](#)
- [OCHA on Message: General Assembly resolution 46/182 \(2012\)](#)
- [1965 International Red Cross and Red Crescent seven Fundamental Principles](#)

1.4 Humanitarian Operating Environment

Adhering to the principles of neutrality and impartiality in humanitarian operations – and being perceived as doing so – is critical to ensuring access to affected people. It can also make a significant difference to the security of humanitarian personnel and the people they assist. Maintaining a clear distinction between the role and function of humanitarian actors from that of the military and other armed actors is the determining factor in creating an operating environment in

which humanitarian organizations can carry out their responsibilities effectively and safely.

1.4.1 Perception and Acceptance

It is obvious, though not always remembered, that the people humanitarian organizations serve are not simply passive recipients. To build up acceptance, it is crucial to involve key actors of the host society and to understand their perspective and perception of the organization and programme. Affected people can be linked to regular or non-regular armed actors, and official and unofficial authorities. It is therefore crucial from a CMCoord perspective to share consistent messages with all actors and avoid association with any party (or perceived party) to a conflict. Efficient and tailored programmes, constant communication with all parties, consistency, and clear explanations of programmes can positively impact on the way humanitarian actors are perceived and thus bolster acceptance. This should be viewed as a long-term and continuous process. Strong coordination with established local associations and NGOs that have gathered expertise and influence over time often is a crucial step in gaining and maintaining acceptance.



Humanitarian-military coordination and interaction must not jeopardize, but must support, the principles guiding humanitarian actors, local networks and trust that humanitarian agencies have created and maintain with communities and relevant actors.



- [OCHA on Message: Communications with Communities \(2014\)](#)
- [IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations \(AAP\) \(2013\)](#)
- [Presence and Proximity: To Stay and Deliver, Five Years On \(2017\)](#)

Case Study: The Use of Armed Escorts in Haiti, 2016

In 2016, during the response to Hurricane Matthew in Haiti, international humanitarian organizations reacted to a series of security incidents – such as truck looting and attempted carjacking - by increasingly using armed escorts for aid deliveries. The Haitian National Police and the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) had always offered escorts for large-scale humanitarian distributions where necessary, but due to agency anxiety and the spreading of rumors among aid actors, this soon became the norm and not an exception.

Armed escorts should be a last resort (see chapters 3 and 6). This was not the case during the response to Hurricane Matthew. The prevalence of armed escorts not only added a logistics layer and

slowed distributions at a critical period, it also deepened existing tensions between local communities and international humanitarian agencies; the cause of many of the security incidents in the first place. It was not a viable, nor a sustainable, solution.

Concerns among humanitarian actors in Haiti did not reflect the security situation, but rather a lack of understanding of the context and local community dynamics. At the same time, some communities resorted to violence and vandalism due to frustrations that they were not being heard and their needs not met. Following a CMCoord assessment, the UN Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator requested that agencies urgently bolster community engagement efforts, learning from NGOs with proven experience in Haiti, and use armed escorts as an absolute last resort. In parallel, OCHA (CMCoord / Communications with Communities (CwC)) hosted working group sessions on the use of armed escorts and community engagement for response actors, to share good practices and minimize the risk of looting and other security incidents. The use of armed escorts eventually decreased without negatively impacting the security of humanitarian actors.

The [IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations \(AAP\)](#) recommend to:

- Facilitate two-way communication between relevant communities and aid providers.
- Ensure that appropriate, multi-channel feedback mechanisms are in place, informed by an understanding of local communication preferences.
- Ensure that communities have timely and accurate information on humanitarian issues, in particular their rights as aid recipients, how to complain and ask questions, and ways to participate in the response effort.

1.4.2 Distinction

From the perspective of the local population, the different objectives, nature and principles between military and humanitarian operations might not always be obvious. The CMCoord Officer has a crucial role to play in promoting distinction between military and humanitarian actors. This may require a certain degree of physical distance, in particular in situations of conflict or internal disturbances and troubles. It can also require the avoidance of using military assets or of the military to perform activities that could be perceived as humanitarian assistance, such as direct distribution or the provision of medical care. Blurring of lines may have some positive effects

from the military point of view, as they could gain sympathy if they are associated to humanitarian actors. See also chapter 4.

The principle of distinction is not only a rule of customary IHL. Distinction from military and political actors and objectives is crucial for humanitarian actors to be perceived as neutral, impartial and independent. Humanitarian access and security can be compromised in case of any real or perceived affiliation to military or political actors. Moreover, if the military/armed actor is visibly involved in relief activities, beneficiaries might be put at risk to become a target. Distinction is particularly important in contexts of conflict or internal disturbance and tensions (see chapter 6). The perceived association with a military actor in a peaceful context (e.g in case of a natural or technological disaster in peacetime) can also impact on the way the organization is perceived by parties opposed to the military actors in other contexts. See also chapters 4 and 6.

Distinction is also challenged in contexts where peacekeeping missions are mandated to play a role in combating armed groups, protecting civilians and facilitating humanitarian access. The CMCoord role is essential in engaging with the peacekeeping mission to promote humanitarian objectives and operational requirements, including distinction. See also chapter 2, section 2.8 and chapter 4, section 4.3.

Case Study: Distinction for Access and Security of Humanitarian Actors

Dialogue with peacekeeping missions is important. However, a clear distinction between politically motivated actions to end conflict and apolitical humanitarian assistance is often crucial. Peacekeeping missions have political and military objectives and therefore might be or be perceived as party to the hostilities, while humanitarian actors must keep a visible independence from political and military structures to preserve humanitarian space.

In some instances, UN AFPs (Agencies, Funds and Programmes) have conducted joint missions with peacekeeping missions (e.g. JAM Joint Assessment Mission), during which the police component of the peacekeeping mission arrested presumed armed elements. The perceived association with peace operation activities had a detrimental effect on the way the local population and armed groups viewed these agencies. Restriction of humanitarian access is often the immediate consequence of such an association, as well as the endangerment of the lives of humanitarian workers or even affected people.

Good practices for humanitarian actors include:

- Avoid participation in JAMs, even with the civilian components of the mission. Humanitarian organizations should conduct their own assessment missions mastering their own analysis.
- Agree on key information to be collected individually by the different actors.
- Promote complementarity of work and dialogue with the peacekeeping mission without blurring lines.

1.4.3 Do No Harm

Any humanitarian assistance (e.g. food distribution or provision of healthcare) is a significant external intervention in a local system and can considerably affect the local economy, power balance, and population movements. It can also contribute adversely to crime or misuse of power. Examples are food distributions that disrupt the local economy; beneficiaries that are assaulted and robbed when picking up relief items; or local tensions because of real or perceived inequality in distributions. The “do no harm” concept is ascribed to the “Hippocratic Oath” in medical practice. It states that any potential, unintentional consequences of humanitarian assistance should be critically examined and any negative consequences avoided. A practical use of the “do no harm” concept is to “examine the solutions being offered today as they might be the cause of problems tomorrow”.

Any actor involved in humanitarian response has to weigh the possible consequences, impacts and effects of his/her activities. Cultural, economic and societal considerations should be made. Each response has to be principled, based on humanitarian standards and adapted to the context, after thorough assessment. Assessments should cover affected people and other peripheral stakeholders that may help, hinder or be affected by humanitarian activities.



This is relevant for CMCoord in two ways: to avoid negative consequences of civil-military dialogue and interaction, and to promote the “do no harm” concept to military actors involved in humanitarian assistance. The CMCoord Officer has a crucial role in sharing (some) data, promoting humanitarian principles, standards and codes of conduct and when relevant, ensuring that military support to relief activities are coordinated with humanitarian actors.

The humanitarian definition of “do no harm” is not to be confused with the military one. Some militaries have applied the “do no harm” analysis in their planning processes, analyzing second- and third-order consequences of a proposed course of action.

Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The combat of sexual exploitation and abuse is for the first time acknowledged as a UN system-wide strategy which requires a common approach. The UN Secretary-General has asked Agencies, Funds and Programmes to adopt new measures and strengthen existing ones to better prevent, detect, report and take action against UN system personnel who commit such “inexcusable and abhorrent acts”.

[PSEA website](#)

Case Study: Vertical Lift Capability in Distribution of Food and Non-Food Items (NFI)

The only way to reach inaccessible affected areas after a major natural disaster is often by helicopter. Airlift capacity is one of the most important, but also most limited, resources during the first days of a disaster. In previous relief operations, military actors have provided direct assistance and delivered relief items and food. These deliveries can be critical in the early stages of the response as the humanitarian community gets organized and deployed to the affected area.

The local and assisting governments, as well as media, are often very supportive of these measures, as they provide quick and highly visible results. Although helicopter distributions sometimes seem to be the only way to get immediate help into severely affected areas, they can have negative effects that the CMCoord Officer may have to address. The following are examples from recent disasters:

Helicopters identified devastated areas from the air and landed or hovered over open spots to drop or unload relief items from two to five metres.

Local people heard of help arriving either by actually hearing the sound of the helicopters or learned via word of mouth, and flocked to the landing zone. The helicopters threw up debris which injured many people who rushed in to get help – and who had no access to health care.

The helicopter crew did not stay and did not manage the distribution. This resulted in the local residents who were the most able claiming relief items, while many others – usually women, children, sick, disabled or elderly people – were left with nothing.

The people did not know if and when the helicopters would return, so they camped in the open field to wait for the next distribution. This could make the landing spots dangerous areas and subject to all kinds of crime, including rape and abduction.

When the helicopters returned, people tried to enter the helicopter, threatened the crew, and in worst cases, the situation ended up in riots – with people killed by security forces or helicopter crew in self-defence.

The helicopters brought random items which were not necessarily needed, e.g. if the water supply was not affected and food was scarce, the helicopters came with bottled water, rather than food. Empty bottles cause a waste problem.

In cases where local markets did offer sufficient wares, local sellers suffered significant losses as a result of the “free” competition. Operations were suspended without notification, leaving no time to find alternative supply routes – and leaving people behind still in need, and upset.

1.5 Humanitarian Access

Humanitarian access concerns humanitarian actors’ ability to reach people affected by crisis, as well as affected people’s ability to access humanitarian assistance and services. Sustained and effective humanitarian access implies that all affected people can be reached and that the receipt of humanitarian assistance is not conditional upon the allegiance or support to parties involved in a conflict, but independent of political, military and other action.

Access is a fundamental prerequisite to effective humanitarian action. After consent has been given by the authorities (see section 1.1.1 in this chapter), full and unimpeded access is essential to establish operations, move goods and personnel where they are needed, distribute life-saving supplies, and to ensure that all affected people benefit from protection and assistance. In situations of conflict and occupation, IHL establishes that impartial relief organizations have the right of access to affected people and regulates its conditions when the parties to the conflict are not able or unwilling to meet the needs of the populations under their control (GC and AP II). Moreover, under customary international humanitarian law, humanitarian relief personnel must be respected and protected ([Rule 31](#)). Finally, under International Criminal Law, intentionally directing attacks against humanitarian personnel and material may amount to “war crimes” in both IAC and NIAC ([Rome Statute, Art. 8](#)). It is important to note that

not all constraints on access are deliberately obstructive and may not constitute violations of international law.

Several factors can prevent access:

- Physical impediments related to climate, terrain or lack of infrastructure: lack of roads, remote mountain regions.
- Bureaucratic restrictions on personnel and humanitarian supplies: long bureaucratic registration procedures, denial to cross a certain checkpoint.
- Restriction of movement of personnel and humanitarian supplies and interference in the delivery of relief and implementation of activities: attempts to divert aid, no clearance to assess a certain region, restrictions of delivery of materials, demolitions of donor-funded structures.
- Active fighting and military operations: humanitarians cannot move, affected people cannot move. Improvised explosive devices (IED) may pose a severe risk.
- Attacks on humanitarian personnel, goods and facilities, politically or economically motivated. ([OCHA on Message: Access](#))

Obtaining and maintaining access is a continuous effort. The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) have a specific role to play in this regard. At the country level, OCHA supports [Humanitarian Coordinators](#) in their role through coordination of options and strategies to increase access and promote compliance with humanitarian principles. See also chapter 2, section 2.3.

Good practices include, but are not limited to:

- Establish and maintain engagement with all actors that can provide or restrict access.
- Enhance acceptance among affected populations, authorities and armed actors.
- Promote humanitarian principles and act in accordance with them.
- Establish specific arrangements with parties to hostilities (e.g. humanitarian notification system for deconfliction, humanitarian “pause” or “corridors”, area security).

The CMCoord function is essential in establishing and sustaining dialogue with the military and other armed actors, including non-state armed groups. This includes the establishment of specific arrangements and promotion of a principled approach to interaction with the military, in adherence to UNGA resolution 46/182 and existing CMCoord guidelines. As explained under section 1.4, acceptance is often a strong prerequisite to access.

Main references pertaining to humanitarian dialogue with non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and humanitarian access:



- *The need for impartial relief organizations to engage with non-state armed groups is spelled out in [Common Art 3 of the Geneva Conventions](#). The article applies to non-international armed conflicts (NIAC) and thus to non-state armed groups.*
- *[UNGA resolution 46/182](#) states that “Under the aegis of the General Assembly and working under the direction of the Secretary-General, the high-level official (emergency relief coordinator) would have the following responsibilities: para 35 (d) Actively facilitating, including through negotiation if needed, the access by the operational organizations to emergency areas for the rapid provision of emergency assistance by obtaining the consent of all parties concerned, through modalities such as the establishment of temporary relief corridors where needed, days and zones of tranquility and other forms”.*
- *The need to engage with all parties is reaffirmed in [UNSC resolution 1894 \(2009\)](#) on the Protection of Civilians.*
- *See also chapters 4 and 6.*
- *[OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Access \(2017\)](#)*
- *[OCHA Manual for Practitioners and accompanying Guidelines on Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups \(2006\)](#)*
- *[Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict, Practitioner’s Manual, Version 2 \(2014\)](#)*
- *[Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict: Handbook on the International Normative Framework \(2014\)](#)*
- *[Oxford Guidance on the Law Relating to Humanitarian Relief Operations in Situations of Armed Conflict \(2016\)](#)*
- *[ICRC Q&A and Lexicon on Humanitarian Access \(2014\)](#)*
- *[ICRC, The Law Regulating Cross-Border Relief Operations \(2013\)](#)*

1.6 Protection

Protection encompasses all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with international human rights law, international humanitarian law (which applies in situations of armed conflict) and refugee law. *Inter-Agency Standing Committee - IASC*

In times of peace or internal tension, national laws establish obligations and rights between states and individuals, in which states have the primary responsibility to protect individuals under their jurisdiction. In situations of natural or technological disasters, national authorities are responsible for providing assistance and protection to those affected.

In situations of armed conflict, protected persons are defined as civilians and those who are no longer part of hostilities (e.g. sick, wounded and detained persons). Different provisions may apply depending on the type of conflict and the category of protected persons. They cannot be directly targeted in attacks.

In situations of armed conflict, the protection provided by the state may no longer be sufficient. Therefore, IHL establishes the responsibilities of the state or armed group that has control over the protected persons. It also indicates that assistance is part of protection and includes the right (for impartial humanitarian actors) to assess the needs and to control the distribution of relief. In armed conflicts, humanitarian actors also engage with responsibility bearers to promote adherence to IHL or other applicable legal instruments to reduce risks faced by affected people. Responsibility bearers may include national or foreign military forces and NSAGs. Their interaction includes information sharing, advocacy, training, awareness-raising and measures to reduce the impact of hostilities on civilians, as well as the promotion of the “do no harm” approach and related methods. The [2017 Secretary-General Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts](#) specifically addresses the conduct of NSAGs. The CMCoord Officer should liaise and coordinate, as appropriate, with military and NSAGs, in support of the protection response. See also chapter 6, section 6.5.2.



Some groups are particularly vulnerable to violations of human rights and need specific protection. In situations of armed conflict, children (individuals below the age of 18) are entitled to protection under international humanitarian law as civilians, and for special protection as children as a customary rule of IHL.

The [IASC Protection Policy](#) highlights that protection is a shared, humanitarian system-wide responsibility. In the field, the Protection Cluster, lead by UNHCR, coordinates the protection response and leads standards and policy setting. The equivalent at the strategic level is the Global Protection Cluster. Protection is sub-divided in four areas of expertise, with designated lead agencies: gender-based violence (UNFPA), child protection (UNICEF), mine action (UNMAS) and housing and property rights (NRC). The sub-clusters are activated in the field as needed. As the custodian of IHL, ICRC plays an important role in protection.

Protection can be seen as a legal responsibility, objective or activity. Humanitarian activities in support of protection fall into three phases:

- Responsive activities to prevent, stop, or alleviate the effects of a threat to persons' rights of safety, e.g. sexual or gender-based violence (SGBV). It includes advocating with parties to a conflict to refrain from such abuse or providing basic medical care.
- Remedial responses to restore persons' dignity and ensure adequate living conditions after abuse, for example legal assistance if a victim of SGBV decides to take legal action.
- Environment building to build a social, cultural, institutional and legal environment conducive to respect for individual rights. This could include strengthening legislation against SGBV or training police on how to handle SGBV cases.



- [ICRC Professional Standards for Protection Work \(2018\)](#)
- [IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action \(2016\)](#)
- [OCHA on Message: Protection of Civilians \(2017\)](#)
- [The Global Protection Cluster](#)
- [Security Council Aide Memoire on Protection of Civilians \(2014\)](#)

1.6.1 Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping Operations

Since the early 2000s most UN peacekeeping mandates include elements of protection. Peacekeepers are increasingly authorized to use force in situations where civilians are facing an “imminent threat of physical violence”, and no longer only in situations of self-defence. Humanitarian actors engage with UN peacekeeping missions and other security actors mandated to proactively protect civilians under threat, by sharing information on what those threats are.

They advocate with UN peacekeeping missions and other security actors aiming to enhance security for civilians and respond to requests for information on population movements and humanitarian needs. However, the new generation of peacekeeping operations have robust mandates that sometimes comprise the neutralization of specific armed groups.

Therefore, humanitarian actors should refrain from sharing sensitive information, information that could compromise their neutrality or that could weaken one party to the conflict. The peacekeeping definition of PoC is different from the humanitarian. It takes a threefold approach: physical protection, rights of the individual, and stabilization and peacebuilding through establishing a protective environment. See also chapter 4, section 4.5.



[Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations \(2009\)](#)

1.7 Security of Humanitarian Personnel

Humanitarian actors operating in an emergency must identify the most expeditious, effective and secure approach to ensure the delivery of vital assistance to affected people. This must be balanced against the need to ensure staff safety and take into consideration any real or perceived affiliation with the military. See also chapter 2, section 2.9.

Many risks can be reduced by trust and acceptance, if humanitarian actors are widely perceived as neutral and impartial, their humanitarian mission is understood, and their presence and work do not have negative effects on or offend local customs and culture. The more humanitarian action is perceived as actually changing the situation for the better, the higher will be the acceptance by local communities and the extent to which they actively contribute to the safety and security of humanitarian workers.

Acceptance-based approaches depend on long-term and continuous dialogue and partnerships. They include knowledge of and adaptation to the local environment, communication, consultation with and involvement of communities, and close monitoring of potential negative perceptions and threats. Local actors, partners and staff play a major role in understanding the environment, threats and possible perceptions, and in communicating humanitarian messages. “Do no harm” approaches also play a crucial role in avoiding local tensions resulting from humanitarian programming.

Good practices include local co-ownership and involvement of all groups, local labour and livelihoods in humanitarian programmes. In high-risk situations, gaining acceptance may be extremely challenging and may need other appropriate risk management measures. For instance, where some groups or organizations are ideologically opposed to parts of the international humanitarian response, humanitarian workers may be directly targeted. In these cases, low-profile approaches can include the de-branding of vehicles, staff not wearing organization emblems, the use of local vehicles and un-marked offices, or not gathering in groups or offices identifiable as belonging to the organization. While these measures will reduce the likelihood of incidents, they tend to increase the impact if they do happen.

Chapter 2: Humanitarian Ecosystem

Chapter 2 describes the evolving humanitarian coordination architecture. It looks at the main actors, coordination tools and mechanisms and the implications for CMCoord. It also looks at the interface with other actors, especially the broader UN system. It includes:

- Main humanitarian actors.
- Humanitarian coordination.
- Development and human rights actors.
- Interaction between the humanitarian community and the larger UN system.
- The UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Reform.
- The UN Security Management System.

2.1 Main Humanitarian Actors and Linkage to UN-CMCoord

The humanitarian community comprises many actors with different legal mandates or missions. This section contains a non-exhaustive list of humanitarian actors that are the most likely to interact with CMCoord Officers. The CMCoord Officer represents the UN system humanitarian actors when engaging with military and armed actors and striving to protect and promote humanitarian principles.

2.1.1 UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes

2.1.1.1 OCHA

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is part of the UN Secretariat. It coordinates the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. It also advocates for effective and humanitarian action by all, for all.

 **Coordination:** OCHA supports the various coordination mechanisms, including the HC, HCT, cluster meetings, inter-cluster coordination and other tools, as well as all steps of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle.

In certain situations, the risks may be higher for international staff, staff from other parts of the country, or staff from certain nationalities. In these cases, remote programming, static localized staffing and local capacity building for community-based organizations and volunteers can be considered. If the risk is equally high for all staff, complete remote programming – carried out by the community itself and monitored via visits and the internet – as well as providing cash and vouchers rather than goods, can be options for consideration. See also chapter 2, section 2.9 and chapter 6, section 6.5.3.

The provision of security conditions conducive to humanitarian activities can be provided by military components in peacekeeping operations as well as by national military or other armed actors in control of a territory. As a general rule, humanitarian actors will not use armed escorts. The minimum requirements to deviate from this general rule are laid out in the IASC non-binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys. See also chapter 3, section 3.2.4.

A good practice alternative to deterrence measures and armed protection is to request area security. This may involve “clearing” and patrolling key road networks, maintaining a presence in the area but not being visible or accompanying a convoy, or providing aerial flyovers.

The CMCoord Officer has an important role to play in support to security management, in particular through liaison with the military and other armed actors. For example, s/he can organize area security or establish a humanitarian notification system for deconfliction (HNS4D).



- [Presence and Proximity: To Stay and Deliver, Five Years On \(2017\)](#)
- [CMCoord as Auxiliary to Humanitarian Access, Protection and Security \(2017\)](#)

 **Policy:** OCHA drafts (country-specific) policy to ensure a uniform and collaborative approach on key humanitarian issues.

 **Advocacy:** OCHA issues key messages on behalf of the affected people to ensure respect for humanitarian principles and support – in public, via “quiet diplomacy” with governments, or through negotiations with armed groups.

 **Information Management:** OCHA collects, analyses, and shares information about the situation among the various organizations involved, and provides visual information material and situation reports.

 **Humanitarian Financing:** OCHA manages joint resource mobilization mechanisms and pooled funds.

The Head of OCHA is the [Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator \(USG/ERC\)](#). See also section 2.3 in this chapter.

 **OCHA is the UN humanitarian Focal Point in the UN humanitarian system for the establishment and management of interaction with military and other armed actors, as decided by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 1995. This relationship changes depending on the type of emergency and the roles and types of the military and other armed actors. OCHA's Civil-Military Coordination Service (CMCS) is the custodian of CMCoord Guidelines and related documents, conducts a CMCoord training programme, assists in large-scale military exercises and maintains rosters of specifically trained expert personnel.**

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- [OCHA website](#)
 - *Guidance, information and resources can be found [here](#)*
 - *The online UN-CMCoord eCourse is available [here](#)*
 - [OCHA On Message: UN-CMCoord \(2017\)](#)

2.1.1.2 WFP and Logistics

The World Food Programme (WFP), as the Global Logistics Cluster lead agency, coordinates the logistic aspects of humanitarian response. If required, dedicated civil-military logistics liaison officers (CMLog) can be deployed to assist the coordination and management of humanitarian cargo. This includes liaison with military and other armed actors, as necessary. The interaction between WFP / CMLog personnel and the military and other armed actors usually focuses on:

- Operational tactical issues around technical matters in relief transport.
- Appropriate use of military assets to assist in relief delivery.
- De-conflicting the use of transport assets (aircraft, ships, trucks) during hostilities.
- Provision of common logistics services, particularly transport and temporary warehousing - as a last resort.
- Military support to infrastructures (roads, bridges, ports, communications, etc).



Coordination between the OCHA CMCoord Officer and the WFP CMLog is required to avoid duplication and ensure consistency.



- [WFP website](#)
- [Logistics Cluster website](#)

2.1.1.3 UNHCR

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) was created to provide protection and to find durable solutions for refugees. In humanitarian crises, UNHCR also provides humanitarian assistance to other groups of people in refugee-like situations, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), asylum-seekers, returnees and stateless people.



The basis for UNHCR's work is the [UNHCR Statute](#) and the [1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol](#).

UNHCR is the Global Cluster Lead Agency for Protection (GPC). In this capacity UNHCR has the responsibility to lead and coordinate with other UN agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participating in the GPC. UNHCR and the CMCoord Officer are likely to liaise, especially regarding protection questions that require specific dialogue with the military and other armed actors (e.g. protection of civilians (PoC) and human rights violations). See also section 2.4 in this chapter and chapter 6, section 6.5.2.

2.1.1.4 UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF often must coordinate with militaries and other armed actors, either directly or through CMCoord

Officers, to ensure the safety and security of its staff and to create space for principled humanitarian assistance to vulnerable children. CMCoord is particularly important for its child protection mandate. UNICEF will advocate with all parties to conflict, including military actors, to prevent and end violations against children during the conduct of hostilities. It will also engage with the military in activities and action plans to address issues such as child recruitment, child detention, explosive remnants of war, education, sexual violence and exploitation, as well as protecting water and sanitation infrastructure, schools and hospitals.



- [UNICEF website](#)
- [UNICEF Programme Guidance Note on Engaging with Non-State Entities in Humanitarian Action \(2011\)](#)

2.1.1.5 WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) works with 194 Member States. WHO strives to combat diseases and enhance general health, by:

- Providing leadership on matters critical to health and engaging in partnerships where joint action is needed.
- Shaping the research agenda and stimulating the generation, translation and dissemination of valuable knowledge.
- Setting norms and standards and promoting and monitoring their implementation.
- Articulating ethical and evidence-based policy options.
- Providing technical support, catalysing change, and building sustainable institutional capacity.
- Monitoring the health situation and assessing health trends.



During health emergencies, when support from the military is required, CMCoord Officers may interact with WHO. The [Civil-Military Interaction and Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets \(MCDA\) in the Context of the Current Ebola Crisis in West Africa](#) was developed in 2014 in the framework of the Ebola response. The [2011 Civil-Military Coordination During Humanitarian Health Action](#) provides guidance on CMCoord during health operations.

Case Study: Use of Emergency Medical Teams in Conflicts

Emergency Medical Teams, or EMTs, are groups of health professionals and supporting staff that provide direct clinical care to populations affected by disasters or outbreaks in peace time, or deploy to emergencies as surge capacity to support the local health system. See also chapter 5, section 5.2.3.2.

During the military operation to retake Mosul in 2016/17, the parties to the conflict were unable and/or unwilling to provide care to all wounded and sick (*hors de combat*), despite their obligation under IHL. In response, WHO engaged a number of implementing partner EMTs to provide frontline trauma care. The very high-risk environment and military operational space often resulted in the co-location of EMTs with military forces. This presented the need to strengthen engagement and coordination with military actors through the dedicated civil-military function, not the least with regard to challenges around distinction and IHL obligations by the parties to the conflict to provide care to the wounded and sick.

- [EMT website](#)
- [Johns Hopkins Center for Humanitarian Health The Mosul Trauma Response \(2018\)](#)
- [Emergency Trauma Response to the Mosul Offensive \(2018\)](#)

2.1.2 The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC) is a global humanitarian network that assists those facing disaster, conflict and health problems. It consists of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Movement and the space that it occupies can be referred to as the Red Pillar. The RCRC Movement has its own legal foundation and role based on the Geneva Conventions, the Statutes of the RCRC Movement and the national law of the 196 states that are party to the Geneva Conventions.

The 191 Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies act as “auxiliary to the public authorities” in the humanitarian field in their countries. They provide a range of services including disaster relief, health and social programmes. Most National Societies are established by a domestic legal act that sets out precise parameters of their auxiliary role. During wartime, National Societies also assist the affected civilian population and support the medical services of the armed forces, where appropriate. National Societies are expected to maintain dialogue and interact with military bodies in their countries, including disseminating knowledge on humanitarian principles, IHL, and the mandates and activities of the RCRC Movement.

IFRC represents the National Societies at the international level. From a crisis and disaster response perspective, the IFRC is designated as the lead agency in situations that are not classified as armed conflict. In this capacity, it coordinates and mobilizes relief assistance for disaster situations. The IFRC observes and contributes to the humanitarian coordination mechanisms (e.g. by co-leading the Emergency Shelter Cluster).



- [ICRC website](#)
- [IFRC website](#)

2.1.3 Non-Governmental Organizations

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. It does not define a precise legal category nor a homogeneous community.

NGO statutes and constitutions vary considerably and activities may be humanitarian, political, human rights based, or religious. They vary greatly from one organization to another. Many NGOs work in both humanitarian assistance and long-term development.

International NGOs (INGOs) participate in international community activities. Local NGOs (LNGOs) in the field are often the first responders. In humanitarian emergencies, many NGOs coordinate with the international humanitarian community through the cluster system and other coordination mechanisms. Relief work is often sub-contracted to or carried out with local partner NGOs. Their relationship with the United Nations system differs depending on their goals, locations and mandates. In situations of armed conflict, IHL specifically protects impartial humanitarian organizations that provide relief and protection to victims, as described in chapter 1.

Multiple humanitarian NGOs, such as Médecins sans Frontières, Save the Children, Oxfam or World Vision, have their own approach on engagement with the military and other armed actors. MSF usually has an independent approach to and an observer role within the HCT. It is important for the CMCoord Officer to understand the priorities and role of the different NGOs and work towards a coherent approach, for example regarding the engagement with non-state armed groups. The [Humanitarian // Military Dialogue](#) website lists specific NGO civil-military policies and guidelines.



Even if NGOs often liaise bilaterally with the military, at the country level it is important to agree on a common strategy within the humanitarian community, via the HCT. Different approaches could jeopardize efforts for unhindered humanitarian access. The CMCoord Officer has a crucial role to play in building coherence.

2.2 Other Civilian Actors

2.2.1 Local Communities

While a state bears the primary responsibility for responding to humanitarian needs within its territory, local communities are often the first responders. This was reaffirmed at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, with the intent to better support sub-national preparedness and response. For CMCoord Officers, it is crucial to include local communities and to consider their perception of humanitarian assistance, distinction, the military and other armed actors, as it may have consequences for the CMCoord strategy. See also chapter 1, section 1.4.1.



[OCHA On Message: Communications with Communities \(2014\)](#)

2.2.2 Human Rights Actors

UN Human Rights actors, such as the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), parts of the civil component of a UN Mission, and national or international NGOs (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, etc) are often present in the same operational contexts as humanitarian actors. Some situations, more than others, require a clear distinction to avoid compromising humanitarian principles or mitigate security risks. Human rights officers will more openly denounce human rights abuses than humanitarian actors who must preserve their neutrality and access to all those in need.



[OHCHR website](#)

2.2.3 Development Actors

2.2.3.1 UN Development Coordination

A number of UN programmes, funds and agencies carry out their own mandated development activities. To ensure unity and coherence of

all UN development efforts, similar to humanitarian coordination, there are coordination forums for UN development activities at the global and country levels.

The global coordination forum for development-related work is the [UN Development Group \(UNDG\)](#). Its strategic priorities include support to countries in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in supporting the implementation of human rights principles and increased resilience.

At the country level, the UN Country Team (UNCT) encompasses all the entities of the UN system that carry out operational activities for development, emergency, recovery and transition in programme countries. It is chaired by the Resident Coordinator (RC). The RC is the designated representative of the UN Secretary-General for development operations and is, if there is no SRSG, the highest UN official in a country. The RC is the link to the global level, and reports to the UN Secretary-General through the head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Head of UNDP also chairs the UNDG. In case of an emergency, the RC will often assume the additional function of HC and represent the humanitarian community. See also section 2.3.2.1 in this chapter.



- [UNRC System - an overview \(2016\)](#)
- [UNDG Guidance Note on Human Rights for RCs and UNCTs \(2016\)](#)

2.2.3.2 UN Sustainable Development Goals

At the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, UN Member States adopted [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), with a set of [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) at its core. The Agenda strives for a world that is just, rights-based, equitable and inclusive. This new universal agenda will require an integrated approach to sustainable development and collective action, at all levels, prioritizing the principles of risk, resilience and prevention.



[UNDG 2030 Agenda](#)

The New Way of Working

While nothing should undermine the commitment to principled humanitarian action, the [2016 World Humanitarian Summit \(WHS\)](#) identified the need to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus. The New Way of Working (NWoW) can be described as

working over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of humanitarian and development actors, including those outside the UN system, towards collective outcomes. Ending needs by reducing risks and vulnerability is now a shared vision, under the SDG umbrella.

The NWoW is highly context-specific. Humanitarian principles are immutable and must always guide humanitarian action. At the same time, respect for humanitarian principles and better coordination with a variety of actors are not mutually exclusive, and it is envisioned that humanitarian action be undertaken in a way that can contribute towards achieving the SDGs.

Determining whether humanitarian principles are at risk will require highly context-specific, pragmatic decisions to inform the best approach to increase coherence between development and humanitarian efforts.

[OCHA New Way of Working \(2017\)](#)

2.2.4 Governments and Governmental Organizations

Governments provide a large percentage of funding for humanitarian assistance. Donors vary widely in their approaches towards humanitarian needs. These may include:

- In-kind donations directly to an affected state.
- Direct funding of projects carried out by IOs, NGOs or the RCRC Movement, or contributions to appeals and pooled funds.
- Deployment of government agency humanitarian advisers.
- Deployment of disaster response teams or foreign military assets (FMA) and units.

OCHA tracks resources in the [Financial Tracking Service \(FTS\)](#)

Many donors, such as the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), have representatives in the country of operation. Governments, as major donors, may have significant influence on the humanitarian response operation. Their participation in humanitarian coordination mechanisms is a controversial topic and handled differently in every country and emergency, based on the context.

2.3 Humanitarian Coordination

As described in chapter 1, the government of an affected state has the primary responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance. When the state is not willing or not able to provide humanitarian

assistance, humanitarian organizations may assist. Most international humanitarian organizations have offices and organizational structures at three levels:

- Global / strategic level (headquarters).
- National / country / operational level (regional and country offices).
- Sub-national / tactical level (field offices).

2.3.1 Global Level

The [Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator \(USG/ERC\)](#) is responsible for the oversight of all emergencies requiring United Nations humanitarian assistance. He/she also acts as the central focal point for governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental relief activities. The ERC also leads the [Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\)](#), an inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. The ERC chairs the IASC. Most humanitarian coordination tools and many humanitarian guidelines are developed at the global level through the IASC.

Table 2: The Composition of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Members					
					
<small>(L-R) UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), World Food Programme (WFP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)</small>					
					
<small>(L-R) UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization (WHO)</small>					
Standing Invitees					
					
<small>(L-R) International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), International Federation of the Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction)</small>					
					
<small>(L-R) Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, World Bank</small>					

2.3.2 Country Level

At country level, the humanitarian coordination architecture can be summarized as follows:

- Strategic level: HCT, led by the HC
- Operational level: Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG)
- Technical level: Clusters



In the humanitarian coordination architecture, ICRC has an official observer status and MSF usually engages as an observer.

2.3.2.1 The HC and Multi-Hatting Functions

When international humanitarian assistance is required, the ERC, in consultation with the IASC, appoints a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). HCs are accountable to the USG/ERC for all humanitarian affairs. They are the link between the operational and the global level and chair the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

The HC function can be a separate one or assumed by the Resident Coordinator (RC) when an emergency strikes. The combined function of RC/HC chairs both the UNCT and the HCT and can be the highest representative of the UN and the representative of the humanitarian community at the same time.

If a UN Mission is deployed to a country, the highest representative of the UN is the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). The RC in that case is often the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) and reports to both the Head of UNDP and to the SRSG. Apart from being the DSRSG and RC, the same official is also often designated as the HC, thereby creating a triple-hatted DSRSG/RC/HC function.

This organizational set-up has its own challenges. The DSRSG reports to the SRSG who is responsible to the UN Secretary-General for all UN activities, including peacekeeping operations. The HC chairs the HCT, in which many NGOs participate, and reports to the ERC, while the RC chairs the UNCT and reports to the Head of UNDP. The HCT and NGOs often operate independently and distinctly from the mandate of the UN Mission. Depending on the context, it may be decided to maintain a separate HC function, which is not integrated in the UN Mission, or to appoint a Deputy HC to strengthen the humanitarian component.



[IASC Introduction to Humanitarian Action - A Brief Guide for Resident Coordinators \(2015\)](#)

Current multi-hatting arrangements and reporting lines are not expected to change with the UNSG Reform. The Secretary-General's proposals in this area of multiple hatting is to enhance the synergies and accountabilities of each reporting line and mandate. See also section 2.8 in this chapter.



A triple-hatted DSRSG/RC/HC in an integrated UN Mission ensures that UN integration supports aid effectiveness without compromising principled humanitarian action.

2.3.2.2 The Humanitarian Country Team

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is chaired by the HC and is composed of a limited number of humanitarian organizations to enable effective decision-making. The main membership criterion is operational relevance. Members represent their respective organizations at the highest level (country representative or equivalent), as well as the thematic clusters their agency may be leading. The HCT includes UN AFPs, local and international NGOs and, subject to their individual mandates, components of the RCRC (as an observer). The UNDSS Chief Security Adviser will have a standing invitation as an observer, when required (see also section 2.9 in this chapter).



Is the military represented in the HCT? HCT membership is restricted to operational humanitarian stakeholders. The civilian leaders of UN peacekeeping operations, the heads of military components, or commanders of FMA may be invited to brief the HCT on an ad hoc basis, depending on the context.

The HCT ensures that humanitarian action is coordinated, principled, timely, effective, efficient, and contributes to longer-term recovery. The HCT may also steer preparedness activities. The HCT's main responsibilities are:

- Promoting adherence to humanitarian principles and adopting joint policies and strategies.
- Agreeing on common strategic issues, setting common objectives and priorities and developing strategic plans on humanitarian planning.
- Proposing a cluster system and cluster lead agencies.
- Providing guidance to cluster lead agencies, activating resource mobilization mechanisms, and advising the HC on the allocation of resources from in-country humanitarian pooled funds.
- Agreeing on common policies and guidance (including country-specific guidance for the use of armed escorts and engagement with armed actors).

2.3.2.3 CMCoord Advisory Role to the HC / HCT

The CMCoord Officer will advise the HC and the HCT, as it is the responsibility of the HC to identify a coherent and consistent humanitarian approach to civil-military interaction. To this end, the HC will work closely with the HCT, with support from the OCHA office. As representative of the humanitarian community vis-à-vis the host country government and UN political or peacekeeping missions, the HC advocates for humanitarian principles and guides political and military actors on how best to support – not compromise – that action. The HC's responsibilities in CMCoord include:

- Ensuring that principled humanitarian action is maintained.
- Engaging with military and other armed actors at the strategic level.
- Ensuring that country-specific civil-military coordination mechanisms and guidelines are in place.
- Approving the use of FMA and initiating requests, at the request of or with the consent of the affected state.
- Leading the development of HCT position papers, e.g. on access or information-sharing with the military.

2.3.3 Regional Level

Coordination can be established at the regional level to ensure a coordinated and consistent regional approach to respond to a crisis (e.g. Syria or Lake Chad Basin).

In this type of set-up, OCHA Country and Regional Offices support the HC to establish and maintain a common, coherent and consistent approach within the humanitarian community in its interaction with military and other armed actors.

Case Study: CMCoord Strategy at the Regional Level

The regional CMCoord strategy for the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) seeks to enhance coherent approaches in humanitarian civil-military coordination across Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, including the use of armed escorts and linkages between CMCoord, access and protection.

The regional CMCoord Officer based in N'Djamena allows for better exchange of information and practices. It is the entry point to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) HQ to promote humanitarian principles and support advocacy for protection and access. The regional CMCoord Officer also supports training activities and the strengthening of CMCoord mechanisms in the LCB countries.

2.4 Cluster Coordination

Clusters support the delivery of humanitarian assistance by coordinating, implementing and monitoring projects, and conducting joint needs assessments and gap analyses in the field. They also inform strategic decision-making of the HC/HCT, through sectoral planning and strategy development. There are 11 global clusters. At the operational level, clusters are activated according to need. Clusters mainly work through regular meetings and working groups, as needed, and each has a lead agency (or option of two). Each cluster is represented at inter-cluster meetings. The activation of the cluster system requires the host government's approval.



[What is the cluster approach?](#)

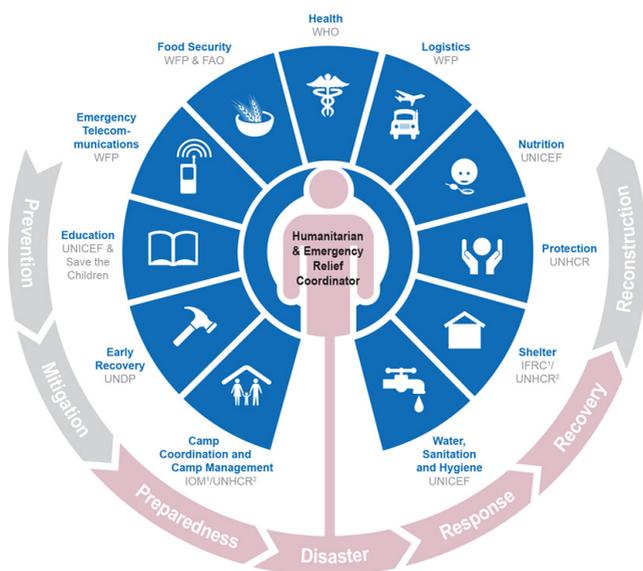


Figure 1: The 11 Global Clusters and the Global Cluster Lead Agencies

2.4.1 Inter-Cluster Coordination

The Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) provides a platform for clusters/sectors to work together for joint effective and efficient humanitarian response. Their activities include joint analysis and planning, agreeing on prioritization of interventions, geographic areas and vulnerable groups, modalities of response, and avoiding gaps and duplications in service delivery.

The ICCG provides operational direction and support to sub-national coordination groups. It plays a critical role in tracking and monitoring response, compiling updates from sub-national coordination groups and transmitting clear messages to the HC and HCT on operational matters, for advocacy and decision-making purposes. The ICCG addresses cross-sectoral issues throughout the response. It also ensures context-specific alignment between humanitarian and development action, where appropriate.

The HCT provides the overall strategic direction for humanitarian responses. OCHA facilitates inter-cluster coordination where applicable. Related meetings provide an opportunity for the CMCoord Officers to:

- Advocate for a consistent humanitarian approach to engagement with the military and other armed actors.
- Clarify critical CMCoord aspects.
- Advocate for the proper use and effective coordination of FMA.
- Disseminate guidance and policies; share information and good practices.
- Receive information from clusters about access constraints, logistic requirements, or other issues that have civil-military coordination implications.
- Discuss necessity of training for security forces on humanitarian principles, IHL, access, protection, SGBV and gender, and ensure that these are coordinated.



[Standard ICCG ToR \(2017\)](#)

2.4.2 The Most Relevant Clusters for UN-CMCoord

- The [Logistics Cluster](#) coordinates closely with military units to support humanitarian logistics operations, particularly on transport assets. The WFP / Logistics Cluster may also deploy their own civil-military logistics liaison personnel (CMLog), often with a strong technical background, to coordinate with military personnel on specific logistics-related activities or facilitation of logistic access.
- The Protection Cluster coordinates humanitarian protection activities. It can validate and channel reports about threats to civilians and ensure that appropriate action is taken. UNHCR, as the Protection Cluster lead, maintains dialogue with military actors where required and appropriate. The CMCoord Officer can assist in liaising with the military and other armed groups. The

[Global Protection Cluster \(GPC\)](#) has developed (draft) guidance on interaction between field-based protection clusters and UN peacekeeping operations. See also chapter 1, section 1.6 and chapter 6, section 6.5.2.

- The [Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster \(WASH\)](#) is led by UNICEF. The in-country WASH Cluster coordination platforms may include additional military liaison where military or peacekeeping actors have a critical capacity which cannot be drawn from civilian sources.
- The [Health Cluster](#) can be a strong partner in situations of disease outbreaks. In 2011, the IASC and the Global Health Cluster drafted guidance on [“Civil-Military Coordination during Humanitarian Health Action”](#). During the Ebola crisis in 2014, OCHA’s [Civil-Military Coordination Section developed guidance on Civil-Military Interaction and Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets \(MCDA\) in the Context of the Current Ebola Crisis in West Africa](#), in close coordination with WHO and the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER).



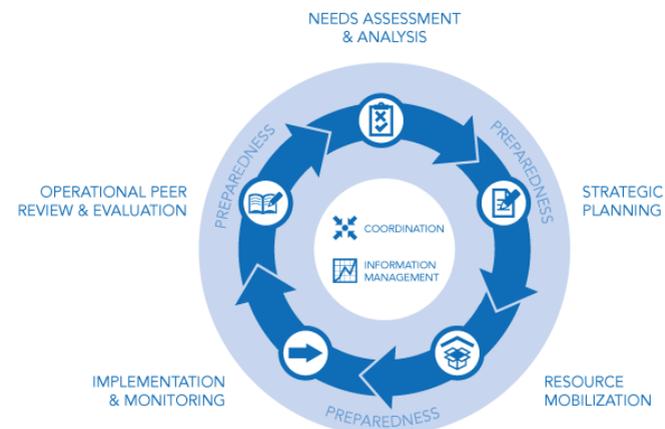
How does the military and other armed actors link to the cluster system? When distinction is not a challenge, the military may be invited to attend some cluster coordination meetings as observers or to provide specific briefings. Coordination can also take place bilaterally with the cluster coordinator or the ICCG. Often, the relevant cluster coordinators or members attend the CMCoord platform to discuss operational civil-military coordination issues. The CMCoord Officer has a key role to play in facilitating this dialogue and interaction.

2.5 Humanitarian Programme Cycle

The humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) is a coordinated series of actions undertaken to help prepare for, manage and deliver humanitarian response. It consists of five elements, with one step logically building on the previous and leading to the next. Successful implementation of the humanitarian programme cycle is dependent on effective emergency preparedness, effective coordination with national/sub-national authorities and humanitarian actors, and information management. The HPC elements are:

- [Needs assessment and analysis](#)
- [Strategic response planning](#)
- [Resource mobilization](#)
- [Implementation and monitoring](#)
- [Operational review and evaluation](#)

Figure 2: The Humanitarian Programme Cycle



The HPC reference module is available [here](#).

2.6 Humanitarian Online Communication Platforms

During emergencies, humanitarian actors may use online humanitarian information platforms to exchange information, plan the response, and know who is doing what where. Most of this information is shared publicly, therefore confidential or sensitive data should not be posted on these platforms.

- During the first hours / days of a sudden onset response operation, the Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (V-OSOCC) is particularly important for exchange of information and contact data. It is in particular used by the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system. An account is required and can be requested [here](#). See also chapter 5, section 5.4.1 on UNDAC.
- For most humanitarian emergencies a webspace is created on [humanitarianresponse](#). The CMCoord Officer has the authority to create a space where relevant information can be shared, such as contact information, SOPs, guidelines, coordination meetings and other operational information.
- Reports and research can be found on [ReliefWeb](#).
- [Humanitarian Data Exchange \(HDX\)](#) is an open platform for sharing humanitarian data. Sensitive data can be shared privately.
- Humanitarian actors can check in on [Humanitarian ID](#) at the onset of / on arrival in an emergency.

2.7 System-Wide Emergency Response

The IASC Transformative Agenda of December 2011 stipulates that in case of a major humanitarian crisis, the IASC Principals may activate a Humanitarian System-Wide Emergency (L3) to deliver a rapid, concerted mobilization of capacity and systems to enable accelerated and scaled-up assistance and protection.



The mechanism is currently being revised.

2.8 The Broader UN System



Under the [UNSG Reform](#), in 2019 DPKO and DPA will merge and become the Department of Peace Operations (DPO). UN Special Missions (SPM) and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) will both be classified as UN Peace Operations (PO), with an SPM and a PKO pillar. In the meantime, this Field Handbook version refers respectively to SPMs and PKOs.

2.8.1 UN Special Political Missions

The UN Secretariat's Department of Political Affairs (DPA) monitors and assesses global political developments to detect potential crises before they erupt and provides support to the UNSG and his envoys to help defuse tensions. DPA can quickly deploy mediators to the field and manages political missions and peacebuilding support offices engaged in conflict prevention, peace-making and post-conflict peacebuilding.

UN political missions can support peace negotiations or oversee longer-term peacebuilding activities. Peacebuilding offices aim to help nations consolidate peace, in coordination with national actors and UN development and humanitarian entities on the ground. Political missions may include military personnel, such as military observers or static guard units.

In addition, the UNSG has a number of "good offices", such as envoys and special advisers for the implementation of different UN mandates. Their appointments may concern a specific country or a specific topic. Political missions, peacebuilding offices, envoys and advisers are authorized by the UN Security Council or General Assembly.



- [DPA website](#)
- [UN Missions website](#)

2.8.2 UN Peacekeeping Operations

UN Charter - Article 24

1. In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.

In fulfilling its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the UN Security Council may establish a UN Mission, in the form of a Peacekeeping Operation or a Political Mission.

The legal basis is established in Chapters VI, VII and VIII of the UN Charter. Chapter VI deals with the "Pacific Settlement of Disputes". Chapter VII contains provisions related to "Action with Respect to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression". Chapter VIII of the Charter provides for the involvement of regional arrangements and agencies in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Although not explicitly provided for in the UN Charter, Peacekeeping is one of today's main tools used by the UN Security Council to maintain international peace and security. While their mandates may also have political elements, UN peacekeeping operations are managed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and have a military, and sometimes police, component or carry out their mandates alongside a regional or multinational peacekeeping force.

Peacekeeping operation mandates and tasks are situation-specific, depending on the nature of the conflict. Traditionally, UN peacekeeping operations were established in support of a political process, such as the implementation of a ceasefire or peace agreement. Over the past decades, the range of tasks has expanded significantly due to changing natures and patterns of conflict.

Peacekeeping has increasingly been used in non-international armed conflicts which are often characterized by a multitude of (armed) actors and objectives. Some UNSC resolutions establish very robust mandates that include, for example, the neutralization of some armed non-state actors.



Many peacekeeping operations today are multidimensional and can include military, civilian police, political, civil affairs, rule of law, human rights, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform, reconstruction, public information and gender components.



- [UN Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines \(2008\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping website](#)

A UN Mission and its responsibilities are defined following a Security Council resolution. The UN Secretary-General is in command of peacekeeping operations, under the authority of the Security Council. The UNSG delegates the overall responsibility for UN Missions to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping. For multidimensional peacekeeping operations, the UNSG appoints an SRSG who serves as Head of Mission and is responsible for implementing the Mission's mandate. For traditional peacekeeping operations, the UNSG may appoint a Force Commander (FC) or Chief Military Observer as Head of Mission.

The SRSG can have one or more deputies (DSRSG) with different thematic tasks. One of them is potentially the RC (DSRSG/RC), who may become a triple-hatted DSRSG/RC/HC if the humanitarian leadership is assumed by the RC.

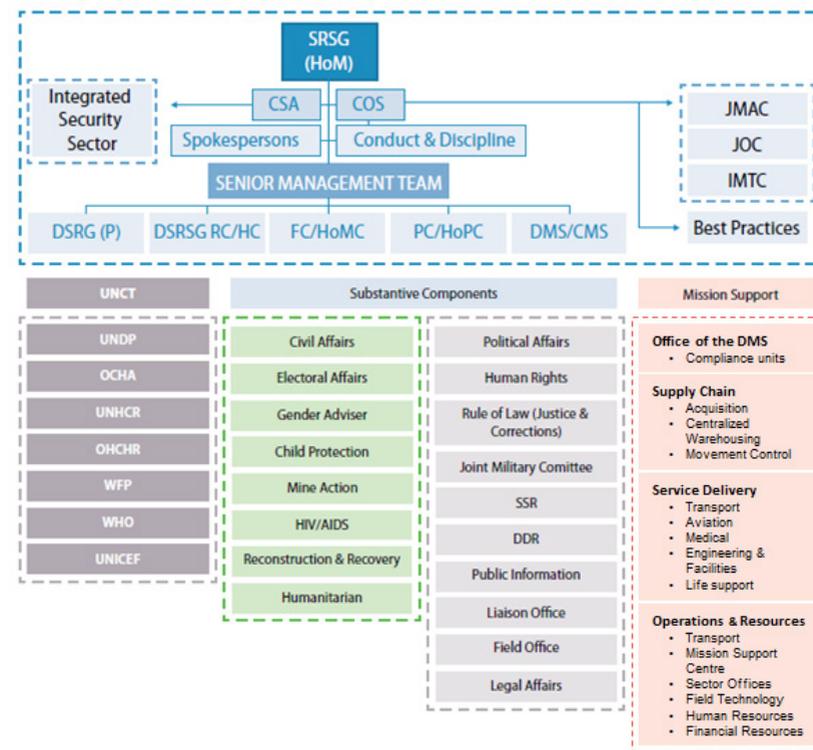
Figure 3: Leadership of UN Peacekeeping Operations - Illustrative Examples



2.8.3 UN Integration

The concept of UN integration emerged with the increasingly complex mandates of peacekeeping operations deployed in environments where other UN and non-UN actors are also operational. While humanitarian action can indirectly support peace consolidation, its main purpose remains to address life-saving needs and to alleviate suffering. Therefore, humanitarian activities are understood to fall largely outside the scope of integration.

Figure 4: UN Mission Structure - Possible Option



HUMANITARIAN ECOSYSTEM

2.8.3.1 Integrated Assessment and Planning (IAP)

When the deployment of a UN Mission is being considered, the UN system, led either by DPA or DPKO, must conduct integrated strategic assessments and planning, in line with the [Integrated Assessment and Planning \(IAP\) Policy](#) that brings together UN political, security, development, humanitarian and human rights entities.

While humanitarian operations are mostly outside the scope of integration, UN humanitarian actors are part of an integrated UN strategic approach. UN humanitarian organizations must be represented in all assessment and planning processes where there are, or is potential for, significant humanitarian needs. This is to ensure that the analysis that informs planning is as comprehensive as possible, that humanitarian issues and concerns are fully reflected and considered and, where required, to minimize potential negative consequences and mitigate risks to humanitarian operations.

Depending on the integrated analysis of context and risks, certain humanitarian activities related to the protection of civilians, durable solutions to displacement and early recovery may be included in the UN's integrated strategic approach.

2.8.3.2 Structural Arrangements

The [OCHA On Message on Structural Arrangements within an Integrated UN Presence](#) explains the structural relationships that Humanitarian Coordinators and OCHA have with any political mission or multidimensional peacekeeping operation within an 'integrated UN presence'.

2.8.3.3 OCHA's Role in the IAP Process

OCHA supports coordinated HCT engagement in IAP processes, and liaises with humanitarian NGOs who are not part of the HCT so that their views are taken into consideration.

OCHA participates in integrated assessment and planning processes and is a member of integrated coordination mechanisms at HQ and in the field. The objective is to support rigorous and comprehensive analysis, ensure attention to humanitarian issues and concerns and ascertain that the form of UN engagement proposed to the Security Council is appropriate to the specific context.

The HC, the HCT and the broader humanitarian community should identify any potential adverse consequences or benefits to the UN and NGO humanitarian coordination and response. It is OCHA's role to ensure that this analysis takes place and that its results are used, along with the outcome of the strategic assessment, to support the development of a coordinated humanitarian position on the most appropriate form for UN engagement and action.

In situations where there is little or no peace to keep, integration may create difficulties for humanitarian and development partners, particularly if they are perceived to be too closely linked to the political and security objectives of the peacekeeping mission. In the worst case, integration may endanger their operations and the lives of their personnel.

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines



Does the CMCoord Officer have a role in the IAP?

The IAP Handbook states that "reference should also be made to any existing country-specific civil-military coordination guidance, as these would provide useful reflections on issues such as co-location, use of United Nations logos and mission assets, which are salient to possible integration levels and structures." The CMCoord Officer should therefore make sure that the Planning Teams are aware of any existing guidance. In his/her advisory role to the HC / HCT, the CMCoord Officer should also point to the importance of including prevailing UN integrated aspects in context / country-specific guidance.



- [The UN Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning \(IAP\)](#)
- [UNSG Guidance on Integrated Missions \(2006\)](#)
- [UN Secretary-General decisions on Integration 2008/24](#)
- [UN Integration Steering Group \(ISG\)-commissioned study on Integration and Humanitarian Space \(2011\)](#)
- [IASC paper on the Impact of UN Integration on Humanitarian Action \(2015\)](#)
- [OCHA On Message on Structural Arrangements \(2010\)](#)

2.8.4 UN Secretary-General's Reform

A number of efforts are underway at the institutional level to further coherence and coordination within and across development, humanitarian, human rights and peace-building action. The UNDG established a Results Group dedicated to policy and operational dialogue, bringing together key stakeholders from the development and peacebuilding communities. The Group coordinates closely with other key counterparts to promote a coherent approach, including through a joint set of messages and guidance products.

At the country level, partnership agreements to enhance collaboration are also emerging. UNCTs are formalizing collaboration with key partners to deliver coordinated crisis assistance and undertake joint risk management assessments.



- [A New Generation of UN Country Teams](#)
- [The Reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System](#)
- [A Joint Board of NYC-based Funds and Programmes](#)
- [The Coordination Fund](#)

2.9 UN Security Management System

The primary responsibility for the security of all UN personnel, including their recognized dependents in a country of operation, lies with the host government. However, the UN as an employer has a system to determine if additional security measures are required, particularly in locations where conditions of insecurity prevail.

The United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) provides a coordinated approach to security and enables UN activities while ensuring the safety, security and well-being of UN personnel, premises and assets. UNSMS covers all UN departments and offices as well as UN AFPs and organizations that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UN. At the global level, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) determines the policies and procedures for the UNSMS. [The Department of Safety and Security \(UNDSS\)](#), headed by an Under-Secretary-General (USG), chairs and provides strategic advice and direction to the IASMN and gives guidance and oversight to UNSMS in each location.



[UNDSS Homepage](#)

At the country level, a Designated Official for Security (DO) is accountable to the UNSG through the USG UNDSS and responsible for the safety and security of UN personnel. This appointment is usually held by the highest-ranking UN official in the country. The DO is supported by the Security Management Team (SMT), a decision making forum comprising the Heads of UN organizations or other organizations with a specific MoU on security arrangements. These organizations are also individually accountable to the UNSG, through their Executive Directors, for the safety and security of their personnel. Where there is a peacekeeping operation, the heads of the military and police components, i.e. the Civpol Commander and Force Commander, will be members of the SMT.

The SMT meets regularly to support the DO's security decision-making based on a security risk management process. Security Risk Management (SRM) is a UNSMS tool to identify, analyze and manage safety and security risks to UN personnel, assets and operations. The UNSMS is risk-based, not threat-based. While threats are assessed as part of the process, decisions are taken based on the assessment of risk.



The SMT is usually supported by a UNDSS security official who acts as the principal security advisor to the Designated Official. This individual may be a Principal Security Advisor (PSA), Chief Security Advisor (CSA) or Security advisor (SA) depending on the size of the UN in country and if there is an Integrated UN Mission. Some UN organizations will also have their own security advisors, known as Agency Security Advisors, Field Security Advisors, Field Security Officers or Security Specialists.

A Security Cell is chaired by the senior UNDSS officer at a working group level and comprises security professionals/advisors from other UN organizations. They will collectively contribute to the security risk management process by developing security measures, plans and procedures for consideration and adoption by the SMT. Because of the nature of their programme, some UN organizations may be exposed to more risk than others and security measures may be adapted accordingly. Liaison Officers from international security forces (CIMIC and police) may be invited to a security cell meeting, e.g. where the use of a military armed escort is considered.



Is security management a CMCoord task? Security management is not a CMCoord task. Security information is an important type of information to be shared between military and humanitarian actors through appropriate information sharing platforms. CMCoord Officers may be invited to attend Saving Lives Together (SLT - see 2.9.2) meetings. They also participate in SMT, ASMT and Security Cell meetings. A CMCoord platform may invite Security Officers when relevant. See also chapter 3, section 3.6, and chapter 6, section 6.5.3.

2.9.1 Programme Criticality

The Programme Criticality (PC) Framework is a common UN system policy for decision-making on acceptable risk. It puts in place guiding principles and a systematic structured approach to ensure that activities involving United Nations personnel can be balanced against security risks. Four levels of programme criticality (PC1 - "lifesaving at scale / activity determined by the UN Secretary-General" - to PC4 - "least critical level") ensure that programme activities are properly factored into security management, that an appropriate rationale for accepting risk is in place, and that additional strategies to manage risk are introduced as required.

The PC Framework is closely linked to the UN security risk management (SRM) process in order to determine levels of acceptable security risk for programmes and mandated activities implemented by UN personnel.



[UN Programme Criticality Website](#)

2.9.2 Saving Lives Together

The Saving Lives Together (SLT) initiative was established to provide a framework to improve collaboration on common security concerns and enhance the safe delivery of humanitarian and development assistance. The objective is to enhance the ability of partner organizations to make informed decisions, manage risks and implement effective security arrangements to enable delivery of assistance, and improve the security of personnel and continuity of operations.

The success and effectiveness of SLT is dependent on the commitment of all participating organizations to work collectively towards the mutual goal of improving the security of personnel and operations in the areas of security collaboration arrangements; security information sharing; security training; security operational and logistics arrangements, where feasible; resource requirements for enhancing security coordination between the UN, INGOs and IOs; and common ground rules for humanitarian action.

SLT is designed to enhance and complement security risk management systems of partner organizations, not substitute these systems and related arrangements. The UN, INGOs and IOs remain responsible for their own personnel and the implementation of their individual security risk management measures.



[OCHA SLT Platform](#)

Chapter 3: Key Concepts of UN-CMCoord

This chapter provides an overview of the main CMCoord Guidelines, guidance, tools and mechanisms pertaining to humanitarian civil-military coordination. It describes the role and tasks of the CMCoord Officer and of other humanitarian actors when dialoguing with the military and other armed actors (including non-state armed groups (NSAGs)).

The scope and character of interaction between humanitarian actors and military and other armed actors is always context-dependent. This chapter provides generic descriptions, while chapters 5 and 6 provide concrete examples and tips for disasters during peacetime and complex emergencies, respectively.

This chapter includes:

- The definition of UN-CMCoord.
- An overview of the key UN-CMCoord Guidelines.
- CMCoord specific guidance.
- CMCoord assessment.
- Generic CMCoord strategies, liaison approaches and platforms.
- A description of the three coordination elements.
- A generic description of the five main CMCoord tasks.

3.1 Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination

Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord or CMCoord) is the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from cooperation to co-existence. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training.

The CMCoord function has evolved over the past three decades, adjusting to prevailing operating environments. In the 90s, the main interlocutors were assisting governments and their military. CMCoord focused on the mobilization of foreign military assets (FMA) to support humanitarian operations, and the implementation of the principles and concepts of the Oslo Guidelines.

With the increasingly complex operating environment, the 2000s were marked by an increasing number and variety of actors present on the ground, including peacekeeping and multinational forces. The CMCoord focus shifted towards dialogue, and the MCDA Guidelines were developed to address the new area of complex emergencies.

In the current decade, the CMCoord operating environment is marked by protracted crises involving domestic military and opposition forces, putting the emphasis of the CMCoord function on dialogue, coordination and negotiation. Access, protection and security elements are establishing themselves as CMCoord “default functions”.

In every humanitarian response, dialogue and interaction with all armed actors is a crucial aspect of humanitarian activities. The objectives, strategies and mechanisms will differ, however. In complex emergencies, emphasis is likely to be put on distinction from the military, dialogue and negotiations with non-state armed groups (NSAGs) for humanitarian access or protection, as well as security of humanitarian actors. In disasters during peacetime, the focus is likely to be on coordination and appropriate use of FMA in support to humanitarian operations.

At all times, the CMCoord Officer has a crucial role to play in liaison and in explaining the humanitarian mandate and principles to the military and commanders of other armed actors, and, likewise, in explaining the mandate, rule of engagement and objectives of military and other armed actors to the humanitarian community. This facilitates mutual understanding, working in the same operational environment, and appropriate coordination arrangements.

3.2 Guidelines and Key Considerations

Four key guidelines have been developed under the auspices of the multi-stakeholder UN-CMCoord Consultative Group and IASC, respectively. They set down the principles and concepts for UN-CMCoord; when and how FMA can be considered; how they should be employed; and how UN Agencies and the broader humanitarian community should interact and coordinate with foreign and domestic military forces. They are:

- ‘Oslo Guidelines’ - Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief - (1994 / Updated Nov. 2006 / Rev. 1.1 Nov. 2007)
- ‘MCDA Guidelines’ - Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil

Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (March 2003 / Rev. 1 Jan. 2006)

- IASC Reference Paper on Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies (June 2004)
- IASC Non-Binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys (February 2013 / replaced the IASC discussion paper of September 2001)

Guidelines are non-binding. They are widely accepted reference documents that provide a model legal framework for the development of context-specific or thematic guidance. Topic and context-specific guidance respond to the particular context of humanitarian action. Thematic guidance (e.g. Humanitarian Notification System for Deconfliction) are described in relevant sections of chapters 5 and 6.

3.2.1 Oslo Guidelines

The Oslo Guidelines were developed to fill the “humanitarian gap” between the disaster needs that the international community is asked to satisfy and the resources available to meet these needs. They address the use of FMA following natural, technological and environmental emergencies in times of peace. They assume a stable government, which remains overall responsible for all relief actions. They also assume that the state receiving FMA provides the necessary security for international organizations.

FMA comprises relief personnel, equipment, supplies and services. Requests for FMA are made by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), through the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). FMA can be deployed through OCHA’s Civil-Military Coordination Service (CMCS) or, as most frequently the case, as bilateral agreements between assisting and affected states. The Oslo Guidelines can be used by states that have requested or decided to accept foreign FMA to establish an interim status of forces agreement (SOFA) between a host country and a foreign nation’s military, if no bilateral or multilateral agreements exist.

In most cases, FMA are provided on a bilateral basis. The role of the CMCoord Officer has shifted from exclusively coordinating FMA to establishing dialogue and coordination mechanisms to coordinate military activities with the humanitarian response. See also chapter 5.



[Oslo Guidelines \(Rev 1.1 2007\)](#)

Military and Civil Defence Assets / Foreign Military Assets

The term Military and Civil Defence Assets or “MCDA” is used in the global UN-CMCoord Guidelines. Today, the term “Foreign Military Assets” (FMA) is more commonly used. MCDA and FMA are defined as foreign military personnel and organizations; goods and services provided by military actors (including, but not limited to, logistics, transportation, security, medical assistance, engineering, communications, supplies and equipment); as well as funding, commercial contracting, material, and technical support provided by military actors.

3.2.2 MCDA Guidelines

The MCDA Guidelines were developed to cover complex emergencies. They provide guidance on when military and civil defence assets can be used, how they should be employed, and how UN agencies should interface, organize, and coordinate with international military forces. The Guidelines underline that support by military forces is a last resort and must not compromise humanitarian action, that FMA should be requested on the basis of humanitarian needs alone, and that FMA support must be unconditional.



- [MCDA Guidelines \(2006\)](#)
- [Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Support of Humanitarian Emergency Operations: What is Last Resort? \(2012\)](#)

Table 3: Key Questions to Help Guide the Use of FMA

<input type="checkbox"/>	Are they the option of last resort, indispensable and appropriate?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the countries offering FMA also parties to the conflict?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Based on the need, is a military or civil defence unit capable of the task?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How long will the FMA be needed?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Can they be deployed without weapons or additional security forces?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How will this association impact the security of UN personnel and other humanitarian workers?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How will this impact the perceptions of UN neutrality and/or impartiality?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What control and coordination arrangements are necessary?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How and when will transition back to civilian responsibility be achieved?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What are the consequences for the beneficiaries, other humanitarian actors, and humanitarian operations in the mid to long term?

Table 4: Key Principles of the Use of FMA

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Last resort: In disasters in peacetime, FMA should be utilized where there is no comparable civilian alternative in terms of time and/or capability, to meet a critical humanitarian need.</p> <p>In complex emergencies, the concept is even more important: Military assets and escorts should be used only if they are the last resort to respond to a critical life-threatening situation, i.e. the need cannot be met with available civilian assets, and there are no alternatives to the activity. As a matter of principle, FMA of belligerent forces or of units actively engaged in combat shall not be used to support humanitarian activities. Decision-makers must weigh the risk to relief workers and their ability to operate effectively at the moment and in the future, against the immediacy of the needs of the affected population and the need for the use of FMA.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Categories of tasks: Military support should focus on infrastructure support and indirect assistance. Direct assistance should only be provided as a last resort, not to compromise the distinction between military and humanitarian actors.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>At no cost and unconditional: FMA assistance should be provided at no cost and without conditions.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Unarmed: Military personnel supporting humanitarian action should be unarmed and in national military uniform for easy recognition.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Distinction: FMA supporting humanitarian action should be clearly distinguished from those engaged in other military missions. The use of FMA should focus on indirect assistance and infrastructure support. Military actors should not provide direct assistance.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Avoiding dependence on FMA: Humanitarian agencies must avoid becoming dependent on military resources. Member States are encouraged to invest in increased civilian capabilities.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Limited in time and scale: The use of FMA should be clearly limited in time and scale and present an exit strategy.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Civilian control: While military assets will remain under military control, the humanitarian operation as a whole must maintain a civilian character under the overall authority of the responsible humanitarian organization. This does not infer any civilian command and control status over military assets.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Countries providing military personnel should ensure that they respect the UN Codes of Conduct and humanitarian principles</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Liaison and information sharing: Humanitarian actors must establish a minimum of liaison with the military to protect personnel and assets from unintended harm, limit competition for resources and avoid conflict. Regardless of the mission or status of the military force, a mechanism should be put in place for mutual sharing of appropriate information, as far as possible.</p>

The use of FMA should focus on indirect assistance and infrastructure support. Direct assistance is best undertaken by humanitarian actors. While the operational context differs from a disaster in peacetime to a complex emergency in an extreme violent environment, most basic CMCoord principles and concepts are the same, with varying considerations and degrees.

3.2.3 IASC Reference Paper on Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies

The IASC Reference Paper on Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies of 2004 serves as a non-binding reference for humanitarian practitioners. It assists them in formulating country-specific operational guidance on civil-military relations for particularly difficult complex emergencies. Part 1 of the paper reviews, in a generic manner, the nature and character of civil-military relations in complex emergencies; part 2 lists the fundamental humanitarian principles and concepts that must be upheld when coordinating with the military; and part 3 proposes practical considerations for humanitarian workers engaged in civil-military coordination.

The Reference Paper is one of the most important guides for the CMCoord Officer to determine appropriate liaison and coordination mechanisms in complex emergencies, and, when relevant, for the development of context-specific guidance.

Table 5: General Key Principles and Concepts

<input type="checkbox"/>	Needs-based assistance free of discrimination: Humanitarian assistance must be provided on the basis of needs alone. The assessment of such needs must be independent from any other considerations than humanitarian ones.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Operational independence of humanitarian action: Humanitarian actors must retain the lead role in undertaking and directing humanitarian activities. They must not implement tasks on behalf of the military or military policies. They must be free in movement, conducting independent assessments, selecting of staff, and identifying recipients of assistance based on their needs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Humanitarian access to vulnerable populations: Humanitarian agencies must maintain their ability to obtain access to all vulnerable populations in all areas and to negotiate such access with all parties to the conflict. Coordination with the military should facilitate, secure and sustain – not hinder – humanitarian access.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Perception of humanitarian action: Humanitarian assistance must come without political or military conditions. Civil-military coordination must not jeopardize the local network and trust that humanitarian agencies have created.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Civilian-military distinction in humanitarian action: At all times, a clear distinction must be maintained between combatants and non-combatants, who are granted immunity from attacks, under IHL. Military personnel must refrain from presenting themselves as civilian/humanitarian workers, and vice versa.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Security of humanitarian personnel: Any perception that humanitarian organizations may have become affiliated with the military could impact negatively on the security of their staff and on humanitarian access.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do no harm: Humanitarian action, including CMCoord, must not have negative impacts on the people it seeks to help – physical proximity to or association with military involved in relief operations could put the recipients of humanitarian assistance at risk.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respect for international legal instruments and culture and customs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consent of parties to the conflict: The risk of compromising humanitarian operations by cooperating with the military may be reduced if all parties to the conflict recognize, agree or acknowledge in advance that civil-military coordination might be necessary for certain humanitarian activities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid reliance on military resources or support.



[IASC Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies \(2004\)](#)

3.2.4 Use of Armed Escorts 2013

The 2013 IASC Non-Binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys ('Armed Escorts Guidelines') replaced the IASC 'Discussion Paper' of 2001. It is the result of consultation and collaboration between IASC members, the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and field colleagues from a broad range of organizations.

Armed Escort: A security measure that serves as a visible deterrent to a potential attack and, if necessary, acts in self-defence against an attack. Armed escorts can be provided by military as well as non-military actors, such as police, private security companies or non-state actors.

As a general rule, humanitarian convoys will not use armed escorts.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which the use of armed escorts is necessary as a last resort to enable humanitarian action. Before deciding on such exceptions, the consequences and possible alternatives to the use of armed escorts must be considered.

Potential consequences of the use of armed escorts:

- (Perceived) cooperation with an armed actor can undermine actual and perceived neutrality, impartiality and independence of the organization or humanitarian community.
- Cooperation with an armed actor can increase convoy vulnerability to attack by opposing armed actors.
- The use of armed escorts by one humanitarian actor can negatively affect the security of others that do not use them.
- Dependence on an armed actor undermines sustainability of the humanitarian operation.
- Cooperation with one armed actor can make it impossible or unsafe to operate in a territory controlled by another armed actor.

Before resorting to armed escort, humanitarian organizations must consider all alternative means for establishing and maintaining access. As a general rule, it is the responsibility of the HCT to collectively assess and agree to their use. Each context has its own specificities, therefore alternatives must derive from a thorough analysis.

Alternatives to armed escorts include:

- Cultivation of greater acceptance with local stakeholders, parties to the conflict and other relevant stakeholders. See also chapter 1, section 1.4.1.
- Humanitarian negotiation: Liaison and active negotiation with all parties, in particular those who influence or control humanitarian access.
- Deconfliction arrangements: Liaison between humanitarian actors and parties to the conflict, to avoid that military operations jeopardize humanitarian ones.
- Humanitarian pause: Negotiation of a temporary suspension in fighting for exclusively humanitarian purposes.
- Humanitarian corridors: Negotiation of an agreement by all parties to allow the safe passage of goods and / or people for humanitarian purposes.
- Days of tranquility: Negotiation of an agreement by all parties to the conflict to refrain from impeding the mobility of humanitarian personnel and affected people during designated days.
- Remote management / programming: Withdrawal of international at-risk staff, transferring risk to national staff.
- Low-profile approach: Low visibility strategy in case humanitarian organizations are particularly targeted.
- Area security: When and where an armed deterrence is recommended.
- Programme design: Other programmes can be envisaged, such as cash distribution, rather than transporting commodities.
- Suspension or cessation of operations: When and where access is not possible (worst case scenario).

The Armed Escorts Guidelines underline that as a general rule humanitarian actors will not use armed escorts. An exception to the general rule will be considered, as a last resort, only when all of the following **cumulative** criteria are met:

1. **Humanitarian Need and Programme Criticality:** The level of humanitarian need is such that the lack of humanitarian action would lead to unacceptable human suffering.
2. **Responsible Authorities:** State and non-state actors are not able or unwilling to permit humanitarian movement without the use of armed escorts.
3. **Safety and Security:** The armed escorts are capable of providing a credible deterrent, necessary to enhance the safety of the humanitarian actors. Note: This is clearly not the case when escort providers are directly targeted by other parties to the hostilities.

4. **Sustainability:** The use of armed escorts will not irreversibly compromise the humanitarian operating environment in the short to long term. The humanitarian agency must put all mitigation in place to avoid such consequences.



The CMCoord Officer has a crucial role to play in advising the humanitarian community (through the HCT) and contributing to building a common position on alternatives to armed escorts. Discussions should also take place with UNDSS and in relevant security forums on potential negative impacts on principled humanitarian action of the use of armed escorts.



[IASC non-binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys \(2013\)](#)

3.2.5 UN-CMCoord Recommended Practices

As the secretariat for the multi-stakeholder UN-CMCoord Consultative Group, OCHA's Civil-Military Coordination Service facilitated the development of 'Recommended Practices for Effective Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination of Foreign Military Assets (FMA) in Natural and Man-Made Disasters'. The Practices intend to better meet the needs of affected people from natural, man-made or technological disasters, and effectively support principled humanitarian action through effective humanitarian civil-military interaction; assist in informed decision-making; apply lessons learned and good practices; and, when appropriate, improve the deployment, employment, and transition of FMA to support humanitarian relief operations.

The Practices were developed to capture decades of experience and lessons in humanitarian emergencies where humanitarian, military, and other governmental actors operate in the same geographic space, and in some circumstances, work together to address the needs of people affected by a crisis. They were developed to operationalize the key principles and concepts contained in existing UN-CMCoord Guidelines and to assist humanitarian, military, and other governmental actors in the development of principled, coherent, appropriate, and effective coordination across the various facets of humanitarian action. The Practices provide practitioners with a hands-on tool to facilitate principled humanitarian action before, during and after a humanitarian emergency. They seek to enhance the predictability, effectiveness, efficiency, and coherence of employing FMA to support humanitarian relief operations. They also serve to reinforce lessons learned across a range of humanitarian relief operations and contexts and to reinforce the distinction between the

roles and responsibilities of humanitarian, military, and governmental actors.



[Recommended Practices \(2018\)](#)
[Descriptive Message \(September 2018\)](#)

3.2.6 Other Relevant Guidance

The global CMCoord Guidelines do not address interaction with NSAGs. However, with the increased number of non-international armed conflicts, engagement with NSAGs is necessary. It is a joint responsibility which requires a coordinated approach among humanitarian actors. Dialogue and negotiation with armed groups are described in detail in the [OCHA Manual on Humanitarian Negotiation with Armed Groups \(2006\)](#) and the [Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Practitioner's Manual on Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict \(Version 2, 2014\)](#).

See also chapter 1, section 1.5, chapter 4, section 4.4, and chapter 6.

3.2.7 Context-Specific Guidance

Humanitarian actors operate in increasingly complex environments with unique specificities and constellations of actors, including military and other armed actors. This calls for tailored CMCoord norms and guidance to advise on the particular circumstances and requirements around relationships between humanitarians and military and other armed actors, in a particular setting.

Context-specific guidance operationalizes the principles and concepts of the global Guidelines, to ensure a tailored, consistent and coherent approach to humanitarian-military interaction and, when deemed appropriate, consistent interaction with other armed actors. The different mandates, characteristics and nature of diverse military and other armed actors may require that the humanitarian community relate to different groups with varying degrees of sensitivity or even with fundamentally different approaches.

The most important distinction to be drawn is whether the military with which humanitarians interact are, have become, or are perceived to be a party to a conflict. Even if the military is not involved in a conflict, the lack of distinction can compromise principled humanitarian action (e.g. Haiti, see example chapter 1, section 1.4.1). The OCHA Office and CMCoord Officer advise the HC and HCT on the

need to issue context-specific guidance, facilitate the consultation and drafting process, and help promulgate the product through a robust dissemination strategy. The drafting should be an inclusive process, steered by the HCT, that includes all relevant stakeholders. The HC takes the final decision on the release of the guidance.

Context-specific guidance has been developed in particularly difficult complex emergency situations. Over the past few years, major natural disasters have also pointed to the need for and usefulness of such guidance, for both preparedness and response purposes.

The main objectives of the guidance should be to:

- Reiterate humanitarian principles.
- Reiterate the need for distinction.
- Reflect a coordinated approach within the HCT with regard to specific topics, such as information sharing with the military, engagement with NSAGs, access, protection, and the use of armed escorts.
- Highlight that CMCoord is a shared responsibility.
- Emphasize benefits for the work of civilian, humanitarian, military and other armed actors, as well as for the affected people.
- Describe appropriate coordination arrangements and proper use of FMA.

Steps to consider when developing CSG:

1. Determine the need for CGS through the CMCoord assessment. (See section 3.3 in this chapter).
2. Consult with key humanitarian CMCoord stakeholders on potential guidance note.
3. Make a recommendation to the OCHA HoO, RC/HC and HCT (guidance form, content, signatories,...). Ensure buy-in from the RC/HC from the start of the process.
4. Create a Task Force for the development of the guidance.
5. Seek consensus on and ownership for the draft guidance. This will facilitate the adherence to the guidance.
6. Once the final version is endorsed by the relevant stakeholders, disseminate the guidance based on a robust strategy, including through training and top tip cards.
7. Monitor the awareness of and adherence to the guidance by all stakeholders.

The HCT, advised by the CMCoord Officer, can also draft internal guidance and SOPs to clarify humanitarian positions, mechanisms and procedures, for example to ensure consistent interaction with armed non-state actors.

Context-specific guidance can take the form of Country Specific Guidelines, that can be signed by the RC/HC, the SRSG and the Force Commander (e.g. [CSG CAR 2017](#)), or by the Country's Government, the RC/HC, the SRSG and the Forces Commander (e.g. [CSG Haiti, 2013](#)). In some instances they regulate the relations between national military and humanitarian actors.



[Guidance Note on the Development of CSG](#)
Examples of Country-Specific Guidance can be found [here](#).

3.3 Assessing the Civil-Military Environment

OCHA Offices support the humanitarian community in understanding the civil-military situation in the country and region of operation. A CMCoord assessment can either be carried out by a dedicated CMCoord Officer or Focal Point, if necessary with support or surge capacity from a Regional Office, or by the Civil-Military Coordination Service.



Start the assessment as early as possible. It is an ongoing process, not a one-time event. Continuous monitoring and analysis of the situation are required, even more so in dynamic and volatile environments, to keep the assessment up-to-date and relevant. It is critical to establish an understanding of the civil-military operating environment immediately from the time of deployment and to follow up with timely updates and reviews as changes occur.

The assessment is part of a structured process that informs:

- The CMCoord Strategy: the appropriate dialogue and interaction between civilian and military and other armed actors in a specific context.
- The CMCoord Action Plan: a sequenced and coordinated set of operational actions, based on the applicable CMCoord strategy to address current or anticipated issues identified through the assessment process.
- CMCoord Structure and Mechanisms.
- Context-specific CMCoord guidance (see section 3.2.7).

The assessment and priorities are context-specific. The specificities are detailed in chapters 5 and 6, respectively addressing disasters in peacetime and complex emergencies. This section provides generic steps to follow when conducting a CMCoord assessment. The steps are developed in the [Guidance Note on Conducting a UN-CMCoord Assessment](#).

Step 1: Assess the operating environment

Collect and analyze primary and secondary data to describe the context and how it impacts on CMCoord.

- Primary data: First hand source. Can be gathered through consultations, field visits, direct observations, questionnaires, etc.
- Secondary data: Data that has been collected by others. It comprises publications, SOPs, treaties, snapshots, position papers, debriefings, media, etc.



Be systematic in gathering, analyzing and synthesizing information and data and triangulate information.

Step 2: Define the operating environment

Identify specificities, including those related to humanitarian space, involvement of military actors in assistance, perception of humanitarian action by the different stakeholders (affected people, armed actors, local authorities), acceptance of humanitarian action, etc.

Step 3: Identify the actors

Map actors and their relations to each other to help determine possible impacts. Humanitarian access, security, logistics and the ability to safeguard humanitarian principles may impact on the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. A chart can be used to map national and international humanitarian, military and other armed actors and other relevant stakeholders:

	National	Foreign
Civilian	Ministries and government agencies, national and local Disaster Management Authorities, local authorities, national and local NGOs, community-based groups, National RCRC Societies, religious organizations, private sector, health & service providers	UN agencies, UN Missions, representatives of partner countries (e.g. donors and their agencies), international and regional organizations, components of the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement, international NGOs, private sector.
Military	National armed forces and paramilitary structures, border and customs officials, security forces.	Foreign forces including armed non-state actors stationed in the country or region or with bilateral military agreements, UN or regional peacekeeping operations.
+	Strategic, operational and tactical levels police, national private military and security companies and non-state armed groups.	UN Police, private military and security companies, others.

At this stage, it is also important to establish and maintain a CMCoord stakeholders contact database (3Ws/4Ws), comprising humanitarian, military and police elements. A few tips:

<input type="checkbox"/>	List the contacts of focal points in local authorities and humanitarian organizations, including NGOs, embassies, and the different military organizations and relevant units.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use an Excel Sheet template.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff turnover is usually high. For military battalions and contingents, the turnover is usually well known in advance. Keep the database up-to-date and documented for handover.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask support from OCHA Information Management colleagues to provide contacts and developing and/or maintaining the database.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use available tools such as the Humanitarian ID app (see chapter 2, section 2.6). Encourage all contacts to check in and out of the Humanitarian ID contact list.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a space in the humanitarianinfo.org domain and include key contacts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create participants lists at relevant meetings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seek the possibility to brief coordination platforms, including the HCT, inter-cluster coordination and relevant cluster meetings. Collect key contacts and leave your contact details.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Liaise with UN and NGO security focal points, in addition to local, national and private security actors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Actively maintain contacts through attendance at meetings, bilateral meetings and informal channels.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Analyze existing coordination mechanisms within UN Missions and between the humanitarian community and UN Missions.

Sensitive lists, such as those including NSAG contact details, should not be shared.

Step 4: Determine missions, mandates and objectives of the military and other armed actors

Ascertain the mission/mandate of all relevant actors, understand specific objectives and the relation with CMCoord. NSAGs might have clear objectives but no recognized mandate. Consider:

- National state forces: military, police.
- National forces, paramilitary and non-state armed groups.
- Military missions with an international mandate (e.g. Security Council resolutions), UN or regional peacekeeping operations (e.g. AU or EU), hybrid missions, and coalitions (e.g. NATO).
- Bilateral agreements: Foreign armed forces or coalitions invited by or having an agreement with the host nation, such as the French military that supports the Malian Government.
- Specific humanitarian actors.

Step 5: Analyze the relations between the actors listed in step 3

Consider the following actors and analyze perceptions, need for distinction and relationships. Note that none of these categories is homogeneous or fixed:

- National civilians (affected people, state authorities, customary authorities...).
- National state military and police.
- National paramilitary, NSAGs, private military and security companies (PMSC), etc.
- International civilian actors (humanitarian, development, political, private...).
- Foreign military, police and other armed actors (NSAGs, proxy forces, PMSC...).

Step 6: Identify potential issues

Identify what potential CMCoord issues need to be addressed and how to engage the actors identified. Prioritize engagement according to the significance of the various actors and their influence, potential long-term impacts, etc.

Lack of engagement with and by stakeholders can lead to unsuccessful and undesired outcomes in a given activity. The CMCoord stakeholder engagement matrix is a useful tool to identify and understand stakeholders.

	Desired Outcome	Role	Interests	Needs	Influence	Unique Facts	Expectations	How To Engage
Primary Stakeholder A								
Secondary Stakeholder B								
Tertiary Stakeholder C								

Step 7: Assess coordination mechanisms, structures and potential venues

Civil-military coordination arrangements should be established at the tactical, operational and strategic levels in a consistent manner. The type of coordination mechanism and venue must take into account the context, perception, and potential long-term impacts. For example, if distinction between humanitarian actors and a peacekeeping mission is deemed important to preserve the perception of neutrality

and impartiality of humanitarian action, an option may be to establish liaison arrangements and avoid meetings within humanitarian premises.

Step 8: Assess the need for and availability of FMA and the potential impact of their use in support to humanitarian operations.



The guidance note for the conduct of CMCoord assessments can be found [here](#).

3.4 Basic Strategies are Context-Dependent

As described above, the type of interaction between humanitarian and military and other armed actors is dictated by the operational environment. The scope and kind of information to be shared, as well as the level of dialogue and coordination, are context-dependent.

Generally, in complex emergencies and high security risk environments, the preferred strategy is co-existence, to ensure distinction between humanitarians and military and other armed actors, and to preserve principled humanitarian action. In disasters in peacetime, closer “cooperation” may be appropriate. CMCoord aims to maximize positive effects of civil-military interaction, while reducing and minimizing negative effects, using the most appropriate strategy and approaches.

CMCoord Strategy	Cooperation	Co-existence		
UN-CMCoord Liaison Approaches	Co-location	Liaison Exchange	Liaison Visits	Interlocutor
Context	Peacetime (Disaster preparedness and response)	Complex Emergency (including Internal disturbances and tensions)		
Hum-Civ-Mil Platforms	HuMOCC (Humanitarian-Military Operational Coordination Concept)	HuMICC, CMCoord Working Group, CMCoord, Advisory Group, CMCoord Cell, CMCoord Forum		
Key Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In support of affected government Information sharing, task division and planning Common situational awareness Appropriate use of available military assets (national and bilaterally deployed) to support humanitarian priorities & capacity gaps through the clusters Documentation & reporting + others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information sharing for common situational awareness on humanitarian activities + safety, security, access, logistics, communications, PoC, etc. Humanitarian notification system for deconfliction (HNS4D) Coherent & consistent use/ non-use of armed escorts strategy Coherent and consistent approach in using military assets (including UN Mission assets) to support humanitarian activities Training, workshops, briefing, sensitization activities, etc. Contribute to other critical areas of coordination like access and PoC Documentation Others 		

Each context has its own specificities and actors, to which strategies, liaison approaches and platforms need to be adjusted and constantly reassessed.

Case Study: Rohingya Refugee Crisis Response, Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, 2017

The “Rohingya Refugee Crisis” was neither a disaster during peacetime nor a complex emergency. The national military and Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) were the main government actors on the ground, from August to October 2017, dealing with the arrivals from Myanmar. BGB screened and inspected arrivals at the border and provided immediate assistance to those who were sick or injured. Once cleared by civil authorities in the capital, new arrivals were directed / transported to refugee camps established and maintained by the military. The military provided assistance to the refugees through donations they received from various donors in-country. By the end of October 2017, all camps were full and congested.

An OCHA CMCoord Officer was deployed and plugged into the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). In that particular context the appropriate CMCoord strategy was cooperation. Co-location, liaison exchange, limited liaison/liaison visits, and interlocutor arrangements were deemed neither feasible nor practical. The CMCoord cooperation strategy supported sector leads, accountability and coordination at the sector, inter-sector and camp/site level. The national military established four coordination cells, each covering a specific geographic area in the Cox's Bazar District. The OCHA/ISCG CMCoord Officer plugged into these coordination cells to establish and maintain dialogue with the military, share information on behalf of the ISCG and relevant sector members, coordinate and/or harmonize upcoming activities in the camps by the Sectors, and coordinate future plans.

3.5 Examples of Liaison Arrangements

The adopted CMCoord strategy determines the liaison arrangements to be established. Possible arrangements are:

- Co-location:** In response to disasters in peacetime, strategies based on cooperation may be deemed appropriate. Co-locating humanitarian and military actors in one operational coordination facility allows for real-time interaction and communication with low organizational and technical impacts. Before opting

for co-location, it is important to consider how humanitarian organizations are perceived in other regions, especially by actors opposed to the military.

Case Study: Supertyphoon Haiyan Response, 2013

Coordination platforms were in place at the national and sub-national levels. One of the key findings of the [UN-CMCoord After-Action Review \(AAR\)](#) was the effectiveness of the co-location liaison approach and cooperation strategy at the sub-national level. It also recommended to “establish a CMCoord mechanism at the national level to: 1) assist and inform the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), as well as the humanitarian clusters, to establish and maintain common situational awareness; and, 2) prioritize the use of FMA in supporting humanitarian activities/priorities and operations.” This mechanism has been referred to as the “Humanitarian-Military Operational Coordination Concept (HuMOCC)”.

- **Exchange of Liaison Officers:** Co-location might not be possible for logistical reasons (e.g. limited facilities or geographic locations), security considerations (e.g. where military actors are more likely to become targets or use deterrence measures for self-protection) or because of the impact on the perception of humanitarian actors. In these cases, the exchange of liaison officers might be more appropriate. This is a common practice at the strategic level. At the tactical level, the assignment of liaison officers may be difficult and, depending on the scope of interaction, not required. In this case, the exchange of liaison officers can be ad hoc.
- **Liaison Visits:** In complex emergencies, where military and other armed actors are (or perceived as) party to the conflict, humanitarian actors should avoid any association and interact with them as little as possible. Liaison Officers will attend relevant meetings and activities as needed.

Case Study: Eruption of Violence, CAR, 2013

The humanitarian civil-military coordination mechanism in Bangui adjusted to address the needs of the humanitarian community and civilian population. The OCHA CMCoord Officer was the main interface between the foreign military forces and the humanitarian organizations. His main activity was to centralize all requests for military support (mainly requests to protect civilians), prioritize them

in coordination with the relevant cluster leads, and share them with the military. Having the CMCoord Officer as the main interlocutor between military and humanitarians allowed to optimize and coordinate the use of limited military resources, while maintaining a clear distinction and ensure a coherent CMCoord approach.

- **Interlocutor:** While direct dialogue is usually the preferred option, in some contexts the use of an interlocutor, or “third party”, is the only way to ensure humanitarian-military distinction. The CMCoord Officer can function as an interlocutor, especially in high-risk environments where military actors apply highly visible deterrence measures, while humanitarian actors base their security management on acceptance and low-profile approaches (see chapter 1, section 1.7 and chapter 6, section 6.5.3). Visits to humanitarian facilities would not be favoured, in order not to endanger humanitarian personnel and because arms are banned from humanitarian sites. Military facilities might face higher risk of attack, posing threats to approaching unarmed humanitarian personnel. In addition to security considerations, humanitarian organizations risk to be seen as not being neutral and impartial if associated with the military, particularly if these are involved in hostilities and combat.

3.6 UN-CMCoord Platforms

CMCoord platforms facilitate the dialogue between the humanitarian community and military forces. They can be exclusively composed of humanitarian actors, with the CMCoord Officer acting as interlocutor, or of both humanitarian and military actors. They are scalable and based on agreed deliverables and the prevailing dynamics in the operational area. CMCoord platforms must remain humanitarian in nature and must be chaired by a humanitarian actor (usually OCHA).

In disasters in peacetime, the Humanitarian-Military Operational Coordination Concept (HuMOCC) is often the most appropriate platform, as described in chapter 5, section 5.2.3.1.1. In complex emergencies, CMCoord platforms will take different forms as dictated by the context and the need for distinction. The name can change, depending on local level decisions: CMCoord Cell, CMCoord Forum, CMCoord Working Group, etc. Chapter 6 provides examples.

- **Chair(s)** - the chair and co-chair(s) of the platform have to be clearly defined right from the start. This provides the leadership and continuity of the collective effort. Most platforms are either chaired or co-chaired by OCHA. It is important to note that the chair and co-chair must be

humanitarian actors as the platform must remain humanitarian in nature.

- **Scope/Terms of Reference (TORs)** - this is meant to level off and manage expectations and define what can be done or covered, by whom and how. This should also cover the limitations of the platform in terms of activities, issues, locations, other aspects of the operation, etc.
- **Membership** - it is essential to clearly define the criteria for membership in the platform as they will be critical to its effective functioning and management. Striking a balance between not having too few and not having too many is key; the type (quality) and quantity of members can impact on the functioning of the platform. Members with key functions related to CMCoord should be prioritized, including those with delegated decision-making authority to ensure an effective and efficient functioning of the platform.
- **Hosting/venue** - a neutral, safe and accessible venue is preferable. This could be provided by an organization that has the space to accommodate the members of the platform and, ideally, provide the secretariat functions. The type of venue will also depend on the CMCoord strategy applied and the operational context.
- **Frequency** - the scale of activities will always be dictated by the need; the frequency of meetings and the issues to be discussed and/or resolved will be agreed upon by the members, based on needs and priorities.
- **Duration** - the platform is designed to function for as long as there is military presence and the need to coordinate with military forces exists.
- **UN Mission and/or military representatives** - agreeing on protocols on when and how to invite UN Mission and/or military representatives is helpful.



CMCoord can also be discussed in humanitarian working groups, if deemed necessary. They can be used to develop common positioning on questions related to access or consistent engagement with NSAGs, for example, and then presented to the HCT for further discussion.

3.7 Key Coordination Elements

The three key coordination elements of CMCoord are:

- **Information sharing**
- **Task division**
- **Planning**

Each context contains all elements in varying forms and degrees, as detailed in chapters 5 and 6. This section gives the basic definitions.

3.7.1 Information Sharing

Humanitarian, military and other armed actors have different reasons and ways to collect, analyze and share information. CMCoord practitioners must understand both military and humanitarian jargon, communication and information management practices. The type of information shared and the mechanisms used will always be context-specific.

A minimum of information should always be exchanged, to increase mutual awareness and de-conflict operations. This may include sharing of situational information and analysis, for example on security, threats, and population movements that are relevant for humanitarian assistance and PoC.



Basic considerations:

- **Humanitarian organizations follow a policy of transparency regarding their operations. Transparency is vital to establishing trust and confidence with the local population.**
- **Under no circumstances will humanitarians share information that provides a tactical advantage to an armed actor engaged in hostilities.**
- **As a CMCoord Officer, it is crucial to understand the language and reference systems of national and international civilian and military, police and other armed actors, to ensure effective communication.**
- **When requesting data or information from military and other armed actors, articulate the desired outcome instead of requesting raw data.**
- **Indicate how the information will be used and ensure that sensitive information will not be shared.**

Military actors and information sharing:

While humanitarian actors tend to share information publicly, military actors might withhold specific information to ensure Operations Security (OPSEC). If the decision about information sharing is at the discretion of the military commander, the primary criteria will be OPSEC and military considerations, in particular in hostile environments or where the mandate includes the use of force. The willingness to share information will be based on trust and on clear communication by humanitarian actors on what information they need and for which purpose, and how it will be used. See also chapter 4.



Try to avoid depending on the military for data that is time-sensitive and has not been shared before. See also chapters 4 and 6.

3.7.2 Task Division

In contexts where the activities of humanitarian and military actors can be (partly) complementary, task division is required. This is mostly the case in disasters in peacetime, but they can also occur in complex emergencies (e.g. on PoC).

Military support to humanitarian assistance can be divided into three categories based on the degree of contact with the affected population. They help define which types of humanitarian activities might be appropriate to support with foreign military resources under different conditions, given that ample consultation has been conducted with all concerned parties to explain the nature and necessity of the assistance. See also Table 3 in this chapter.

Tasks Performed

Direct Assistance

Face-to face distribution of goods and services - handing out relief goods, providing first aid, transporting people, interviewing refugees, locating families etc.

Indirect Assistance

At least one step removed from the population - transporting relief goods, building camps and shelters, providing water sources, clearing mines and ordnance, etc.

Infrastructure Support

General services that facilitate relief, but are not necessarily visible to, or solely for, the benefit of the affected population - repairing infrastructure, operating airfields, providing weather info, ensuring access to communications networks, etc.



As a general rule, military support to a humanitarian operation should be limited to infrastructure support. In some circumstances in peacetime, direct assistance by military actors could be an option of last resort. Potential negative implications should always be thoroughly analyzed by humanitarian actors. In a complex emergency, direct and indirect assistance by military actors should be avoided.



How to request military assistance? The use of military assets, such as armoured vehicles, helicopters and specialist surveillance equipment for example, are unlikely to be discussed in open forums due to OPSEC. When interacting with the military, humanitarian requests for FMA must detail the objective, e.g "improved security on a specific route". This can be achieved by patrolling for improved area security as opposed to armed escorts. By communicating the humanitarian objective as opposed to the asset required, military can better plan and make better use of the available assets in support of humanitarian operations.

3.7.3 Planning

Areas for (joint) planning and its structure depend on the context. It may include security management, medical / casualty evacuation (MEDEVAC/CASEVAC), logistics, transport, infrastructure and engineering, communications, information management, and PoC. When joint planning is deemed necessary and appropriate, the CMCoord Officer must identify the information required to inform the planning process – ideally well in advance – and establish the pre-conditions and mechanisms to exchange information and ensure planning.

- A common operational picture: Who does what, where, and until when is crucial to avoid duplication and maximize aid effectiveness.
- Cost planning: Appeals should be drafted without taking into account potential FMA deployment, to avoid dependence on FMA. FMA should be provided at no cost to the affected state or humanitarian organization. Armed escorts and protection activities that are within the mandate of a peacekeeping operation should be budgeted under the regular UN budget. There is no possibility to re-finance military activities through humanitarian financing sources.

Information required for military planning may include the location and movement of humanitarian actors to de-conflict military campaigns and avoid collateral damage. See also humanitarian notification system for deconfliction in chapter 6.

3.8 UN-CMCoord Tasks

CMCoord facilitates a coherent and consistent humanitarian approach to interaction with the military and other armed actors, enhancing understanding of humanitarian action. CMCoord comprises five main tasks. The list below gives generic descriptions, while chapters 5 and 6 give specific examples of the activities in disasters in peacetime and in complex emergencies.

1. Establish and sustain dialogue with military and other armed actors.

After the context assessment and mapping of relevant stakeholders, dialogue can be launched and, when relevant, networks can be built. It is important to regularly sensitize stakeholders to others' mandates and to explain and promote humanitarian principles. Conducting

CMCoord training can be useful to that extent. It might be easier to liaise with the military and structured non-state armed groups than other armed non-state actors that may not have a clear chain of command.

2. Establish a mechanism for information exchange and humanitarian interaction with military forces and other armed actors.

The humanitarian community (through the HCT and based on OCHA's advisory role) must determine the basic strategy and a coherent and consistent approach towards interaction with military and other armed actors. Mechanisms are highly context- and objective-dependent: in disasters in peacetime, they can include co-location and coordination of assets, while in a complex emergency, they can take the form of a humanitarian notification system for deconfliction (HNS4D) with some actors, and access negotiation with others.

3. Assist in negotiations in critical areas of interaction between humanitarian workers and military forces and other armed actors.

The humanitarian community advocates for humanitarian principles vis-a-vis government, military, and other armed actors. Activities can comprise access negotiation with the military and other armed actors (e.g. non-state armed groups), influencing the behavior of combatants and fighters, sensitizing security actors to humanitarian risk mitigation measures and negotiating the use/non-use of armed escorts in support of humanitarian operations.

4. Support the development and dissemination of context-specific guidance for interaction of the humanitarian community with military forces and other relevant armed actors.

The development of context-specific guidance is crucial to ensure a tailored, coherent and consistent humanitarian approach to civil-military interaction within the humanitarian community. See also section 3.2.7 in this chapter.

5. Observe the activity of military forces and other armed actors to ensure that distinction is maintained and to avoid negative impact on humanitarian action.

This may include training on humanitarian principles and humanitarian action to military and other armed actors and promotion of a coherent approach within the humanitarian community.

3.9 Training Events

Training is a central component of the CMCoord function, to ensure common understanding, knowledge of CMCoord Guidelines and timely and appropriate use of FMA. As many training activities as possible should take place at the country and regional level, tailored to the specific context of the operating environment. OCHA's Civil-Military Coordination Service supports OCHA offices and CMCoord Officers in preparing and conducting such training.

Training events bring together participants from different backgrounds and enhance civil-military dialogue in a conducive environment. They are an important tool for effective dialogue, awareness raising, dissemination of guidelines and networking. Identifying the right mix of humanitarian and military organizations in training events is crucial.



You can find up-to-date information on upcoming training activities [here](#).

3.10 Participation in Military Exercises

Humanitarian organizations are often invited to participate in military conferences, CIMIC courses, scenario exercises and pre-deployment training courses. Potential benefits include enhanced mutual understanding and awareness of humanitarian and military action, structures and relationships as well as exchange of knowledge and good practices. However, before participating, humanitarian actors must carefully consider potentially associated challenges, such as issues of neutrality (real or perceived), inappropriate content and lack of resources. Humanitarian organizations should consider each invitation on a case-by-case basis. The following questions may help in the decision:

- What is the likelihood that the military actors will be deployed to a theatre where humanitarian organizations might interact with them?
- Is the event likely to promote improved civil-military coordination?
- Is the event conducive to adequate representation by humanitarian organizations?
- Could participation negatively impact the humanitarian organization's neutrality, actual or perceived?
- Are sufficient resources available for effective participation in the event?



[Guidance on Humanitarian Organizations' Participation in Military Events \(2015\)](#)

Chapter 4: Understanding the Military and Other Armed Actors

Chapter 4 provides a general understanding of military, police and other armed actors, such as non-state armed groups, and familiarizes the CMCoord Officer with related key concepts. It also discusses current challenges and clarifies key concepts and terms. The chapter includes:

- Basic legal provisions pertaining to armed actors and the conduct of hostilities.
- An overview of a traditional military organization's generic command and control structures, military planning and headquarters, ranks, responsibilities and unit sizes.
- The organization of the military and police components of UN peacekeeping operations (blue helmets).
- A brief overview of the police command and structure.
- An overview of "non-traditional" armed actors.
- Foreign interventions by military actors and current challenges.
- Protection of civilians.
- Possible humanitarian assistance tasks undertaken by the military.

4.1 Basic Legal Definitions and Principles

[International Humanitarian Law \(IHL\)](#), also referred to as the [Law of Armed Conflict \(LoAC\)](#), regulates the means and methods of warfare. Human Rights Law remains applicable at all times. See also chapter 1, section 1.2, and chapter 6.

4.1.1 Basic Legal Categories

Combatant

A combatant is a person who is authorized, under IHL, to use force in situations of armed conflict. The combatant is usually under the direct command of a state armed force. Contrary to civilians taking up weapons, a combatant cannot be charged for participating in hostilities, provided he/she acted in accordance with IHL. The combatant, on the other hand, is a legitimate military target in times of armed conflict. Police forces are not part of the armed forces, unless specifically indicated to other parts of the conflict.

Fighter

Today's armed conflicts are mostly non-international. Therefore, some of the parties to the conflict are non-state armed groups (NSAGs) (see section 4.4 in this chapter). NSAGs are organized groups with a basic structure of command. They operate outside the control of the state and resort to force to achieve their objectives. Members of these groups are usually referred to as "fighters", because they do not have a combatant status unless specifically agreed, as encouraged by Common Art. 3 of the Geneva Conventions. The fighters who join organized armed groups undertaking a "continuous combat function" can be targeted at all times during an armed conflict. However, some civilians are "farmer by day, fighter by night" and thus do not have a continuous combat function. They can be targeted only when they take direct part in hostilities and only for the duration of their participation in hostilities. In case of doubt, fighters must be considered civilians. Fighters do not have a combatant's immunity for taking part in hostilities (and thus can be charged under criminal law only for taking up arms against a state).

Civilian

Civilians are persons who are not members of the armed forces or of organized non-state armed groups. In both international and non-international armed conflicts, civilians are entitled to protection against attacks unless they take a direct part in hostilities. Members of the armed forces (typically called combatants) or of organized armed groups (typically called fighters), on the other hand, are not protected against attack unless they are *hors de combat* (i.e. if they are under the power of an adverse party, defenceless because of unconsciousness, shipwreck, wounds or sickness, or clearly express an intention to surrender) and provided they abstain from any hostile act and do not attempt to escape.

Civilian Objects vs. Military Objectives

Civilian objects are all objects that are not military objectives. Military objectives are limited to those objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose partial or total destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage. See also chapter 1, section 1.2.



- [ICRC, Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities under IHL \(2009\)](#)
- [1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Additional Protocols](#)
- [1998 Rome Statute](#)

4.1.2 Core Principles Regulating the Use of Force

The legal regimes governing the use of force can be found in IHL and IHRL. In armed conflict, the conduct of hostilities is regulated by IHL. IHRL applies at all times, and governs law enforcement operations. Under IHL, targeting combatants/fighters or civilians directly participating in hostilities is lawful. Under IHRL, the taking of life is only lawful where strictly necessary to protect against an imminent threat to life. The law enforcement regime provides guidance on how a state may use force in self-defence, to prevent crime, to effect or assist in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders, to prevent the escape of offenders or suspected offenders and to maintain public order and security.

Under IHL, the following rules apply to all parties in armed conflict:

- **Distinction:** In armed conflict, parties must at all times distinguish between civilian and civilian objects on the one hand and combatants/fighters and military objectives on the other. While the latter can be targeted, civilians and civilian objects are protected against attack under IHL. (AP I, art. 48 and 52 and CIHL, rules 1 and 7). Parties to conflict must refrain from launching indiscriminate attacks, i.e. attacks which (a) are not directed at a specific military objective; (b) employ a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military objective; or (c) employ a method or means of combat, the effects of which cannot be limited as required by international humanitarian law; and consequently, in each such case, are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction.
- **Precaution:** Parties to the conflict must take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event minimize incidental death and injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects. Constant care should be taken to ensure civilians and civilian objects are spared in the conduct of military operations. (AP I, art. 57 and CIHL rule 15)
- **Proportionality:** Parties to the conflict must not launch attacks which are disproportionate, i.e. attacks which may be expected to cause incidental death or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and anticipated direct military advantage. Before conducting an attack, a proportionality assessment should systematically be performed. (API, art. 51 and CIHL rule 14)



[The 7 Rules of IHL](#)

Under the law enforcement paradigm (in peacetime but also in armed conflict):

- **Absolute necessity:** The use of force should be used only as a last resort, in order to protect life, when no other available means, such as arrest, would be effective. Non-lethal means to maintain public order and security must always be considered first.
- **Precaution:** The use of force must be in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate objective to be achieved.
- **Proportionality:** All precautions must be taken to avoid, as far as possible, the use of force, or to ensure that, if force is used, the damage is contained as much as is possible.



The key concept of civilian-military distinction used in CMCoord guidelines is derived from that principle; it specifically refers to the distinction between military and humanitarian actors. If they carry out similar activities, the distinction between them and their mandates becomes very difficult to maintain and understand, even if humanitarians are not cooperating directly with the military. It is the responsibility of both communities to maintain a clear distinction between them, particularly in complex emergencies. Military personnel must refrain from presenting themselves as humanitarian workers and must clearly state who they are, and vice versa.

4.2 Traditional Military Forces

This section provides a generic description of traditional military organizations. It does not cover the differences among and within them. Each Member State's military is organized, equipped and tasked in unique ways. Even individual services and branches within a Member State's military have organizational and cultural differences. A general understanding of military actors' organization, capabilities and roles is crucial for establishing liaison and dialogue and identifying appropriate interface and coordination mechanisms.

4.2.1 National Military Forces

The role of the national military is defined in each national legislation. States are responsible for the security on their territory and may use military or paramilitary units for this purpose. States also have the responsibility to use whatever means at their disposal to respond to the humanitarian needs of people affected by disaster on their territory. In many states, the national military or civil defence /

protection units are part of, or even lead, the national response to disasters and crises. See also chapter 5 on the role of the military in disasters in peacetime.



Is the CMCoord function applicable for the interaction with national armed forces? Some of the general considerations discussed in the CMCoord Guidelines are applicable to the interaction with national armed forces, while others are not.

Discussion Paper on Humanitarian Interaction with National Military

Humanitarian actors face a dilemma if the national armed actors are a disaster responder and at the same time active in military operations on their territory.

4.2.2 Military Organization

Army is the land component which is normally tasked with taking and holding specific objectives or geographical areas. Member State armies are generally the largest service in terms of personnel and equipment. The army is the most likely service to be found in peacekeeping operations and complex emergencies, and can play a hands-on part in natural disasters. In addition to ground equipment and large numbers of personnel, armies may also have some rotary wing (helicopter) capabilities.

Navy is the naval component. Navies can carry out a large range of military and non-military operations such as protecting the nation's waters, vital sea lanes of communications, counter-piracy or disaster and humanitarian response. Naval vessels are part of the nation's diplomatic effort when visiting other countries and enjoy the same status as embassies. Some navies carry out law enforcement duties such as counter-trafficking or enforcement of UN resolutions.

Air Force is the air component and provides strategic and tactical airlift for the other services, as well as aerial warfare. Air forces generally have fixed- and rotary-wing assets. Humanitarians are most likely to engage with air force personnel in natural disaster response, but they may be present also in peacekeeping missions and complex emergencies.

Specialist Forces are forces such as airborne, marine or special forces that are generally smaller, highly trained and equipped for specialist functions such as parachuting and amphibious methods of insertion, covert operations such as raids and hostage recovery, and counter-insurgency. Their covert nature means information about them and their operations is scarce and their small size means they can move more discreetly.

Regardless of nationality, military forces are often organized in similar ways and can sometimes share common aspects, whether they are army, navy, air force or other special forces. Military forces are organized in a clear hierarchical structure with clear lines of command, control and communication.



The hierarchy of military activity is described as being at the strategic, operational or tactical level. The strategic level is the highest one. It includes political, national or coalition direction and involves the allocation of resources towards certain campaigns. The operational level is the level at which campaigns are planned and supported. Operations at this level consist of a series of tactical level activities to secure a larger objective. Activities at the tactical level are the 'hands-on' ground- or field-level actions, such as individual battles or engagements.

4.2.2.1 Military Mission or Operation

A military mission or operation (depending on size) is an activity or task assigned to a unit or formation. Military operations can be undertaken by a single service of a military force, but military necessity and political will means that military operations are invariably joint, and/or combined. Joint operations involve contributions from two or more services (land, air, sea) under a unified command structure. Combined operations refer to those where two or more allied nations act together. At every level an operation follows a mission statement issued by the commander which defines the task(s) to be undertaken and the desired end state. Each military has a generic format for its mission statement which usually contains the following elements:

- Who: Identifying the force; friendly, neutral or enemy forces.
- What: Essential tasks derived from either a higher headquarters or national authority ("secures", "protects", etc.).
- Where / When: Spatial and temporal constraints.
- How: A statement of methodology, e.g. "provide visible deterrence", "contributing to security", or "undertake non-combatant extraction operation".
- Why / End State: Articulate conditions that define achievement of the commander's objectives.

4.2.2.2 The Commanding Officer

Command is a position of authority and responsibility to which military officers are legally appointed. The Commanding Officer is the most senior-ranking officer in the unit and is legally responsible for the actions of the personnel under his/her command under domestic and

international law. This does not preclude individual responsibility of the combatant performing an unlawful act.

All commanders will have a Deputy Commander and many commands at a higher level will have a Chief of Staff (CoS) who is tasked with coordinating the staff sections of the headquarters and managing the activities of unit or formation staff. The CoS has routine access to the Commander. The Commander may also delegate some command responsibility to the Deputy Commander or Chief of Staff in his/her absence.



Engagement with the Commander: The CMCoord Officer usually interacts primarily with the C/J/G/U 9, Civil Affairs or CIMIC staff (categories are described in Table 10 below). It is critical for CMCoord Officers to establish communication and coordination lines with the Commanding Officer, as he/she has the largest degree of authority over the personnel and operations of his/her command. Depending on their rank and span of command, commanders may be unwilling or unable to meet CMCoord Officers regularly. In some instances, it may also be more appropriate for senior humanitarian officials such as the HC and the HoO to meet with senior military actors. In addition, efforts should be made to establish a constructive relationship with the Deputy Commander and/or Chief of Staff. It is also a good practice to schedule a "courtesy call" with the Commander and CoS as early as possible.

4.2.2.3 Functions and Responsibilities of Headquarters Staff Sections

Headquarters staff or staff officers can be broken down into nine categories, referred to as 1 to 9, and are preceded with a letter referring to the function, e.g. J2 for Intelligence. In NATO, the letter preceding the function determines level and component, e.g. G for Ground or N for Navy. The letter J is used if the command is designated as a Joint Headquarters and the letter C is used if the command is designated as a Combined Headquarters. If a HQ and staff operate under both these arrangements, they will often have the designation Combined Joint (CJ), e.g. Combined Joint Task Force (CJTf). The UN uses the letter U to designate its staff sections in the military component of peacekeeping missions. To an outsider the structure may not be obvious and a military headquarters may appear large and chaotic, however, the system provides clarity and efficiency for those working within it. Depending on the size and function of the unit that the HQ oversees, not all of these functions may be represented.

In addition, many commands will have special staff functions which provide a specialist advisory function to the Commander, such as Legal Officers, Chaplain, Liaison Officers to and from other units or HQs, Public Affairs Officer, Gender Advisor, Political Advisor, Cultural Advisor and many more.



While civil-military/CIMIC staff may be a good entry point and designated as responsible for engagement with civilian actors, staff in other sections and functions may be more appropriate for certain information requests or engagement. Examples are plans staff for shaping protection inputs in military plans, or the targeting cell of a HQ to deal with humanitarian notification systems for deconfliction (HNS4D).

Table 10: Military Headquarters Staff Functions 1-9

Personnel	1	Personnel planning, reporting, casualty tracking, welfare, discipline, prisoners of war, internees and detainees.
Intelligence	2	Collection and collation of information from various sources. Process and analysis of that information into intelligence to gain military advantage over the adversary, including force protection.
Operations	3	Implementation of current (J3) and future (J3-5) operations by coordinating subordinate units to achieve the Commander's mission.
Logistics	4	Supply, movement, transportation, equipment support and any external input such as contractors and medical support.
Plans	5	Plans for various operations and contingencies in accordance with the Commander's intent. Writes and disseminates those plans as required.
Communications (Radio & IT)	6	All technical aspects related to information exchange, management and surveillance of electronic spectra.
(Doctrine), Training (or Engineering)	7	Policy and after action reviews contributing to lessons identified processes and post-operational reporting.
Resource management	8	Contracts, budgets and financing.
Civil-Military Interface / CIMIC	9	Engagement with civilian actors and entities in the military area of operations. Could include Political Advisors, Legal Support, and Media and may be embedded in other specialist functions.

4.2.2.3.1 Civil-Military Operations

Solutions to complexities are often impossible to achieve by the simple use of force or the conduct of hostilities alone. As a result, most armed forces have developed mechanisms for actions that influence the operating environment without the application of force. This often includes a component for civilian interaction or dialogue in support of the political or military objectives assigned to it. See also section 4.6.2 in this chapter.

Civil Military Cooperation

While UN-CMCoord describes how the humanitarian community should interact with military actors to safeguard humanitarian principles, military forces will have different reasons to coordinate with civilian actors. There are different concepts of the C/J/G/U 9 function, such as Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), Civil-Military Cooperation and Coordination (CMCO (EU)), Civil-Military Interaction (CMI (NATO)), Civil-Military Operations (CMO), and Civil Affairs (CA).

For the UN, NATO and many national militaries, CIMIC describes the military staff function and capabilities that facilitate the dialogue and cooperation with civilian actors. This function is conducted in support of the military mission.

Definitions of CIMIC

- DPKO definition: In a UN peacekeeping context, this coordination is called “UN-CIMIC” which is the military staff function that contributes to facilitating the interface between the military and civilian components of an integrated mission, as well as with the humanitarian and development actors in the mission area, in order to support UN Mission objectives. [UN-CIMIC Policy \(2012\)](#)
- NATO CIMIC: A joint function comprising a set of capabilities integral to supporting the achievement of mission objectives and enabling NATO commands to participate effectively in a broad spectrum of civil-military interaction with diverse non-military actors.



To acknowledge the fact that civil-military dialogue and interaction are not limited to the CIMIC function and to activities carried out “in support of the military mission”, some militaries use the concept of Civil-Military Interaction.

4.2.2.4 Military Planning

The military planning process is the fundamental way of managing military activities at all levels of command (strategic, operational and tactical) at all times, in peace and conflict situations. A military plan details the activities of subordinate or supporting units, including how they coordinate to achieve the mission stipulated by the higher HQ or national authority.



Military planning is not a linear but a cyclic process that requires constant updating to react to changing contexts. A full description of the military decision-making process and how IHL should be integrated can be found in [ICRC's Decision-Making Process in Military Combat Operations](#).

There are usually four basic phases of planning:

1. Phase one is the mission analysis of orders and intent of the superior commander and HQ, and identification of the tasks required to complete the mission.
2. Phase two is the evaluation of the environment, such as terrain and presence of civilians, forces involved and spatial and temporal constraints.
3. Phase three is the development and evaluation of different courses of action to achieve the mission. Each course of action is a draft plan that differs based on force composition, synchronization of activities and tactics.
4. Phase four is the Commander's decision on which course of action will be selected and development into a full plan.

Key planning elements include:

The Mission or **Operation Plan (OPLAN)** details the task, purpose and how to achieve success. Once the OPLAN has been approved for execution, it becomes an **Operations Order (OPORD)** that becomes the basis for action of units involved in the operation. Changes to the OPLAN are made by issuing **Fragmentary Orders (FRAGO)** to the units involved.

The **Operational or Combat Estimate** is part of the planning process including the development of Courses of Action. All Staff Sections within a command will provide inputs to the operational estimate, based on their areas of expertise.

The **Concept of Operations (CONOPS)** defines the Commander's intent for a mission or operation, as well as a concept of achievement. The CONOPS is a description of how a unit's capabilities may be employed to achieve desired objectives or a particular end state for a specific scenario. It can, and may be expected to, address issues pertaining to manning, equipment, training, maintenance and administration.

Targeting is the process of selecting objects or installations that can lawfully be attacked, taken or destroyed. It systematically analyzes and prioritizes targets and matches appropriate lethal and non-lethal actions to the targets. It is a flexible process designed to be adapted to any type of operation. A targeting cell will draw up and maintain a dynamic No Strike List which clearly defines people, places, installations and buildings that are to be protected under IHL. The list is constantly reviewed and communicated to all fighting elements. The **Humanitarian Notification System for Deconfliction (HNS4D)** between humanitarian and military actors is a complementary mechanism to notify relevant military and other armed actors about humanitarian locations or movements. See chapter 6, section 6.2.1.4 and section 4.1.2 in this chapter.

Operational Security (OPSEC) considerations will primarily determine which information is shared. Access to information is managed through a system of classification. All military personnel have security clearances of varying levels, which determine the sensitivity and amount of information to which they have access. Additionally, they are only given access to the sensitive information that they need to know to perform their duties. As a result, military personnel may not have access to or may be prohibited from sharing certain information. Even military commanders can have limited authority to share information with external actors.

Rules of Engagement

Competent authorities (states or multi-national actors) issue Rules of Engagement (ROE) that outline the circumstances under which their armed forces may legally use force to achieve their objectives. ROE reflect the rules and principles of IHL, IHRL and ICL in relevant domestic laws and policies, to facilitate their understanding and implementation in military operations.

ROE are often accompanied by operational guidance for specific taskings and appear in various forms in national military doctrines, including deployment orders, OPLANs, OPORDs or standing directives/SOPs. They provide authorization for and limits on the use of force, the positioning and posturing of forces, and the employment of specific military capabilities and weapons. During military operations, ROE change constantly due to a variety of factors, such as movements of civilians or combatants/fighters. Commanders are required to continuously communicate changes in the RoE to their troops.



[Sanremo Handbook On Rules Of Engagement \(2009\)](#)

4.2.2.5 Military Ranks

A key element to effective interaction with military actors is to understand the rank structure and the flow of authority and responsibility commensurate within the rank structure. The individual may change, the role does not.

The military rank indicates responsibility, seniority and authority to command. Responsibility for personnel, equipment, safety and security grows with each rank. Generally, officers are responsible for the planning, management and oversight of operations. Non-commissioned officers (NCOs) are responsible for operationally accomplishing the tasks.

Regardless of the nation, the military is hierarchical in structure and the structure provides a clear chain of command. There are some similarities, but each national military and service has its peculiarities in rank structure, as well as its own insignia and uniforms. Four generic rank classifications of military personnel exist in most military organizations:

- **Commissioned Officers:** Those who hold a legal commission and position of authority, and exercise command and control over subordinates. They derive their authority directly from a sovereign power and hold a position charging them with the duties and responsibilities of a specific office or position.
- **Warrant Officers:** Some armed forces have an additional rank between the commissioned and enlisted ranks. Warrant Officers do not have command authority, but are usually experts in their field and have significant seniority.
- **Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs):** Personnel who have been promoted to higher rank (e.g. corporal or sergeant) and have functional authority over those below them.
- **Enlisted Personnel (US), or Ordinary Ranks (NATO)** form the majority of all military personnel and perform tasks and duties allocated to them by their Officers and NCOs according to their specialization.



The CMCoord Officer should take the time to understand the rank structure of the military with which he/she is liaising and learn to identify the rank of military counterparts through their uniforms and insignia.

International alliances and coalitions have the same challenge when operating together: they need to harmonize rank structures and understand each other's ranks and insignia to establish a joint chain of command. NATO uses the following codes to make ranks comparable.

Officers (Commissioned)	O/OF 1- 10
Warrant Officers	WO 1-4
Non-Commissioned Officers	E/OR 5-9
Enlisted Personnel	E/OR 1-4



The Standardization Agreement (STANAG) gives an overview and comparison of all NATO codes and ranks: [STANAG 2116 ED. 6 \(2010\) Nato Codes For Grades Of Military Personnel](#)



It is customary for military personnel to address their subordinates by rank and surname and senior ranks by their rank, e.g. sergeant if not commissioned or Sir or Ma'am if commissioned. Formal salutations may not always be used, depending on circumstance, situation, context and whether there is a significant gap in rank difference. Civilians are not required to address military personnel by their rank but may wish to do so. If in doubt, enquire as to what is most appropriate.

O-	Navies	Armies	Air Forces
10	Admiral/ Admiral of the Fleet	Marshal/ Field Marshal	Marshal of the Air Force
9	Admiral	General	Air Chief Marshal
8	Vice Admiral	Lieutenant General	Air Marshal
7	Rear Admiral	Major General	Air Vice Marshal
6	Commodore	Brigadier/Brigadier General	Air Commodore
5	Captain	Colonel	Group Captain
4	Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	Wing Commander
3	Lieutenant Commander	Major/Commandant	Squadron Leader
2	Lieutenant	Captain	Flight Lieutenant
1	Sub-Lieutenant/Ensign	Lieutenant/ First Lieutenant/ Second Lieutenant	Flying Officer/ Pilot Officer

4.2.2.6 Military Structure

Regardless of size, a military force can be broken down into several sub-units. Every national force will be deployed as variations of different military units. Generally, militaries are organized based on the "rule of three" – three organic subordinate units make up the superior unit (e.g. three companies in a battalion, three battalions in a brigade/regiment, etc.). There is no formula to unit formation and command rank, however basic principles apply, for example a battalion is most often commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel and will comprise up to 600 men and women, not including the attached sub-unit in specialist and/or supporting roles.

Division	6,000-10,000	Major General (2* or higher)
Brigade/Regiment	2,000-3,000	Brigadier General/ General 1*/Colonel
Battalion	400-600	Lieutenant Colonel
Company	100-150	Captain-Major-Commandant
Platoon	30	Lieutenant
Section/Squad	6-10	Sergeant-Corporal

4.3 Military and Police Components in UN Peacekeeping Operations

As described in chapter 2, section 2.8.2, the decision to establish a peacekeeping operation (PKO) rests with the UNSC as part of its mandate to maintain international peace and security. Most missions are run by the UN, often referred to as "blue helmets". The Security Council can also authorize other organizations to carry out regionally led peacekeeping operations (e.g. African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)), hybrid missions comprising two or more entities (e.g. UN and AU), individual coalitions of national armed forces or other military alliances or coalitions (e.g. NATO).

4.3.1 Military Component

A UN peacekeeping operation is generally composed of civilians (national and international) and uniformed personnel (military and

police). “Classic” peacekeeping operations are essentially military in character and have a military Head of Mission, double-hatted as a Force Commander (FC) or Chief Military Observer. The military component forms the largest part of most peacekeeping operations. Assigned tasks may involve observation, monitoring, facilitating humanitarian access, Protection of Civilians (PoC), reporting, supervision of ceasefire agreements and support to verification mechanisms. Training of military forces is the responsibility of each individual Member State. Pre-deployment and in-mission training is also common, however this differs per national military and mission mandate.



To increase mutual understanding, CMCoord Officers should ensure that incoming military contingents get a CMCoord briefing, either through pre-deployment training (with the support of OCHA Geneva and Regional Offices) or on arrival. The online [CMCoord eCourse](#) can be used to that effect.

4.3.2 Police Component

Police forces are usually not the first interlocutor with a humanitarian actor and the CMCoord Guidelines do not address relations between police and humanitarian actors. However, CMCoord Officers and other humanitarian actors may have to dialogue and interact with police forces.

The mission of the UN police is to “enhance international peace and security by supporting Member States in conflict, post-conflict and other crisis situations to realize effective, efficient, representative, responsive and accountable police services that serve and protect the population”. To that end, the UN police builds and supports or, where mandated, acts as a substitute or partial substitute for the host nation police capacity. Their role is to prevent and detect crime, protect life and property and maintain public order and safety, in adherence to the rule of law and international human rights law ([S/2016/952](#)). The two components are [UNPOL](#) and [Formed Police Units \(FPU\)](#). See also section 4.3.3 in this chapter.

4.3.3 Types of Military and Police Personnel

The military component of a UN peacekeeping operation can include individually deployed Military Experts on Mission and/or Military Staff Officers assigned to the different staff positions (U1-9) of the UN Force Headquarters. Member States also contribute Formed Military Units. These are also referred to as troop contributing country (TCC) units or contingents.

- Military Advisers advise the civilian leadership on military issues, provide expertise on security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants/fighters, and perform other military tasks.
- Military Liaison Officers maintain a link between a UN peacekeeping operation and non-UN military forces and actors.
- Military Observers (MILOBS) are the eyes and ears of a Peace Mission. They are usually unarmed and their responsibilities include verifying cessation of hostilities, patrolling demilitarized zones and observing violations of Human Rights.



MILOBS may ask questions to affected people that are similar to those humanitarian actors ask (e.g. on displacement, access to health care and the normal pattern of life). It is important for the CMCoord Officer to meet with MILOBS to make sure distinction is maintained and to agree on principles of interaction with affected populations, to avoid frictions and address concerns.

- Formed Military Units (FMU) correspond to traditional military formations, such as companies, brigades or battalions. Their strengths and capabilities vary depending on the mandate. FMU commanders and staff working within UN Missions may have significantly varying degrees of expertise and experience related to humanitarian action and peacekeeping.

Police components of UN peacekeeping operations:

- UNPOL Individual Police Officers (IPOs) are police officers or other law enforcement personnel assigned by Member States to serve with the UN on secondment. IPOs cover the complete range of policing tasks, including mentoring and in some cases training of national police officers. They provide specialization in different types of investigations and help law enforcement agents address transnational crime.
- Formed Police Units (FPUs) consist of approximately 140 police officers, trained and equipped to act as a cohesive unit capable of accomplishing policing tasks that IPOs cannot address. Well-trained FPUs can operate in “high-risk” environments. They have three core duties: public order management, protection of UN personnel and facilities, and support to police operations that require a concerted response but do not respond to military threats.

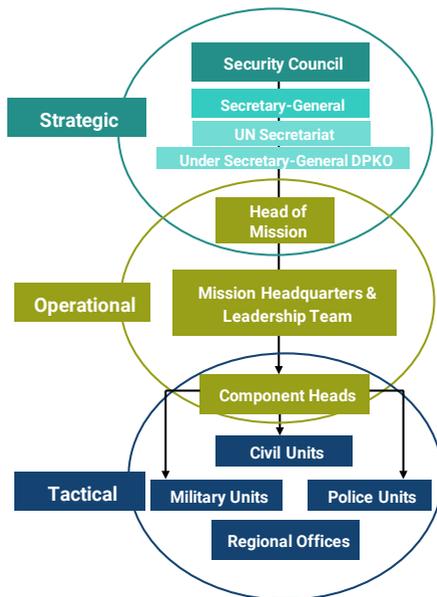
The CMCoord Officer should assess military and police components’ knowledge of humanitarian operations and programme coordination. This is also an opportunity to explain the impacts that peacekeeping and military operations can have on affected populations and humanitarian action, including humanitarian access.

4.3.4 Command and Control in a UN Peacekeeping Operation

Rules of Engagement (ROE) are tailored to the specific mandate of the UN Mission and the situation on the ground. Contingent commanders are responsible for ensuring that all troops comply with the mission-specific ROE, applicable for any member of a peacekeeping contingent.

The Head of a Military Component (HoMC), or Commander is usually the most senior military officer and reports to the Head of Mission/SRSG. He/she exercises operational control over all military personnel in the mission, including MILOBS. The HoMC establishes the military operational chain of command in the field. This may include subordinate sector commands, as appropriate. In doing so, the HoMC places military units under the tactical control of military commanders in the operational chain of command. The HoMC maintains a technical reporting and communication link with the DPKO Military Adviser at UN Headquarters. This technical reporting link must not circumvent or substitute the command chain between the USG DPKO and the Head of Mission, nor should it interfere with decisions taken by the Head of Mission in accordance with established policy directives.

Figure 5: Levels of Authority – Command and Control in UN Peacekeeping Operations



The operational authority over peacekeeping forces and personnel lies with the unified UN command and control. UN operational authority includes the authority to issue operational directives within the limits of a specific mandate, the mission area and for an agreed period of time.

Military personnel of troop contributing countries (TCC) remain under the jurisdiction of their national armed forces. Commanders of each TCC unit have a reporting line to their national government. Possible TCC military constraints, such as ways of performing tasks, patrolling, QIPs or unavailability of equipment, will have been agreed prior to the TCC nomination having been accepted at DPKO HQ. Robust dialogue may be required prior to deployment of the TCC to ensure that national agendas do not create friction at the operational level.



UN-CIMIC function (U-9) and responsibility: UN-CIMIC is a military staff function in a UN integrated mission that facilitates the interface between the military and civilian components of the mission, as well as with the humanitarian and development actors in the mission area, in order to support UN Mission objectives.



- [UN Policy on "Authority, Command and Control in UN Peacekeeping Operations" \(2008\)](#)
- [Handbook on UN Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations \(2003\) Chapter V: Military Command and Control](#)

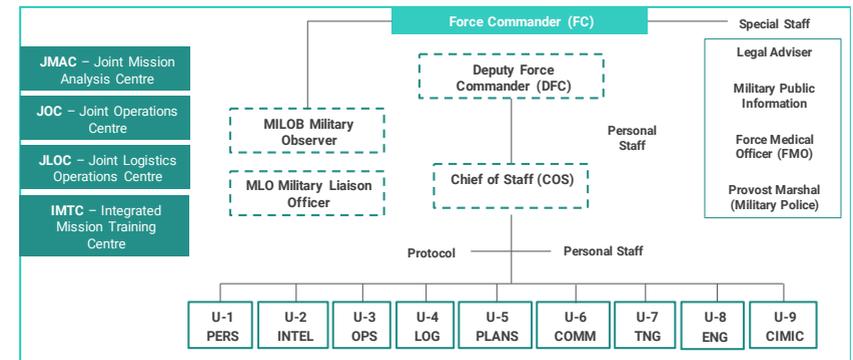


Figure 6: Sample UN PKO Force HQ

4.3.5 Principles of UN Peacekeeping

UN peacekeeping operations are guided by three basic principles:

- Consent of the parties
- Impartiality
- Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate

The **consent of the parties** implies a commitment by the parties to a political process. In the absence of such consent, a peacekeeping operation risks becoming a party to the conflict. However, consent does not necessarily guarantee that there will also be consent at the sub-national level, particularly if the main parties are internally divided.

Impartiality is understood as an objective and consistent execution of the mandate, regardless of provocation or challenge. Impartiality does not mean inaction or overlooking violations. UN peacekeepers should be impartial in their dealings with the parties to the conflict, but not neutral in the execution of their mandate, i.e. they must actively pursue the implementation of their mandate even if doing so goes against the interests of one or more of the parties.

Non-use of force means that UN peacekeeping operations are not an enforcement tool, and therefore should not use force. However, they may use force at the tactical level, with the authorization of the UNSC, if acting in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

In certain volatile situations, the UNSC has given UN peacekeeping operations “robust” mandates, authorizing them to use all necessary means to deter forceful attempts to disrupt the political process and protect civilians under imminent threat of physical attack. A UN peacekeeping operation should only use force as a measure of last resort.

Robust peacekeeping should not be confused with peace enforcement:

- Robust peacekeeping involves the use of force at the tactical level with the authorization of the UNSC and consent of the host nation and/or main parties to the conflict.
- Peace enforcement does not require the consent of the main parties and may involve the use of military force at the strategic or international level.



Robust peacekeeping: MONUSCO, the Peacekeeping Mission in DRC, has been authorized to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate. Since 2013, the Force Interventions Brigade (FIB), situated within MONUSCO, carries out an offensive mandate, as explained in UNSC Res 2409 (2018) that includes “neutralize armed groups through the Intervention Brigade under direct command of the MONUSCO Force Commander”.

The terms neutrality and impartiality are used differently in peacekeeping and humanitarian action. In peacekeeping, neutrality means non-intervention, or not taking action, while impartiality means

non-allegiance. In the humanitarian context, impartiality means non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, creed, religion, etc., while neutrality means not taking sides in the conflict.

Table 14: Neutrality and Impartiality in Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Action

	Neutrality	Impartiality
Peacekeeping	Non-intervention	Non-allegiance
Humanitarian Action	Non-allegiance	Non-intervention

4.3.5.1 Observance by UN Forces of IHL and Standards of Conduct

As [emphasized by the UN Secretary-General in 1999](#), UN military personnel have to act in accordance with the main principles and rules of IHL when engaged in a conflict as combatants. Hostilities that trigger the application of IHL include self-defence and the conduct of a mandate as authorized by the UNSC under Chapter VII. “The fundamental principles and rules of international humanitarian law set out in the present bulletin are applicable to United Nations forces when in situations of armed conflict they are actively engaged as combatants, to the extent and for the duration of their engagement. They are accordingly applicable in enforcement actions, or in peacekeeping operations when the use of force is permitted in self-defence.”

The UN expects that all peacekeeping personnel adhere to the [highest standards of behaviour](#) and conduct themselves in a professional and disciplined manner at all times. They are required to recognize local laws, customs and practices, treat host country inhabitants with respect and act with impartiality, integrity and tact.



[Ten Rules for the Personal Conduct of Blue Helmets](#)

The UN operational authority does not include responsibility for individual personnel matters of military contingents. The UN may take administrative steps in case of misconduct, including repatriation of military contingent members and staff officers. The discipline of military personnel and prosecution of criminal conduct remains with the TCC.

4.4 “Non-Traditional” Armed Actors

Humanitarian actors must interact with “non-traditional” armed actors in most contexts, for example non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in non-international armed conflicts. This section provides definitions and tips for the CMCoord Officer to better understand and engage with these actors.

4.4.1 Engagement with Non-State Armed Groups

In a non-international armed conflict, at least one party to the conflict is a non-state armed group (NSAG). It can consist of “dissident armed forces” (a part of a country’s armed forces that has turned against its government) or a group made up of persons recruited from the civilian population. To be a party to a non-international armed conflict, a NSAG must possess organized armed forces that are under a certain command structure and have the capacity to sustain military operations. However, there may be situations in which the CMCoord Officer and larger humanitarian community will engage with armed groups that do not meet the level of organization required to be party to an armed conflict (criminal groups, locally improvised militias, etc.) or are private military / security organizations. These actors may be referred to as armed non-state actors (ANSA).

OCHA characterizes NSAGs as groups that :

- Have the potential to employ arms in the use of force for political, ideological or economic objectives.
- Have a group identity and act in pursuit of their own objectives as a group.
- Are not within the formal military structures of states, state alliances or intergovernmental organizations.
- Are not under the command or control of the state in which they operate.
- Are subject to a chain of command (formal or informal).

The hierarchy and channels of communication may not be as robust as within traditional military forces and extra efforts and engagement may be needed to ensure that information is conveyed to relevant sections of a NSAG. NSAGs also often adopt the rank structure and unit titles of traditional military forces.

Negotiations with NSAGs should be needs-driven and based on the obligation of NSAGs to facilitate rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians in need. It can also encompass other cross-cutting themes such as protection of civilians and security.

For more details on humanitarian access, see chapter 1, section 1.5 and chapter 6, section 6.5.1.

Potential questions to be discussed when engaging with NSAGs are: agreement on ground rules (information sharing, coordination, liaison, etc.), respect for IHL and protection of civilians, humanitarian principles and action, safety and security of humanitarian personnel, free passage of relief items and personnel, forced displacement, evacuation of the sick and wounded, etc.



- [OCHA Manual on Humanitarian Negotiation with Armed Groups \(2006\)](#)
- [ICRC Casebook](#)
- [Geneva Call: In Their Words: Perceptions of Armed Non-State Actors on Humanitarian Action \(2016\)](#)

4.4.1.2 Challenges Linked to the Counter-Terrorism Agenda

If engaging with a NSAG is necessary in order to carry out humanitarian assistance operations, the designation of that group as “terrorist” by some states or institutions – including the Security Council – should not preclude engagement with the group.

No UN resolution prohibits UN humanitarian organizations from engaging with “listed” individuals/groups to carry out humanitarian assistance operations. Equally, no UN resolution obliges Member States to prohibit persons under their jurisdiction from engaging with listed individuals/groups for the purpose of providing humanitarian assistance.

UN resolutions only prohibit UN entities, and oblige Member States to prohibit all persons under their jurisdiction, from making available any funds or economic resources, directly or indirectly, to listed individuals/groups. Thus, mere contact or engagement is not prohibited, as long as it does not result in material or financial resources being made available. NGOs and individuals are not directly bound by Security Council resolutions.

Domestic counter-terrorism laws are often much broader than UN resolutions and target a broader range of acts and individuals/groups. Individuals and organizations, including UN staff members, are subject to the laws and regulations of the state on whose territory they operate. In addition, most states subject their nationals and legally

established organizations to their counter-terrorism laws, including for acts committed abroad. A minority of states will further subject non-citizens and foreign organizations acting abroad to domestic criminal laws deemed of particular importance (e.g. any individual or entity can be subject to prosecution in the US under the US Material Support Statute for acts suspected to be in violation of this Statute, wherever committed). However, even if the host state law does prohibit or restrict such dialogue, UN personnel enjoy immunity from prosecution for all acts performed in their official capacity in the territories of Member States. This means that, while UN personnel have to abide by the laws of the countries in which they operate, national authorities cannot arrest or prosecute them for acts committed in their official capacity, unless and until their immunity is waived by the UN.

4.4.2 Private Military and Security Companies

The presence of private military and security companies (PMSCs) in areas where humanitarians are likely to operate has increased substantially over the last two decades. Often they work at the behest of government departments, and not of military forces. They can also be contracted to private sector businesses and individuals. In some cases they have also provided services to humanitarian organizations, including training, security information, physical security, and armed escorts.

The outsourcing of security and military services from government-controlled oversight to the private sector has been accompanied by issues resulting from the behaviour of some PMSCs towards civilians. Although armed and fulfilling a security and/or military function, PMSCs often dress in civilian clothes and drive civilian vehicles. This can lead to problems of distinction with other civilians, including humanitarians. This has been addressed in some contexts where PMSC staff and vehicles need to be clearly marked and identifiable. The distinction is further clouded by PMSCs providing security for private sector businesses carrying out stabilization, reconstruction and development work in areas where humanitarians are also present.

The [Montreux Document](#) of ICRC and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs defines how international law applies to the activities of PMSCs when they are operating in an armed conflict zone. It contains a set of good practices designed to help states take measures nationally in order to fulfil their obligations under

international law. UN [policy](#) and [guidance](#) are also available on the subject. Use by humanitarians of PMSCs has been collated into a policy brief in the Humanitarian Policy Group's [Private Security Contracting in Humanitarian Operations](#).

PMSCs often recruit former military staff, however that is not always the case and the quality of staff can vary dramatically from one company to another. If the need arises to address issues around PMSCs, CMCoord Officers should engage with the Country Directors / Managers or Operations Officers of such companies, or approach the contracting client or entity.

Special Considerations Related to Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups

Children associated with an armed force or armed group refers to boys and girls who are or have been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies, or for sexual purposes. In addition, the compulsory, forced or voluntary recruitment, conscription or enlistment of children under the age of 15 into any kind of armed force or armed group is a war crime under ICL.

Actions to release and protect children, or prevent their recruitment or re-recruitment, are not connected to any peace process, nor do children need to surrender weapons in order to be released. Children who have been released should be accommodated away from adult ex-combatants to prevent harassment or abuse. Children and child protection actors should be involved in decision-making throughout the process. Female employees should be present throughout the process of release of girls. Nutrition and health care for infants and young children and support to girl mothers, including education and parenting skills, should be made available.



- [UNICEF Programme Guidance Note on Engaging with Non-State Entities in Humanitarian Action \(2011\)](#)
- [Save the Children Civil-Military Relations and Protection of Children \(2017\)](#)

Table 15: Tips for Establishing Contact and Dialogue with Military and Other Armed Actors

<input type="checkbox"/>	Study the mandate, objectives and organizational structure, ranks and insignia before the first meeting.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the right level and contact. This can be the CIMIC or Civil Affairs staff (often referred to as C/J/G/U/J9). Identify military Staff Officers to be briefed one-on-one, e.g. operations, plans, logistics, and security. Ask humanitarian counterparts to join, if relevant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request an appointment with the Commander and a meeting/courtesy call with the Chief of Staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If meeting the counterparts for the first time, use the opportunity to briefly introduce the humanitarian community, principles, relevant guidelines, concerns, etc. For specific humanitarian topics, seek support from technical experts and cluster coordinators/leads, as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Define expected outcomes of meetings and key messages.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep it short, simple and direct to the point.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be specific and clear about terms and language. Watch out for misconceptions that may arise from use of specialized vocabulary and acronyms. Common terms used by the military and civilians often have different meanings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expect more informal questions in the margins of / after briefings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide reference documents (on humanitarian principles and mandates, CMCoord Guidelines, legal documents, Sitreps...).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explain what resources, information and training opportunities are available from CMCoord and humanitarian actors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be clear about when and why certain information is needed. Required information might be available, but not shared due to classification / OPSEC. Arrange a follow-up meeting to allow military counterparts to seek de-classification.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clearly communicate that under no circumstances will humanitarian actors share information that provides a tactical advantage to one armed actor.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If decisions are required, it may be necessary to address the Commander directly. Seek support from the OCHA Head of Office, if necessary.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Promote CMCoord as the information gateway and entry point to the international humanitarian community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Share your contact details with all potential CMCoord contacts and ask for the widest possible distribution.

4.5 Military Protection of Civilians Doctrines

While they are often complementary, the military and humanitarian definitions of protection differ. According to the [IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action](#), protection encompasses “... all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. International Human Rights Law (IHRL), International Humanitarian Law, International Refugee Law (IRL)).” This definition

is broader than those of military doctrines, both in terms of the legal framework for protection (“full respect”) and in terms of the strategies and methods by which protection can be achieved (“all activities”). See also chapter 1, section 1.6.

- NATO’s approach to PoC is consistent with IHL and IHRL and recognizes that all feasible measures must be taken to avoid, minimize and mitigate harm to civilians. The NATO PoC Conceptual Framework includes efforts to be taken to avoid, minimize and mitigate negative effects on the civilian population that may arise from NATO and NATO-led military operations and, when applicable, to protect civilians from conflict-related physical violence or threats of physical violence by other actors. It includes the establishment of a safe and secure environment. The NATO Policy for Protection of can be found [here](#).
- In its PoC mandate DPKO recognizes the responsibility in all parts of a peacekeeping mission (civilian, military and police). Peacekeeping operations are authorized to use all necessary means, up to and including the use of deadly force, to prevent or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians, within capabilities and areas of operations, and without prejudice to the responsibility of the host government. The POC mandate is guided by a set of principles:
 - Protection of civilians is the primary responsibility of governments.
 - Peacekeepers with a mandate to protect civilians have the authority and responsibility to provide protection within their capabilities and areas of deployment where the government is unable or unwilling to protect.
 - The protection of civilians mandate is a whole-of-mission activity, not only a military task, which embodies an active duty to protect.
 - Protection of civilians is done in cooperation with humanitarian actors and with respect for humanitarian principles.



- [The Protection of Civilians in UN PKO](#)
- [Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations \(2009\)](#)

4.6 Civilian Assistance Tasks by the Military

4.6.1 In Extremis

In very rare situations, military forces may be the only actor in a position to provide direct humanitarian assistance to affected people, due to security concerns or other access restrictions that prevent civilian actors from carrying out such operations.

Direct humanitarian assistance operations should only be conducted by military forces as a last resort, and only in extremis, i.e. where needs are immediate and life-threatening. However, in certain circumstances, military actors may have a legal obligation to provide medical care or other types of life-saving assistance. Obligations can depend on whether the military forces belong to the host nation, whether there is an armed conflict, and whether the military forces belong to a party to the conflict. If the forces are peacekeepers, their obligations will be defined by their mandate. If there is no armed conflict and the military forces do not belong to the host nation, obligations will depend on the agreement they have with that state. It is critical to develop plans for such a contingency. The plan should include humanitarian actors' coordination with the relevant military forces, guidance on what the military forces should and should not do, as well as the development of a rapid transition plan to re-establish principled humanitarian action.

Case Study: Civilian Assistance Task by the Military, Iraq, 2014

In August 2014, forces of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) attacked Sinjar in Iraq's Nineveh Governorate, forcing 200,000 civilians from the city and surrounding villages to evacuate. 50,000 Yazidis fled into the Sinjar Mountains with the support of Kurdish forces. Under siege by ISIL, the Yazidis became trapped in the mountains without food, water or medical care.

On 5 August, Iraqi helicopters started delivering water and food to the stranded, however this was not sufficient. Initially US Government ordered its forces to airdrop emergency supplies (food, water and medical supplies) to the displaced. British, French and Australian air forces joined the effort, resulting in a combined 16-aircraft air drop operation over a seven-day period. At the same time, U.S. airstrikes were conducted in the Mount Sinjar area from 9 August to force ISIL forces to withdraw and open a corridor for Kurdish forces to reach the displaced. The siege was declared broken on 13 August. 5,000 to 10,000 people remained in the mountains, for fear of returning to their homes.

4.6.2 Quick Impact Projects

Military actors may seek to establish rapport with civilian actors and the civilian population to support military objectives, e.g. enhance the acceptance of troops, seek intelligence or ensure support of local communities. Humanitarian actors will acknowledge and observe these activities to avoid duplication with their own.

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) are small-scale, low-cost projects that are planned and implemented within a short timeframe. QIPs are funded through the Commander's budget or linked to a stabilization plan supported by coalition governments. The objective of QIPs is to build confidence in the mission, the mandate or the peace process. This can include the involvement of uniformed personnel or components, such as engineers or veterinary surgeons.

The activities are designed to benefit the population and are likely to be infrastructure support, provision of equipment, short-term employment-generating projects, non-recurrent training activities and workshops. They are unlikely to be collaborative with humanitarian actors or line ministries and may therefore be considered *ad hoc* and of little assistance in the longer term.

While close coordination is necessary, where the project have humanitarian or developmental elements, a clear distinction is necessary. Peacekeeping mission QIPs that relate to development and humanitarian assistance cannot be carried out without the consent of the HC. The CMCoord Officer must maintain close dialogue with Civil Affairs Officers and the HC, to ensure that QIPs complement and do not undermine humanitarian efforts.

Civic action, civil affairs, QIPs, reconstruction, and other military activities can be an integral part of a military strategy, for example to win hearts and minds. Similarly, military support may be indispensable in some situations, to deliver life-saving assistance. It is one of the most difficult tasks of a CMCoord Officer to promote an approach that takes into account these realities and safeguards distinction at the same time.

Case Study: International Security Assistance Force QIPs in Afghanistan

QIPs have been promoted in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the NATO-led security mission in Afghanistan, as a positive way to encourage dialogue and acceptance between authorities at the sub-national level and civilians and military actors. In reality, reports have been received of local stakeholders being frustrated by wells built in wrong places or in places where women and girls were put at risk, or where NSAGs targeted or threatened locals using the facility. Other reports suggest that schools were built without the consent of local line ministries or in the absence of teachers. Military planned QIPs are often carried out in total isolation from the NGO and INGO communities who have the comparative advantage and technical background to plan such activities.

Sustainable and relevant QIPs need careful examination and contextual understanding, particularly in contexts of short-term deployments with high troop turnovers and lack of capacity, for project monitoring and evaluation.

Lessons learned have shown that QIPs could have been delivered better and cheaper by humanitarian aid organizations. QIPs must be properly planned and coordinated with humanitarian actors, and should include maintenance, capacity building and technical support so that they do not put locals at risk and waste funding.

Chapter 5: UN-CMCoord Disasters in Peacetime

Building on the concepts described in previous sections, chapter 5 describes how to share information, plan and divide tasks following natural, technological and environmental emergencies in times of peace. In this chapter, the main interlocutors are national and international military. It elaborates on:

- Basic definitions pertaining to natural and technological disasters in peacetime.
- Specific considerations for CMCoord assessments in natural and technological disasters in peacetime.
- Identification of the appropriate CMCoord strategy.
- Establishment of a sustained dialogue with military forces.
- Establishment of mechanisms or platforms for information exchange with military forces and design of coordination arrangements.
- Coordination of Foreign Military Assets (FMA), including Requests for Assistance (RFA).
- Development and dissemination of context-specific guidance for interaction with military forces.
- Critical areas of negotiation and advocacy.
- Other potential CMCoord tasks, e.g. in-country and pre-deployment training and preparedness activities.

This chapter includes multiple case studies and tips drawn from recent operations.

The last section includes considerations on how to adapt approaches in a disaster that occurs in a complex emergency setting.

5.1 Disaster Response Preparedness and Planning

5.1.1 Basic Concepts

The first responders in any emergency are disaster-affected people and their community-based and local organizations. The affected state has the primary responsibility to provide protection and life-saving assistance to people affected by crises. In recent years, the

capacity of government institutions, in particular National Disaster Management Authorities (NDMA), to coordinate and provide assistance to disaster-affected people has increased. They are better engaged in timely and effective response preparedness activities that are undertaken to minimize loss of life, injury and property damage in a disaster, and to ensure that rescue, relief, rehabilitation and other services can be provided following a disaster.

At the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in May 2016, support for localized humanitarian action was a priority outcome, reinforcing trends in humanitarian action where the expectation is that the international community role in response is to complement national capacity. Experience has shown that the added value of international assistance is to boost the speed and volume of life-saving assistance provided in the initial phase of a response (i.e. the first 1-3 months), at a time when national and local partners may be overwhelmed. This is underlined by a role in ensuring the quality of assistance provided, primarily by promoting international standards, applying good practices and advocating for adherence to humanitarian principles.

External support from regional partners and/or the international humanitarian system to respond to disasters takes place only with the consent of the affected state; usually at the request or upon the acceptance of an offer of assistance.

The ability to deliver speed, volume and quality in a response is dependent on linking effective preparedness to coordinated response. This requires the involvement of the international community from the onset of the response, but also during the preparedness phase when there is a need to work strategically with national authorities, community and local civil society partners, and military and police actors, to build a shared understanding of the operating environment and agree on assistance modalities. Evaluations of the response to recent large-scale disasters point to significant opportunities to improve this linkage, principally by placing a greater emphasis on pre-disaster planning, with the involvement of national, regional and international responders (civilian and military), and by doing more to understand risk, vulnerability and need prior to a disaster.

In 2014, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) underlined that humanitarian action, including preparedness, can be designed and implemented in such a way that it helps systems and people to be more resilient – that is, to be less vulnerable to future shocks. The severity of humanitarian consequences of a crisis depends on the vulnerability and coping capacity of the affected people and societies.

A disaster does not necessarily turn into a humanitarian crisis. It depends on how resilient the affected people are and how well the response works.



- [IASC Guidance on Emergency Response Preparedness \(2015\)](#)
- [IASC Common Framework for Preparedness \(2013\)](#)
- [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#)
- [The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction \(UNISDR\) www.unisdr.org](#)

Table 16: Key Concepts and Principles Related to Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning

<input type="checkbox"/>	Place national response front and centre, articulating the role the international humanitarian community plays to complement Government preparedness and response.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create linkages between disaster preparedness and response, and the resilience and development agendas by generating synergy with existing initiatives that governments have committed to, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Place affected people at the centre of disaster risk reduction and response planning, with the aim of reducing the lead time required to reach them in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Effectively use country-specific risk profiles and vulnerability data to inform context-specific and appropriate response in support of national efforts. Coupled with a robust analysis of the immediate needs to be addressed after a disaster and supported by a strong focus on community engagement, this allows for the immediate delivery of assistance while assessments are ongoing.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adapt global guidance to operational planning applicable to both high-risk and medium- to low-risk countries, while transcending the humanitarian and development divide, in line with the WHS outcome on a “new way of working”.

UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) are governments’ first point of contact with the international humanitarian system. OCHA typically supports the HC through its regional offices, country offices or, in some cases, through a Humanitarian Advisory Team (HAT). Increasingly, OCHA also works directly with relevant government counterparts, particularly NDMAs, to provide support to government-led emergency coordination, preparedness activities, and/or capacity building. OCHA also provides support to regional organizations that have humanitarian mandates.

5.1.2 Key Definitions

In 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted the report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and disaster risk terminology ([GA 69/284](#)).

- **Natural Hazards** are naturally occurring physical phenomena caused either by rapid or slow onset events which can be geophysical (earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and volcanic activity), hydrological (avalanches and floods), climatological (extreme temperatures, drought and wildfires), meteorological (cyclones and storms/wave surges) or biological (disease epidemics and insect/animal plagues).
- **Technological or Man-Made Hazards** (complex emergencies/conflict (see chapter 6), displaced populations, industrial accidents and transport accidents) are events that are caused by humans and occur in or close to human settlements. This can include environmental degradation, pollution and accidents.

[The IFRC website contains useful definitions](#)

Vulnerability: The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards.

Preparedness: The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters. Preparedness is based on a sound analysis of disaster risks and good linkages with early warning systems, and includes such activities as contingency planning, stockpiling of equipment and supplies, development of arrangements for coordination, evacuation and public information, and associated training and field exercises. These must be supported by formal institutional, legal and budgetary capacities. The related term “readiness” describes the ability to quickly and appropriately respond when required.

Resilience: The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.

5.1.3 The Role of UN-CMCoord in Disaster in Peacetime

A number of disaster response operations over the last few years have shown that in order for international assistance to successfully complement nationally-led response, the comparative strengths and advantages of many different operational partners involved in disaster preparedness and response should be leveraged, including militaries, the private sector and civil society. CMCoord can provide the critical link between civilian and military actors both during the preparedness phase and within a coordinated response, especially in the following key areas:

- **Capacity Assessment:** In the preparedness phase, it is important to identify the specific roles and capacities of domestic actors, including military and police actors, in order to understand what additional resources from the regional and international level may be required during a large-scale disaster response. Assessing available stockpiles, the logistics needed to mobilize timely assistance, as well as available staffing capacity, can help determine what caseload should be targeted for support by regional or international actors within the first few weeks of the response. In this phase, dialogue and partnership with military and police can facilitate the identification of the unique assets and capabilities that these actors can mobilize to enable the rapid delivery against identified humanitarian needs.
- **Response Modalities:** This phase involves discussing how people identified as being in need and requiring assistance will be reached, highlighting challenges that may emerge in meeting these needs, and agreeing on ways in which these challenges could be overcome. CMCoord efforts in this phase can help highlight the appropriate role that military and police actors can play to overcome identified challenges in areas such as indirect assistance (logistic bottlenecks) or infrastructure support (engineering barriers).
- **Coordination Structure:** In a disaster response that should be ‘as local as possible’, the humanitarian coordination architecture should be flexible, designed on the basis of an assessment process, and tailored to the existing national and sub-national disaster management framework. The possible activation of working groups or platforms, including information management, assessments, cash transfer programming, and humanitarian

civil-military coordination should be carefully evaluated and, if assessed as appropriate in a given context, integrated as part of the broader humanitarian coordination architecture.

Overall, investment in CMCoord in the preparedness phase contributes to building a civil-military coordination engagement that is predictable, practical and operational. It highlights how national and foreign military actors can contribute to boost the speed and volume of life-saving support provided in the initial phase of a response, at a time when national and local partners may be overwhelmed. The ultimate objective is to enhance the operational readiness by clarifying what key military-military and civil-military coordination mechanisms would be activated during a disaster response in line with global and regional frameworks and guidelines. Training, exercises, capacity-building events, or partnership forums provide opportunities to enhance mutual understanding of mandates, approaches and working cultures.

Case Study: Establishment of a Regional Consultative Group

A Regional Consultative Group (RCG) on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination for Asia and the Pacific was established in 2014 to act as a multi-stakeholder, regional forum that brings together humanitarian, civilian and military actors involved in planning for and responding to disasters in the region.

The RCG was formed to discuss response preparedness planning, with a focus on the coordination of operational planning between civilian and military actors in priority countries in the region (Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines). It also serves to facilitate the exchange of information and innovative ideas to enable well-coordinated and needs-based effective disaster response, and to strengthen linkages with other relevant platforms, with emphasis on the relationship with Regional Organizations and the Global Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination.

The RCG is led by Member States in Asia and the Pacific, with a rotating chair system. One of the first recommendations by the RCG was to enhance the predictability, and to develop a common understanding, of the civil-military coordination mechanisms and their respective functions during a response. Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination in Emergencies: Towards a Predictable Model outlines key civil-military coordination mechanisms and how these are activated during disaster response in Asia and the Pacific in line with global and regional frameworks and guidance.



[Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination in Emergencies: Towards a Predictable Model \(2017\)](#)

5.1.4 UN-CMCoord Tasks in Disaster in Peacetime

5.1.4.1 Establish and Sustain Dialogue with Military and Other Armed Actors

Dialogue is the foundation of civil-military coordination. The CMCoord Officer must act as the lead facilitator of this vital dialogue that should be inclusive of all the relevant stakeholders identified during the assessment process. Through this dialogue, there will always be the possibility of reaching an agreed solution to challenges that may arise during the preparedness or the response phase of large-scale disaster response operations.

5.1.4.2 Mechanisms and Platforms for Information Exchange and Interaction

There are generally no limitations on what information can be shared, as far as it pertains to the response. Militaries have significantly increased the level and type of information that they can share in disaster response, operating as much as possible in an unclassified environment. The following are some examples of the most relevant types of information that may, at the discretion of the relevant organization or cluster, be shared between humanitarian and military actors:

- Presence, capabilities and assets of military forces, including the time and scale of their “full operating capability” and the end of deployment.
- Requirements of military support to humanitarian assistance.
- Relief activities undertaken by the military and assessment results.
- Humanitarian assessment data, strategic response plans and gaps, ongoing humanitarian activities and coordination structures.
- Status of main supply routes and key infrastructures.
- Population movements or potential security threats resulting from the disaster.

It is important for the CMCoord Officer to define what type of information can be shared and if there are any subjects that are not addressed by either humanitarian, military or police actors. Deployment to a disaster response operation with a clear and shared understanding of what humanitarian and military actors agree to talk about will help the CMCoord Officer to manage expectations.

5.1.4.3 Negotiations in Critical Areas of Interaction

As described in chapter 3, section 3.7.2, there are three humanitarian assistance areas that military forces can support during disaster response operations:

- Direct Assistance
- Indirect Assistance
- Infrastructure Support

The CMCoord Officer may be requested to assist in negotiations related to these three categories to reach an understanding and agreement with military and police actors on where they can add the best value in support of humanitarian operations. Considering the distinctive ability of military forces to deploy rapidly and at scale in the first few hours of a large-scale disaster and their unique capabilities, military forces, and foreign military assets in particular, will most likely add best value in indirect assistance and infrastructure support.

5.1.4.4 Development and Dissemination of Context-Specific Guidance

CMCoord Officers are increasingly requested to operate in multifaceted and unique contexts where the traditional distinction between a 'pure' natural or technological disaster in a peacetime setting and a complex emergency is no longer the norm. This trend has prompted the humanitarian community to increasingly opt for the development of country- or context-specific UN-CMCoord guidance. Such guidance is tailored to the context of a specific disaster and operationalization of humanitarian principles and existing global UN-CMCoord Guidelines. It contains guidance on how to ensure a consistent and coherent approach to interaction by the humanitarian community with military actors; highlights CMCoord as a shared responsibility, critical at the operational level; and emphasizes CMCoord action that benefits civilian, humanitarian and military actors, as well as the affected people receiving assistance.

5.1.4.5 Observe the Activity of Military Forces and Other Armed Actors to Ensure Distinction

The CMCoord Officer should observe military relief activities from two angles: aid effectiveness and principled humanitarian action. CMCoord promotes the complementarity of military activities with the overall humanitarian response, avoiding duplication and competition. Particular attention should be paid to the drawdown of FMA, to ensure a smooth transition from military support and direct assistance activities to civilian actors. The CMCoord Officer can provide practical advice on the "do no harm" approach (see chapter 1, section 1.4.3) and exit strategies, including potentially negative long-term effects. He/she can also refer military units to specific subject-matter actors, such as gender and protection advisors.

5.2 UN-CMCoord Assessment

As outlined in chapter 3, section 3.3, the CMCoord deployment or assignment starts with a CMCoord assessment. If OCHA is present in-country, the CMCoord assessment is ideally conducted in the preparedness phase and regularly updated. If no CMCoord assessment is available, it starts at pre-deployment with the establishment of contacts at the global level and analysis of secondary data.

5.2.1 Assess and Define the Operating Environment

As a first step, the CMCoord Officer will assess and define the operating environment, describing how the context can impact on the CMCoord function. This step should be conducted as part of CMCoord efforts in the preparedness phase.

Case Study: Assessing the Environment, Nepal Earthquake, 2015

In the Nepal earthquake response, the assessment of the operating environment started well before the CMCoord deployment, with the analysis of secondary data (disaster management framework, response preparedness plans, logistic capacity assessment) available at the national, regional and international level. Following the deployment of CMCoord Officers as part of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC), primary data was then collected to better define the operating environment. Face-to-face consultations took place with key stakeholders (Government of Nepal, Nepal Military, Armed Police, Humanitarian Coordinator, Clusters) and field visits were conducted to gain a first-hand understanding of the humanitarian-military interface in critical areas

of the response. The use of primary data allowed for the collection of CMCoord-specific and needs-based data. It also allowed to validate and confirm the authenticity and reliability of the data against specific parameters.

5.2.2 Identify Actors, Missions and Their Mandates

As a second step, the CMCoord Officer will identify relevant actors and stakeholders, their missions, mandates and objectives, and analyze civil-military relations. The focus should be on the identification of civilian and military and other armed actors that can have an impact on or influence CMCoord dialogue and interaction. A detailed understanding of the various actors' missions and mandates, as well as their engagement in CMCoord, is essential. When analyzing civil-military relations, it is important to identify potential issues that need to be addressed to establish and sustain an effective CMCoord strategy and action plan. Following the mapping of the actors and understanding of their relations, the CMCoord Officer should build a CMCoord Stakeholder Engagement Matrix. See chapter 3, Table 8.

Tips

- At a minimum, identify civilian agencies that have a mandate for emergency relief, assistance delivery and reconstruction.
- Pay special attention to the role of domestic military in the provision of emergency relief and to the missions and mandates of foreign military forces. Consider other armed actors (e.g. non-state armed groups).
- While CMCoord focuses on the interaction between international civilian and military actors, also consider and liaise closely with foreign police forces, including the UN Police (UNPOL).

5.2.3 Analysis of Civil-Military Relations

The CMCoord Officer should then assess coordination mechanisms, structures and venues. This information is essential to re-visit or establish new and appropriate CMCoord coordination forums, structures and mechanisms.

Civil-military coordination arrangements should be established at the strategic, operational and tactical level in a consistent manner.

As outlined in chapter 3, section 3.4, the applicable CMCoord strategy is always context-dependent.



Coordination must always strive to protect and promote humanitarian space and principles.

5.2.3.1 Liaison Arrangements

The adopted CMCoord strategy will inform the coordination and liaison arrangements to be established at the operational level. In response to disasters in peacetime, strategies based on cooperation between humanitarian and military actors might be deemed appropriate. In this case, at the operational level, co-locating humanitarian and military actors in one coordination facility allows for real-time information sharing, dialogue on task division and coordination of operational planning.

There may be cases where the applicable CMCoord strategy is one of cooperation, and where at the operational level, the liaison arrangement of co-location may not be appropriate to the context and dynamics on the ground. In such cases, other operational approaches should be explored and possibly adopted, such as "Liaison Exchange" or "Liaison Meeting".

Case Study: Liaison Exchange During Tropical Cyclone Winston, Fiji, 2016

Given the unique context of the Pacific and the specific character of missions and mandates of actors involved in the Tropical Cyclone Winston response operation, the CMCoord strategy of "cooperation" and the "liaison exchange (secondment)" approach were deemed appropriate. Two CMCoord Officers were seconded to the Future Operations Unit in the NDMO to facilitate information sharing, support task division and enable the coordination of operational planning between humanitarian and military actors involved in the response. The CMCoord strategy and liaison approach put in place were geared towards establishing and sustaining essential dialogue throughout the response operation. In addition, a number of briefings and information sharing sessions were held with the senior leadership of the national military as well as the foreign military forces present on the ground. This contributed to building relationships anchored on mutual respect and trust of each other's roles and responsibilities.

5.2.3.1.1 Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Concept

When a strategy of cooperation is applicable in the context of a large-scale disaster and it is appropriate to co-locate humanitarian and military actors, the Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Concept (HuMOCC) can provide a predictable humanitarian-military coordination model.

Case Study: From JOTC to HuMOCC, Haiti Earthquake, 2010

A Joint Operations and Tasking Centre (JOTC) was established in Haiti 12 days after the earthquake in January 2010 to streamline requests for military assistance (RFA). All RFA had to be channelled through the JOTC and cluster leads were responsible for certifying them and to ensure that available FMA were used to support humanitarian priorities. Planning was strengthened by a 72-hour lead-time for RFA.

The JOTC concept was further refined into a coordination model that can be rolled out in disaster response operations, flexible enough to allow for modifications and tailoring to the specific operating environment. It was initially referred to as the Civil-Military Coordination Centre (CMCC) and was later renamed Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Concept (HuMOCC) to highlight the humanitarian character of the coordination model.

The CMCoord assessment will reveal whether the national/sub-national disaster management framework already includes procedures and platforms for information sharing, task division and coordination of operational planning between military and humanitarian actors. Where these arrangements are not already in place, the HuMOCC can provide a concept to be contextualised by the NDMA to the specific disaster management framework. The objective is to facilitate the interface between humanitarian and military actors in the context of large-scale disaster response operations.

Case Study: The HuMOCC in the Nepal Earthquake Response, 2015

The CMCoord assessment conducted by the CMCoord Officers deployed as part of the UNDAC Team identified that the Government of Nepal had established dedicated coordination and liaison arrangements for humanitarian-to-humanitarian interface (National Emergency Operation Center, On-site Operations Coordination Center, HCT, Clusters), as well as for military-to-military interaction (Multinational Military Coordination Center). However, there were no specific measures in place to facilitate humanitarian-military dialogue and interaction. As a result of the CMCoord assessment findings, the Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Concept (HuMOCC) was acknowledged by the Ministry of Home Affairs as a model that could provide a predictable humanitarian-military-police coordination interface.

Table 17: The HuMOCC Aims to Deliver the Following Services

<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide a predictable and effective coordination model on the ground.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid the establishment of ad-hoc and/or intermediate civil-military coordination platforms that create duplication and confusion.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilitate access to assessment results, including priorities, needs, and requirements, including for the use of military assets.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contribute to the establishment of a needs-based system to match requirements with appropriate military assets.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advise, as timely as possible, on appropriate FMA to be deployed to the affected state and on priority locations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contribute to the creation of a common situational awareness among all actors, to facilitate a coherent and systematic response to the disaster.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilitate effective and consistent information sharing between humanitarian and military actors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raise awareness of the CMCoord function among humanitarian organizations and military actors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhance mutual understanding of operations and requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop an exit strategy for drawdown of military assets. This includes planning for the transition from military to civilian assets, as well as realistic indicators and benchmarks, and evaluation criteria.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide an adequate number and geographic coverage of trained CMCoord Officers. This includes adequate language skills and technical knowledge.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advocate for institutionalized pre-disaster training and doctrine development among military forces deployed in disaster response. If time permits, this can include CMCoord orientations and briefings.

5.2.3.2 Humanitarian-Military Coordination during Health Operations

Emergency Medical Teams, or EMTs, are groups of health professionals and supporting staff that provide direct clinical care to populations affected by disasters or outbreaks. Following sudden-onset disasters, EMTs are often deployed as surge capacity to support the existing local health infrastructure and to provide emergency care to patients with traumatic injuries and other life-threatening conditions. They include governmental (both civilian and military) and non-governmental teams and can be sub-classified as either national or international, dependent on the area of response.

Military actors can support EMTs when they are deployed. A few examples of military support to civilian EMTs include:

- Key logistic support to sustain the EMTs, including transport.
- Facilitation of medical evacuations and extraction of casualties.
- Technical capability to support satellite and other imagery.
- Foreign military assets.

See also chapter 2, section 2.1.



[EMT website](#)

5.2.4 Need, Availability and Impact of Foreign Military Assets

It is important to distinguish between the availability of FMA and the decision to use FMA in a specific operating environment. Ideally, civilian and military actors will engage in the preparedness phase to discuss and coordinate their operational planning to enable a timely, effective and appropriate response. As the lead on emergency response, the government of an affected state, usually through its National Disaster Management Authority, decides whether or not it will accept foreign military forces on its territory. The in-country humanitarian lead will likely consult with the government on whether FMA can be used to support humanitarian response operations and if any national military assets are available to support the international humanitarian response. Foreign military forces are increasingly involved in large-scale disaster response operations. The use of FMA in support of humanitarian operations is an option that should always complement existing relief mechanisms. Specific requirements for FMA should define the period of time they are needed and respond to an identified and acknowledged humanitarian gap.

Foreign military capacities can fill response gaps in the following critical areas of disaster response, especially during the first few days of a disaster:

- Logistics (transport, air and seaport management, warehousing, commercial transport information).
- Engineering to restore critical infrastructure and clear main supply routes.

- Telecommunications (e.g. satellite-based voice and data).
- Information exchange (assessment information, priorities in services and locations, potential gaps within estimated timeframes).
- Health (MEDEVAC, specific capacity).



The role of the CMCoord Officer is to facilitate the timely and appropriate use of FMA, facilitating knowledge and understanding of humanitarian priorities and ensuring that FMA meet actual humanitarian gaps. While FMA can fill a critical gap at the onset of a natural or technological disaster, they might draw down long before the humanitarian response ends. The humanitarian community should therefore avoid over-reliance on FMA. While the usual end state of the military mission is a situation in which civilian capabilities and capacities can take over, the aim of humanitarian assistance is to restore normalcy within affected communities. Humanitarian actors must plan for the projected timeframe of the relief operation, independent of military support which is temporary in nature. See also chapter 3, section 3.2.5, Recommended Practices for Effective Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination of FMA in Natural and Man-Made Disasters.

Case Study: The Coordination of FMA in Bangladesh

Foreign military assistance is generally based on existing agreements between Bangladesh and other Member States, or provided multilaterally. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for communicating the need for foreign military assistance to the international community. The availability and use of FMA is determined by government agencies and the clusters, in coordination with the Prime Minister and other government entities, such as the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC). When FMA are requested or accepted, a joint and combined operation, or a multinational force (MNF) structure is established.

A Multinational Military Coordination Center (MNMCC) may be activated in disaster contexts where a significant number of FMA are deployed. The MNMCC provides a common situational awareness between the Bangladesh Armed Forces and assisting foreign militaries, facilitates information sharing, and ensures the efficient use of military support.

5.2.4.1 The Request for Assistance Process

When the use of military assets, foreign or domestic, is considered to be timely and appropriate in large-scale disaster response operations, one of the CMCoord Officer's key tasks is to facilitate the planning and implementation of a Request for Assistance (RFA) process. The RFA process helps humanitarian actors prioritize requests for military assets and allows military forces to plan accordingly.

Requests for military assets by humanitarian organizations are first reviewed by clusters and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms so that they can be validated and prioritized against humanitarian priorities agreed with the government/NDMA. Once RFA are validated, they become part of the civil-military dialogue and interface the NDMA has established, to determine that there are no comparable civilian alternatives and that only military assets can meet a specific critical humanitarian need. Experience from recent large-scale disaster response operations indicates that most RFA that can be timely and effectively met by military assets are primarily for indirect assistance and infrastructure support, such as engineering, transport and airlift capacity.

Some thematic clusters, if activated, for example the Logistics Cluster or Emergency Telecommunications Cluster, may also establish specific coordination mechanisms for specialized FMA, e.g. an Aviation Coordination Cell to coordinate military air assets as part of a wider pool of commercial or humanitarian air assets.

The Logistics Cluster and the military are specifically essential in the following areas:

- Use of military assets to assist in relief delivery.
- Use / exchange of transport assets (aircraft / helicopters, trucks, rail).
- Provision of services and equipment (fuel for aircraft, vehicles or bulldozers, maintenance of assets and equipment).
- Infrastructure Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), such as rehabilitation of roads or bridges.
- Safety and evacuation (security / medical evacuation, shared medical facilities and services).
- Training and exercises prior to a humanitarian emergency.
- Contingency planning for military response activities.

5.2.4.2 Operational Guidance

After assessing the need and availability of FMA, it is important to analyze the possible impact on humanitarian organizations using these assets. The use of FMA by humanitarian organizations in a specific operating environment can have a negative impact on both affected people and aid workers if these are perceived as having too close a relation with the military. Issues related to safety and security, respect for and promotion of humanitarian principles, and unimpeded humanitarian access to populations receiving assistance should be mindfully considered. Balance must be found between the urgency

of the FMA needs and the longer-term ability of the humanitarian community to operate within the country or emergency. Despite the requirement for coordination, the CMCoord Officer must ensure that the interaction with military actors does not compromise the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and operational independence. Military actors should also be made aware that humanitarian assistance must be civilian in character and be provided on the basis of needs alone. It is useful to remind responding military actors that needs are assessed on humanitarian criteria and should not be based on political considerations or for media attention. See also chapter 3, Table 5.

5.3 Information Management in Disasters in Peacetime

Managing information during a humanitarian emergency is a crucial part of any operation. Particularly in large-scale disasters, the humanitarian community recognizes the importance of gathering reliable data on the locations of affected people, what they urgently need, who is best placed to assist them, and the value of this information for effective and timely humanitarian assistance.

A strong information management network in disasters requires processes to collect, analyze and share information about the situation among the various stakeholders, and a coordination system that runs efficiently. The network includes people affected by the emergency, as well as relief organizations, affected and assisting state governments, military and police actors.

One of the key tasks of the CMCoord Officer is to liaise with the Information Management Unit in the OCHA office or with the OSOCC to identify available and appropriate tools to facilitate information sharing and create a joint situational awareness between humanitarian and military actors. Several information products, such as 3/4Ws, maps, visuals and infographics can be used to share CMCoord information and ensure that relevant military activities and locations are documented.

5.3.1 Information Sharing Tools

One of the key tools that the CMCoord Officer can use as part of the assessment process to facilitate the mapping of actors, missions and mandates relevant for the CMCoord function is the CMCoord stakeholders' contact database. See also chapter 3, Table 7.

Table 18: Tips for Information Sharing

- ❑ Humanitarian operational information is shared openly online. Make military counterparts aware of open sources (humanitarianinfo.org, reliefweb.int, Humanitarian Kiosk app, Humanitarian ID).
- ❑ Keep the humanitarian community up to date: Provide short CMCoord briefings in HCT, inter-cluster coordination and relevant cluster coordination meetings. Convene regular “open-door” CMCoord network meetings.
- ❑ Create a CMCoord page on the humanitarianinfo.org domain. Share contact details and the time, place and minutes of meetings.
- ❑ Keep contacts up to date. Brief bilaterally as required.
- ❑ Map available FMA; seek assistance from IM colleagues in the country or regional offices.
- ❑ Make agreements for unclassified e-mail communication, 24/7 availability and standard communication with military counterparts.

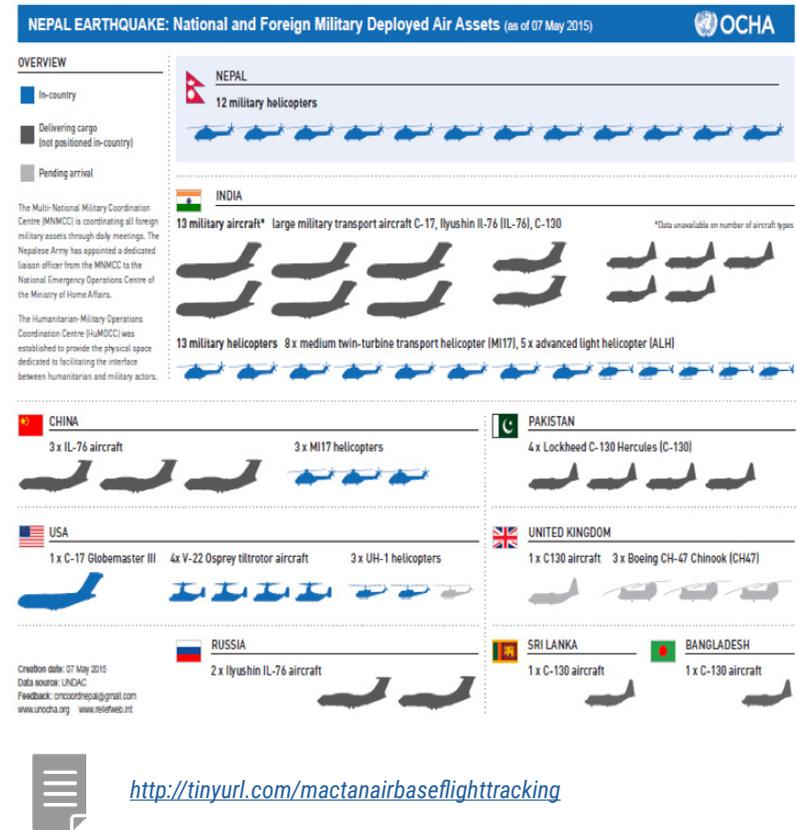
Good Practice: A Tool for Tracking FMA

In response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, the Armed Forces of the Philippines used a simple Google Sheet to plan, organize and track relief flights into disaster-affected areas. The virtual collaboration on flight data was extended to sea assets at a later stage.

The data was shared publicly online and could be used by all stakeholders. The matrix was displayed on a screen in the sub-national operation centres.

CMCoord Officers followed this example of sharing information on a collaborative platform to share and collect data on the use of FMA. This allowed real-time communication, ensuring all stakeholders had access, and significantly reduced e-mail communication. The information sharing platform can easily be put in place from anywhere in the world, using a Gmail account. It can be put at the disposal of the field operation or managed from the headquarters for collecting, reviewing, and updating FMA data. With the consent of the host nation, a virtual tracking system can be expanded to national military forces. OCHA’s CMCS can also support.

Figure 7: OCHA Infographic: National and Foreign Military Assets – Nepal Earthquake



5.3.2 Advocacy and Advisory Role

In disaster response operations, it is the responsibility of the RC/HC to identify a coherent and consistent humanitarian approach to civil-military interaction and the use of FMA to support humanitarian priorities. The OCHA office and the CMCoord Officer can support the RC/HC and HCT to identify opportunities and challenges and develop a common strategy and position.

Military assets are increasingly deployed through bilateral agreements between affected and assisting states. The advocacy and advisory role of CMCoord will primarily focus on the following:

DISASTERS IN PEACE TIME

- **“Pull” rather than “push” FMA:** Advocate with assisting governments to deploy FMA that are based on identified needs and actually requested, as opposed to what is politically most attractive. This should happen at the global, regional and country levels, and ideally in the preparedness phase.
- **Aid effectiveness:** Liaise with Commanders of deployed FMA and advocate for their participation in humanitarian coordination, to ensure that military actors complement the civilian effort and support humanitarian priorities. This could be done through the implemented humanitarian-military coordination concept or by invitation to attend HCT or inter-cluster coordination meetings.
- **Principled humanitarian action:** Observe military activities and provide advice on humanitarian principles, priorities and standards, including the “do no harm” concept.
- **Coherence:** Promote a coherent and consistent approach within the humanitarian community with regard to interaction with the military and the proper use of FMA.

See also chapter 4, Table 15, Tips for Establishing Contact and Dialoguing with the Military and Other Armed Actors.

5.4 First Days of Response to a Disaster in Peacetime

Humanitarian actors have several surge and rapid response mechanisms to ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided as quickly as possible in large-scale disasters. The first 48 to 72 hours are the most critical in terms of search and rescue operations, medical treatment and/or evacuation and other life-saving measures. The response largely relies on the capacity available on the ground. The ability to respond quickly is crucial. It is equally important to have a clear transition and exit strategy to end external assistance as soon as the sub-national systems are restored to normalcy.



What is the role of military actors within that time frame? The relief phase ranges from a couple of weeks to several months, depending on the scale of destruction, access, and a variety of other factors. The military can play a crucial role given its ability to mobilize quickly – especially in terms of logistics, engineering and transport assets.



As observed in the past, FMA that deploy to a disaster tend to draw down or redeploy from the scene before the relief phase is over, and sometimes on very short notice. In anticipation of this reality, the CMCoord Officer needs to ensure that military commanders clearly communicate the end of their deployment, to make sure that handover plans are in place for the transition from military support to civilian capacities.

5.4.1 United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination

UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams can deploy at short notice (12/48 hours) to sudden-onset emergencies anywhere in the world to establish or support a coordination mechanism for international response. The deployment of UNDAC teams may be requested by the government of an affected state or by the RC/HC.

UNDAC teams support cross-sectoral emergency assessment, coordination of relief, and information management. They work under the authority of the RC/HC. In situations where there is no UN presence, the UNDAC team may work in direct support of the government of an affected country.

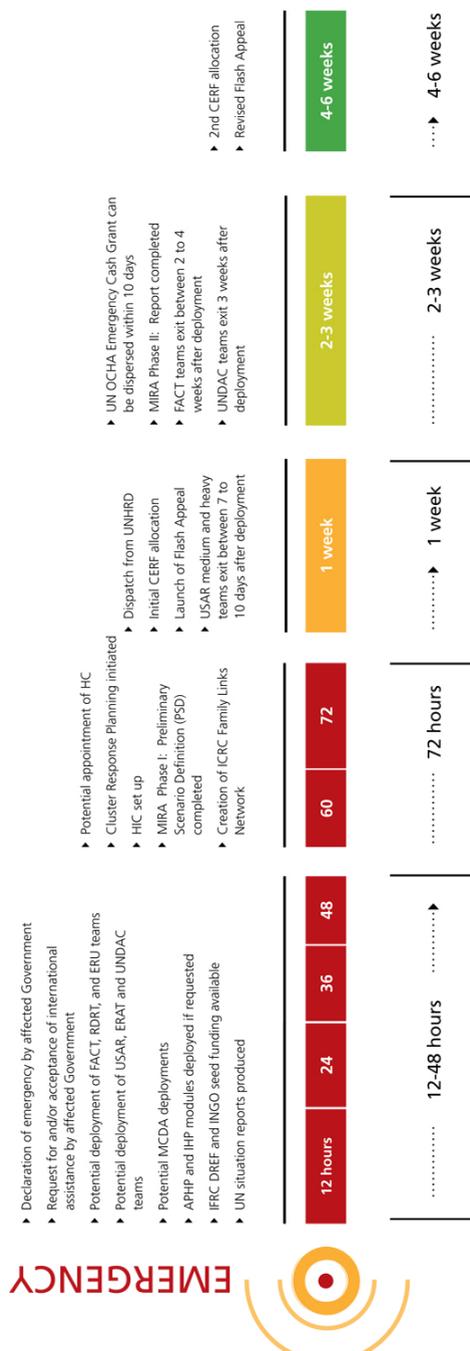
If a CMCoord Officer is already on the ground before the UNDAC team arrives, contact should be initiated, preferably prior to deployment, with the CMCoord focal point within the UNDAC team, if there is one. Even if military forces are not involved in the relief effort, they may have a significant impact on the operation.

If there is military involvement in the disaster response, a CMCoord specialist will generally be integrated in the UNDAC team. This is especially the case where there is no pre-existing OCHA presence. As part of the UNDAC induction training, UNDAC members are made aware of how to appropriately and effectively interact with military forces on the ground. They also get basic training in how to facilitate the essential dialogue between humanitarian and military actors, and establish a civil-military coordination mechanism that enhances the disaster response by facilitating information sharing, task division and, when appropriate, coordination of operational planning.



[UNDAC Handbook \(2018\)](#)

Figure 8: OCHA Activities Within the First 48 Hours of an Emergency



Source: UNDAC

5.4.2 On-Site Operations Coordination Center

When required, an UNDAC team may establish and run an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) and a Reception and Departure Centre (RDC) to act as a link between international responders and national authorities. The OSOCC / RDC facilitates coordination of international response and provides a platform for coordination and information sharing.

Subject to the scale of the emergency and military involvement, OCHA may deploy dedicated CMCoord Officers as part of the UNDAC team to coordinate humanitarian civil-military coordination activities within the OSOCC and/or sub-OSOCCs. Should the number of actors and identified needs increase significantly, a shift from the OSOCC-based approach to the planning and implementation of a dedicated Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Concept (HuMOCC) may be necessary. The HuMOCC, comprising humanitarian and military representatives, will remain linked to the OSOCC and/or sub-OSOCCs.



[OSOCC Guidelines \(2018\)](#)

[OSOCC Awareness eCourse Module 1](#)

[OSOCC Awareness eCourse Module 2](#)

[OSOCC Awareness eCourse Module 3](#)

Table 19: Tips for Disasters in Peacetime

<input type="checkbox"/>	Conduct a rapid and continuing assessment of military actors who are already involved / deployed / about to deploy to the affected area/country. Ensure that their mandate, mission and lines of command and control are known and the implications are understood by the HCT.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor the civil-military environment in terms of the mission, size and capability of military actors, geographic areas they cover, the likely duration of their operation, liaison arrangements and key contacts. Be ready to advise.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a civil-military coordination mechanism that is appropriate to the operational environment if not yet in existence. Ensure that humanitarian organizations and military can share information, agree on tasks and, as appropriate, plan jointly. If required, this mechanism can include an RFA process to prioritize FMA requests to support humanitarian priorities as certified by cluster leads.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Observe and analyze the need for longer-term CMCoord capacity. Validate key tasks and deliverables with other Humanitarian Affairs / CMCoord Officers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organize key military contacts, identifying who is doing what, where and (until) when (4W). This includes liaison officers, commanders, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) officers, etc. Update regularly. Share with relevant actors (e.g. cluster coordinators) and, as appropriate, with government entities (e.g. disaster/emergency management authorities, ministries and armed forces).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Remember that the overarching deliverable of the CMCoord function is to facilitate the right assistance to the right people at the right time in the most appropriate way.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a CMCoord strategy in conjunction with the broader humanitarian coordination strategy. CMCoord is and will always be a subset of the broader humanitarian coordination in an emergency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Take the initiative to identify and observe on-going and potential critical issues on the use of FMA and participation of military representatives in relevant clusters. Proactively advise clusters on CMCoord-related issues.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information sharing between humanitarian and military actors should contribute to having a common situational awareness as the response operation progresses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare a prioritized list of operational CMCoord issues, including resolved, outstanding, and anticipated ones. Indicate factors that helped or hindered in resolving these problems and/or factors that might trigger future questions. Ensure that CMCS is informed of these issues.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set up a handover process with the longer-term OCHA presence or the HC office to ensure continuity of the CMCoord function.

5.5 Disasters in Complex Emergencies

The approaches to disasters in peacetime and complex emergencies respectively, presented in Chapters 5 and 6, are default cases. Each context is different and requires a unique approach, often using elements from both approaches. The approach must also be flexible enough to allow for adaptation to changing environments.

There are several scenarios in which a disaster could happen in a complex emergency environment. The CMCoord strategy would lean towards the complex emergency approach where national or international military forces are involved in combat or counter-insurgency, or have other mandates that might affect the perception of their assistance activities as impartial.

Infrastructure damage, population movements and other consequences of disasters, in addition to frustration with the crisis management, may result in a deterioration of the security situation, increase in crime, civil unrest or conflict. Existing conflict-drivers might be fuelled or re-enforced and turn violent. Military forces might take over security tasks.

Case Study: Haiti Cooperation and Co-existence

Country-specific Civil-Military Coordination Guidelines were developed in 2013, to acknowledge the need for humanitarian personnel and military and police actors to operate effectively within this unique operating environment. This followed a detailed CMCoord assessment process, with a view to: (i) establish agreed principles and practices for constructive civil-military relations in Haiti, (ii) avoid duplication of tasks, and (iii) promote and strengthen the coordination of activities.

The Haiti Country-Specific Civil-Military Coordination Guidelines address CMCoord in natural disasters in a highly insecure environment. They make reference to the principles outlined in the Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (Oslo Guidelines) and are based on the existing international framework and practices for CMCoord. According to the Guidelines, the “strategy of cooperation” is applicable to Haiti, since the country embodies the context of a natural disaster in a peacetime setting. However, the Guidelines also state that when and if the public security situation deteriorates, albeit being a disaster in a peacetime setting, civil-military coordination in Haiti shall be guided by a “strategy of coexistence.” In this approach, coordination with the military is characterized by circumstances where there are no common goals to pursue and actors merely operate side by side. Therefore, civil-military coordination will focus on minimizing competition and conflict in order to enable the different actors to work in the same geographical area, with minimum disruption to each other’s activities.

According to the Guidelines, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), under the leadership of the RC/HC, shall make a situation-specific determination on the strategy to be adopted to guide interaction between humanitarian and military and police actors, should a change in the operational environment occur.

Chapter 6: UN-CMCoord in Complex Emergencies

Chapter 6 provides concrete examples and considerations on how to perform the CMCoord function in complex emergencies, including during international and non-international armed conflicts and other situations of violence. These contexts, constantly evolving and often beset with sensitivities, require balance between thorough, careful and principled consideration of CMCoord tasks and quick decision-making, in order to be effective in a fast tempo situation.

This chapter looks at:

- Basic definitions of complex emergencies, armed conflict and other situations of violence, and associated legal frameworks.
- Specific considerations for CMCoord assessments in complex emergencies.
- Identification of the appropriate CMCoord strategy.
- Establishment of a sustained dialogue with military forces and other armed actors.
- Establishment of mechanisms or platforms for information exchange with military forces and other armed actors and design of coordination arrangements.
- Considerations for the use of foreign military assets (FMA) in complex emergencies.
- Development and dissemination of context-specific guidance for interaction with military forces.
- Critical areas of negotiation and advocacy.
- Cross-cutting areas in complex emergencies that CMCoord can enable, especially the role of the CMCoord Officer in humanitarian access, protection of civilians (PoC), and security.

The chapter includes multiple case studies and tips drawn from recent operations.

6.1 Assessing the Operating Environment

A thorough understanding of the operating environment will help the CMCoord Officer perform his/her role, including:

- Maintaining a principled approach to humanitarian action in complex emergencies. Short-term gains through compromises of humanitarian principles that were deemed acceptable at one time may appear in a different light as dynamics and armed actors change, with a long-term negative impact on perception, acceptance, access and security for the entire humanitarian community.
- Balancing out engagement with parties to conflict. Engaging with one party can jeopardize contact with others and negatively impact perception and compromise principled humanitarian action.
- Ensuring that the rationale and principles behind engagement with all parties are understood and accepted by all conflicting parties and humanitarian actors.
- Sustaining engagement when the humanitarian situation deteriorates, often in relation to the actions of armed actors who are also CMCoord interlocutors. Military staff and other armed actors will, as a matter of course, prioritize the conduct of military operations and CMCoord Officers will find it more difficult to be heard and to preserve the relationship while raising sensitive issues. CMCoord Officers will need to maintain strong professional contacts with armed actors, while also raising issues related to their negative impact on the humanitarian situation.

The outcomes of the CMCoord assessment will inform the CMCoord strategy and help determine the appropriate liaison approach and mechanisms. It follows the same process outlined in chapters 3 and 5. However, in complex emergencies the collection and analysis of relevant information to conduct an assessment may be limited or particularly sensitive with regard to military and other armed actors. Open source information is available through academia and think tanks conducting conflict analysis and by local civil society, humanitarian and human rights NGOs, and others engaging with military forces and other armed actors.



Engagement with armed actors may require visiting forward areas where they are located, including areas of hostilities or facilities which can be legitimate military targets during conflict. CMCoord Officers should be aware of security concerns and cognizant of mitigation measures for such risks.

6.1.1 Basic Definitions Around Complex Emergencies

6.1.1.1 Complex Emergency

The IASC has **defined** a Complex Emergency as a humanitarian crisis:

- Which occurs in a country, region, or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from civil conflict and/or foreign aggression.
- Which requires an international response which goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency.
- Where the IASC assesses that it requires intensive and extensive political and management coordination.

A complex emergency has a **number of characteristics** including:

- Large numbers of civilian casualties, populations who are besieged or displaced quickly and in large numbers, human suffering of major proportion. There is a requirement for massive humanitarian assistance but it is seriously impeded, delayed, or prevented because of political or conflict-related constraints.
- High security risks for relief workers attempting to provide humanitarian assistance.
- Situations that require a high degree of external political support to enable humanitarian response, including negotiated access to affected populations.
- International and cross-border dimensions that require intervention by a range of participants beyond a single national authority. Interventions are characterized by political differences and may require political mediation and coordination.

6.1.1.2 Armed Conflict

IHL (commonly referred to by military forces and other armed actors as the Law of Armed Conflict or LOAC) distinguishes between two main categories of armed conflict: international armed conflicts and non-international armed conflicts.

- International Armed Conflict (IAC) involves two or more states that resort to armed force against each other and/or where one state occupies another state.
- Non-international armed conflict (NIAC) occurs when one or more organized non-state armed group (NSAG) is/are engaged in hostilities against governmental forces or against one or more other NSAGs. The hostilities must reach a minimum level of intensity and the armed groups must have a sufficient level of organization.

In any armed conflict, IHL, IHRL and domestic law will apply in parallel. An IAC and a NIAC can take place simultaneously in the same geographical area and one actor can be part of an IAC and a NIAC at the same time.

6.1.1.3 Other Situations of Violence

Situations that do not amount to armed conflict will typically involve police, military or paramilitary forces, other security forces or individual groups engaged in lower intensity activities such as riots, demonstrations and/or sporadic acts of violence. Such situations of violence can also be referred to as Internal Disturbances and Tensions (IDTs). In other situations of violence IHRL, ICL and domestic law apply, but IHL does not.

For more information on the respective legal frameworks see chapter 1, section 1.2 and chapter 4 section 4.1.



- [HPN The Humanitarian Consequences of Violence in Central America \(2017\)](#)
- [ALNAP/ODI Humanitarian Interventions in Situation of Urban Violence \(2014\)](#)

6.1.1.4 Other Frameworks

During an assessment CMCoord Officers should strive to identify specific normative and moral frameworks or codes of conduct that the military and other armed actors may recognize or respect and that can be utilized in CMCoord engagements. In some contexts, UN officials have assisted in the formulation and promulgation of such guidance by civilian or religious authorities. This could include advocating with military forces and other armed actors for training, procedures and orders, as well as SOPs and ROE that promote adherence to IHL, respect for humanitarian principles and humanitarian activities, and the protection of civilians.

Case Study: Engagement with Religious Leaders, Iraq 2015

In February 2015, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the spiritual leader of Iraq's Shia community, issued a fatwa entitled "Advice and Guidance to the Fighters on the Battlefield" that contained messages on the conduct of combatants, especially on the protection of civilians and civilian harm mitigation. This fatwa was reinforced on numerous occasions by Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani through other statements during the battle for Mosul.

Furthermore, the Iraqi Prime Minister, as Commander in Chief of the Iraqi Armed Forces, also provided guidance to the armed forces, reinforced by public statements in the media that protection of civilians was a key objective of the operation and that tactics used were to ensure this.

These messages from the leader of the country and a highly respected religious leader were widely disseminated by Iraqi forces through their chains of command and were also used by humanitarians to support their own advocacy efforts with military forces and other armed actors, for better protection of civilians during the military operation.

6.2 Coordination Elements in Complex Emergencies

6.2.1 Information Sharing

When humanitarian actors apply a coexistence strategy (see chapter 3, section 3.4), a critical minimum of dialogue is still required and should be established. A key criterion for information sharing is that it does not put civilians at additional risk or give tactical advantage to a party. Possible information exchange includes:

- Information to de-conflict humanitarian and military operations.
- General security information, as long as information provided by humanitarian actors does not grant any armed actor a tactical advantage.
- Information on infrastructure, population movements and humanitarian needs that may be available from military and other armed actors. Relief activities of military actors, such as CIMIC, Civil Affairs, or QIPs, to avoid duplication with humanitarian activities (see chapter 4, section 4.6, “in extremis”).
- If armed actors have a PoC mandate (e.g. a UN peacekeeping operation), information on threats to civilians, population movements and other relevant information.
- Information on humanitarian principles and humanitarian action.



How to avoid miscommunication? Armed actors have different reasons and ways to collect, analyze and share information. CMCoord practitioners must understand military and humanitarian jargon, communication and information management practices. It is crucial for a CMCoord Officer to understand the language and reference systems of civilian and military, and international and local actors, to ensure that counterparts communicate effectively.

6.2.1.1 Military Information

Armed actors might withhold specific information to ensure OPSEC (see chapter 4, section 4.2.2.4). As a result, military personnel and other armed actors may not have access to, or may be prohibited from or unwilling to share certain information with CMCoord Officers. Even military commanders can have limited authority to share information with external actors, based on the classification level. As engagement develops, interlocutors may decide to share more information but that does not imply that the information is less classified and therefore requires a high level of discretion by CMCoord Officers.

In order to be effective, CMCoord Officers need to have access to and understand military information, for the basic purpose of knowing with whom they are engaging. For example, if a humanitarian actor reports an issue with an armed group at a specific location, the CMCoord Officer needs to know (on the basis of location, uniform, identifying insignia, equipment carried and maybe name and rank) which armed actor or group is causing the problem. In some contexts, if tasked with enabling protection and security issues, CMCoord Officers will be more effective and have more credibility with armed actors if they know/understand the tactics used and weapons carried by armed actors, including their technical characteristics. More information can be found at the following links:



- [OCHA Compilation of Military Policy and Practice \(2017\)](#)
- [ICRC Indirect Fire Report: A Technical Analysis of the Employment, Accuracy and Effects of Indirect-Fire Artillery Weapons \(2017\)](#)
- [PAX/Article 36 Areas of Harm: Understanding Explosive Weapons with Wide Area Effects \(2016\)](#)
- [Online databases of weapon characteristics can be found \[here\]\(#\) and \[here\]\(#\).](#)



CMCoord Officers need to find the right balance between accessing enough military information to be effective, understanding that access to this information will be limited, and deciding how and with whom to share sensitive military information.

6.2.1.2 Humanitarian Information

Disaggregated humanitarian data is mostly shared publicly and is available to all actors, as explained in chapter 2, section 2.6. This does not apply to sensitive information that could put affected people at risk.

A considerable amount of humanitarian information can be collected by military forces and other armed actors during their operations (e.g. state of the affected population, availability of key services and critical infrastructure). Operational security notwithstanding, military forces and other armed actors should endeavour not to classify this type of information.

Military and other armed actors in complex emergencies will have Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) resources for military purposes. When employing such resources, they can discover information on the civilian and security situation that may be of utility to the humanitarian response, especially in areas that are hard for humanitarians to access.

Case Study: Information Exchange During the 2016-2017 Mosul Operation

During the operation when ISF retook Mosul the Iraq CMCoord team drew up a list of humanitarian information requirements that military ISR counterparts were invited to pass on to the CMCoord team. The information was signed off by the respective commanders, translated and posted in the operational centres of both the coalition and Iraqi forces. They included:

- Regular updates on the location of front lines and military positions for the purposes of access/avoidance, and whether areas were a “go or no-go” for humanitarian actors.
- Information on situations which could potentially put civilians or humanitarian staff at increased risk.
- Regular updates on changes to the status of critical infrastructure, such as hospitals, water treatment plants, routes and bridges.
- IDP movements not along pre-designated IDP routes/corridors, including returnees - numbers, routes, ad-hoc congregation / self-settled areas and final destination, if known.
- Any anticipated IDP movement as a result of planned military activities - anticipated date, numbers, routes/corridors, screening sites.

- Any services being unavailable to IDPs in camps, emergency camps and informal sites - primarily shelter, water, sanitation, food and health.
- Any instances of civilian mistreatment.

In one instance, the movement of IDPs along a previously unknown route was detected by an Unmanned Aerial System (UAS). Information on the number of IDPs, route, and expected destination allowed humanitarians to receive the IDPs and provide assistance and accommodation.

Consideration Regarding Information Exchange with Robust UN Peacekeeping Missions

Peacekeeping missions and humanitarian actors normally exchange a certain amount of information, for example to implement complementary PoC measures, when appropriate. UN peacekeeping missions might have robust mandates that include, for example, the neutralization of or combat against non-state armed groups (e.g. [MONUSCO](#), [MINUSMA](#), [MINUSCA](#)).

CMCoord country-specific guidelines often do not provide detailed directions on the relation between humanitarian actors and the Mission regarding protection (information sharing, participation in joint initiatives, etc). Specific guidance for DRC and CAR do state that humanitarians can share relevant security information with the respective Missions, so long as that information does not compromise the confidentiality of informants or expose individuals to additional risks. They also reiterate the need for distinction between humanitarian actors and the Missions.

In order to increase information on potential threats against civilians, Missions sometimes encourage humanitarians to feed into the protection monitoring via participation in Mission mechanisms, joint assessment missions, or protection teams. Participation can be a requirement for stabilization funding of NGOs.

The sharing of sensitive information (e.g. about parties to the conflict) can compromise the neutrality of humanitarian action and impact negatively on access and security, and put affected population at risk (e.g. if seen as informers). Moreover, as neutral parties, humanitarian organizations should not share information that can weaken or be to the advantage of one party to the conflict.

A common stance within the humanitarian community regarding information sharing with a Mission and the conduct of joint missions is crucial. The CMCoord Officer can play a key role in advising the HC/HCT on dialogue with the PKO Mission as well as in the drafting of context-specific guidance.

6.2.1.3 UN-CMCoord Information Management

Information provided by military forces and other armed actors should be treated confidentially, especially in relation to positions, names and contact details. Armed actors may only provide information on the provision that such information is secured and not shared. CMCoord Officers should abide by this responsibility, as failure to do so can undermine acceptance and engagement with military forces and other armed actors. CMCoord Officers are expected to show discretion with sensitive information.

CMCoord Officers may become inadvertently aware of unsolicited sensitive military information such as military dispositions, force structures including equipment, military objectives, tactics and upcoming military plans with associated timeframes, operational codewords and control measures. Such information can be regarded as military intelligence which can vary from one context or party to the conflict to another.



[Civil-Military Guidelines & Reference for Complex Emergencies \(2010\)](#) - Section B, "Information Sharing".



CMCoord Officers should avoid being exposed to sensitive military information. If they are, the information must be treated with extreme confidentiality.



UN-CMCoord Hotline and E-mail Contact Modalities:

In some contexts it has been useful to establish a CMCoord hotline where issues can be rapidly reported by humanitarian actors to CMCoord staff. The hotline has primarily been used to support humanitarian access and humanitarian notification for deconfliction (HNS4D). It could be used for any issues related to military forces and armed actors that need attention. A common country or regional CMCoord e-mail address can also be created. Both can be extremely useful, especially when surge/emergency staff are present and there is a high turnover of staff.

The CMCoord Officer or one of the CMCoord team members is responsible for holding the phone 24/7 and clearing the e-mail account on a regular basis. Military forces and other armed actors can also use these tools, which can be especially important on issues such as deconfliction to convey last minute changes of humanitarian movements, or for emergencies such as medical evacuations and emergency movements.

6.2.1.4 Humanitarian Notification System for Deconfliction

OCHA facilitates humanitarian notification mechanisms for deconfliction (HNS4D) in several countries with ongoing armed conflicts. The mechanism is designed to notify relevant military actors of humanitarian locations, activities, movements and personnel for the purpose of protection against attacks and incidental effects of attacks under International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The HNS4D covers static locations, such as the offices of humanitarian organizations, and non-static locations, such as humanitarian convoys.



[Working Paper HNS4D v 1.0](#)

As described in chapter 4, section 4.1.2, IHL requires distinction between civilians and combatants. Attacks may not be directed against civilians or civilian objects and parties to the conflict must take all precautions to avoid incidental civilian harm before and during attacks. These include humanitarian relief personnel and objects used for humanitarian operations in any type of armed conflict.

United Nations premises are inviolable and United Nations property and assets are immune from interference. Non-consensual entry (by persons or objects such as munitions) into UN premises, for any reasons, is prohibited. The HNS4D serves as a complementary set of information for military planners to ensure that airstrikes or other kinetic operations will not result in the harming of humanitarian locations, activities, movements and personnel. It is for the belligerents to positively identify what they attack and to assess the risk of incidental civilian harm; it is not for humanitarian organizations to identify what may not be attacked or incidentally harmed.

The stand-alone term “deconfliction mechanism” should not be used by humanitarians. Deconfliction is carried out by the military (land, sea, air), not by humanitarians. The purpose of the humanitarian notification process is intended to help promote the safety and security of humanitarian operations.

The HNS4D can be established at HQ level, in country, or at the regional level. It is pivotal to agree on the mechanism in the HCT and decide which humanitarian locations, activities, movements and personnel should be included, as well as what structures and procedures should be utilized. The role of the CMCoord Officer is to manage the HNS4D process.



The HNS4D is not an approval/disapproval mechanism by parties to the conflict. Use the Working Paper on HNS4D when establishing a HNS4D mechanism.

Good Practices: Access in Gaza and Yemen

In Gaza, the Access and Coordination Unit has established an online platform called the Emergency Coordination Portal (ECP) where agencies and NGOs can directly upload coordinates or maps of the locations of their static facilities and routes and destinations of their missions. These are then conveyed to the Israeli forces.

In Yemen, a process of notification for static facilities and land, sea and air movements was established in April 2015. The process, forms and contact details are available [online here](#). The information is passed to the Deconfliction Liaison Team based in Riyadh, from where it is passed on to the Saudi-led coalition.

As UNDSS provides safety and security for UN staff members and facilities, UNDSS and OCHA need to clarify who does what with regard to HNS4D.



Other actors have also initiated notification mechanisms, for example OFDA in Somalia. Humanitarian organizations such as MSF and ICRC might have a bilateral mechanism with parties to the conflict. It is important to avoid duplication of mechanisms or triangulation of information.

6.2.2 Task Division and Distinction

The sole purpose of humanitarian assistance is to save lives, while military forces usually carry out civil-military operations (Civil Affairs, CIMIC, civil-military operations, or others) based on the needs of the force and the mission. This can serve the purpose of force protection by enhancing acceptance, gathering information, or generate support. Activities may include “humanitarian-type” activities, but should not be confused with actual humanitarian action undertaken by humanitarian actors in accordance with humanitarian principles. One example are Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) for which more details can be found in chapter 4, section 4.6.2.

The CMCoord Officer should be aware of and monitor such activities for the following reasons:

- Raise awareness for the importance of distinction between humanitarian assistance and military activities.

- Civil-military operations are often conditional and may cease when the mission changes or the unit moves. Ensure that the end of an operation does not result in relief gaps.
- Avoid duplication with humanitarian activities.
- Advise on “do no harm” approaches and possible second and third order effects.

Task division can also be required to coordinate activities such as PoC, where humanitarian actors and the military may conduct complementary activities.

6.2.3 Planning

In complex emergencies, situations that might require joint planning can be humanitarian area security by a peacekeeping mission, or medical evacuations, for example. Also, the military can be instrumental in the provision of logistics and road and other infrastructure rehabilitation that will require joint planning (identify priority areas, avoid presence at the same time, etc). Planning and implementation efforts should ensure that distinction between military and humanitarian activities is maintained and humanitarian principles respected.

Good Practice: Medical Evacuation Through the Humanitarian-Military Coordination Cell in Syria

In Syria, one of the first CMCoord initiatives by the Humanitarian-Military Coordination Cell (HuMiCC) was a process for coordinating and providing medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) support to INGO staff operating in the area. Coalition forces quickly agreed to extend the use of Coalition military assets to conduct aerial evacuations in areas of Syria under their control in cases of life-threatening injuries to INGO international and national staff. The mechanism intended to enable a quick and responsive system, to be used only in emergency situations and as a last resort when “life, limb or eyesight” were at risk and there was no alternative option available.

It was decided that the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) was best placed to facilitate MEDEVAC requests on behalf of INGOs and conduct no-notice drills with the Coalition. OCHA CMCoord facilitated the development of a SOP between INSO and the Coalition for requesting MEDEVAC support, at no cost to NGOs. The Coalition requested, but did not require, that INGOs register with INSO their intention to make use of the support if needed.

Monthly no-notice drills were critical to working out communication gaps and ensuring understanding by all parties.

Only one request has been submitted so far, with rapid response from the Coalition. The request was cancelled shortly thereafter, due to a reassessment of injury severity.

The establishment of a formal MEDEVAC request process assists INGO security focal points and field staff in managing the risk of field operations in a high threat context.

6.3 Use of Foreign Military Assets as a Last Resort

Complex emergencies generally involve high levels of insecurity, damage to critical infrastructure, absence of basic services, and a high level of humanitarian needs. Military forces and other armed actors may be the only option in providing support in conflict areas where traditional civilian providers, such as government authorities and humanitarian actors, may be unwilling or unable to operate.

Generally, foreign military assets (FMA) and armed escorts should only be used if they are the only option to respond to a critical life-threatening situation, where the need cannot be met with available civilian assets and there are no alternatives. In complex emergencies, the decision of whether or not to use military resources should be taken with the greatest care.

The expedient and inappropriate use of military resources can compromise principled humanitarian action. This can result in humanitarians becoming direct targets of the belligerents and being denied access to the affected population. It could also affect other humanitarian operations and result in the affected population becoming direct targets of the belligerents. Ultimately, decision-makers must weigh the risk to humanitarians and their ability to operate effectively at the moment and in the future, against the immediacy of the needs of the affected population and the need to use FMA.

See relevant CMCoord Guidelines, and chapter 3, section 3.2 and Table 4, Key Principles of the Use of FMA.



[Civil-Military Guidelines & Reference for Complex Emergencies \(2010\)](#)

6.4 UN-CMCoord Tasks in Complex Emergencies

6.4.1 Establish and Sustain Dialogue with Military and Other Armed Actors

In complex emergencies, sensitivities on both sides can mean a smaller space for coordination than in disasters in peacetime. The appropriate scope and kind of interface will depend on the actors deployed, their mandate, and the conflict itself. If being seen as associated with or perceived as working with military or other armed actors impedes humanitarian access or puts humanitarians or affected people at risk, direct contact should be kept to a minimum. In these cases, liaison officers should maintain a low profile and meet in a “neutral” place. As contexts vary, the strategy has to be tailored to each specific context. See also chapter 3, section 3.4.

Liaison exchange may be difficult and is likely to be a one-way placement of a Liaison Officer.

In some highly sensitive complex emergency situations, an option is to use an interlocutor, e.g. a CMCoord Officer or third party Liaison Officer. This significantly reduces the risk of humanitarians being perceived as working with the military. The interlocutor must ensure links into the humanitarian coordination mechanisms and platforms, such as:

- HC and HCT.
- Clusters, e.g. health, protection or logistics.
- Inter-cluster coordination forums.
- Thematic advisors, e.g. on gender or early recovery.
- Security cells, focal points, and/or SMT.
- Individual humanitarian agencies and NGOs.



CMCoord officers can act as a one-entry point for armed actors to the humanitarian community and vice versa, to undertake CMCoord tasks and functions in accordance with country-specific guidance and on behalf of the HC/HCT.

6.4.1.1 Engagement with Military Forces and Other Armed Actors

Establishing contact with interlocutors within military forces and other armed actors can be a laborious process. As engagement develops, contacts and entry points identified during the assessment process can be built upon. Local NGOs, civil society and INGOs with in-country

experience, as well as NGOs or UN agencies with country offices, can have useful contacts. The assessment also serves to identify gaps within the CMCoord stakeholder engagement matrix. See chapter 3, Table 8.

It generally takes more time, resources and effort to develop understanding and engagement within non-state armed groups, where the hierarchies and relationships between the armed actors may not be clear or consistent. If an effective chain of command is not in place, the CMCoord Officer may have to develop contacts and engage with individual groups and entities.

National staff can be instrumental in engaging with military forces and other armed actors and in understanding the context. However, there may be limitations as to with whom they can and are willing to engage, as it can expose them to additional risks if perceived as non-neutral.

Engagement modalities may have to be reviewed if they no longer produce the intended results. A cost-benefit analysis of engagement should be ongoing and the HC/HCT consulted if results are not being met.

As contacts are made and engagement commences, the CMCoord stakeholder contact database and engagement matrix should be continually updated.

See chapter 4, Table 15, Tips for Establishing Contact and Dialoguing with the Military and Other Armed Actors.

6.4.1.2 De-centralizing the CMCoord Function

In the absence of a dedicated CMCoord Focal Point in an OCHA field office, one option is to use staff in OCHA sub-offices to fulfil a CMCoord role. This will have the following advantages:

- Civil-military relations at the sub-national level are essential for effective coordination.
- Local issues can be resolved quickly.
- Better and more detailed information to analyze trends and get a better overall picture of the situation on the ground.
- Humanitarian awareness training needs for military forces and other armed actors can be identified and implemented more effectively.

- Training for military and other armed actor counterparts can be tailored and conducted locally.
- Sub-offices usually have closer contact with communities and have a better picture of local perceptions.
- Sub-offices can observe military activities.



This requires briefing, sensitization and supervision by the CMCoord Officer. Ideally the CMCoord Officer would conduct a one- or half-day briefing for OCHA staff, or an in-country sensitization course. This should cover the basics of CMCoord guidelines and in-country CMCoord strategy and organization.

6.4.2 Mechanisms or Platforms for Information Exchange and Interaction

In complex emergencies, different coordination mechanisms may have to be used with different parties in addition to or in lieu of CMCoord Officer engagements as outlined above. This does not infer a different type or level of engagement, but that circumstances dictate different approaches. See also chapter 3, sections 3.4 and 3.6.

Case Study: Two Coordination Arrangements - One Armed Conflict

During the Israeli operation against Gaza in 2008, humanitarians had to engage with both Israeli and Hamas forces to ensure humanitarian access and civilian protection. During periods between conflict, regular liaison visits to both sides were sufficient. However, during periods of active conflict which greatly exacerbated humanitarian needs, requiring increased humanitarian response, the requirement for CMCoord engagement heightened significantly.

Engagement is essential with the Israeli forces who control ground access into Gaza, as well as the air and marine space above and around, and are able to engage any target within Gaza, static or mobile. Today, inter-agency Joint Liaison Teams (JLTs) with pre-identified staff from OCHA, DSS, UNRWA and the Access Coordination Unit are on standby 24/7 to deploy as liaison at the tactical and operational level Israeli military headquarters. The JLTs were formed to meet the scale of engagement required, including notification of static humanitarian facilities (which change nature, e.g. as public spaces become IDP shelters) and mobile humanitarian missions into and inside Gaza, as well as advocating for civilian protection.

Conversely, inside Gaza the intensity of active conflict and danger to staff prohibits visits to Hamas interlocutors. Communication through mobile phones and landlines is the only means to engage. In the 2014 conflict these channels were also used to arrange

humanitarian pauses where both parties paused operations in order to allow civilian movement inside Gaza to access essential services and supplies.

The Humanitarian-Military Coordination Cell (HuMiCC) was established in 2017, in Amman, for Northeast Syria to facilitate coordination between the US-led Coalition and the humanitarian community. The initial platform consisted of an OCHA Civil-Military Coordination Officer, a Coalition Forces Liaison Officer and a USAID-OFDA liaison. Meetings occurred three times a week and a formal Request for Information (RFI) process was established that tracked RFIs and the response.

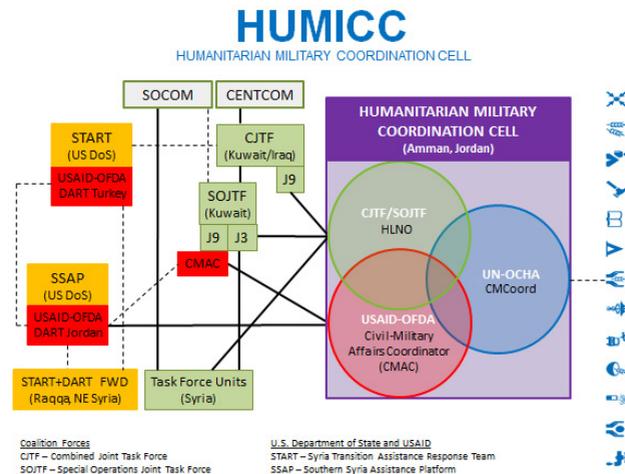
In establishing the appropriate liaison approach for a particular context, multiple platforms / liaison mechanisms may apply in parallel. A range of platforms and mechanisms exist and include:

- A single or multiple platform (depending on conflicting parties and/or theme) led by CMCoord that includes both humanitarians and representatives of military forces and other armed actors.
- A platform led by CMCoord that includes only humanitarians.
- Liaison by the CMCoord Officer.

6.4.2.1 Joint Humanitarian / Military Platform

Where the context is suitable, joint multilateral humanitarian and military platforms can dramatically increase information sharing and confidence in the engagement process.

Figure 9: The HuMiCC

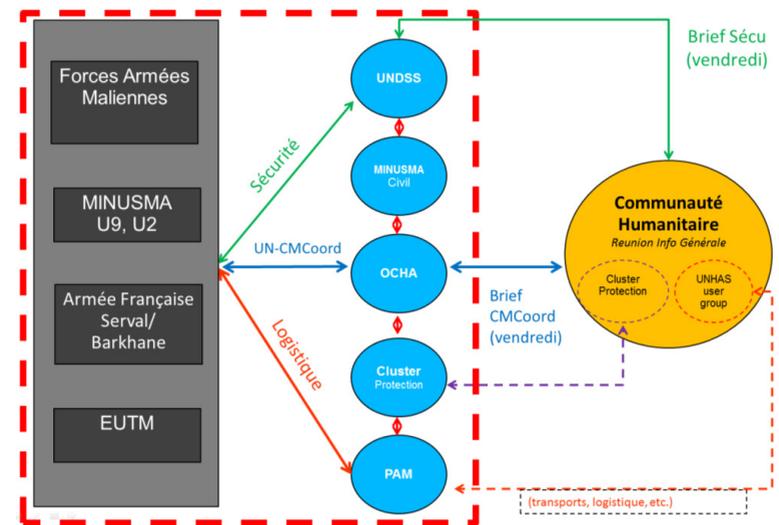


Case Study: Implementation of the HuMiCC

Early obstacles included limited willingness by the Coalition to share information, long response times or no response to RFIs, frequent changes in liaisons, and difficulties in engaging with military outside the established liaison approach. Over time, the HuMiCC evolved into broader working groups to address thematic areas such as trauma response, ERW/IED (explosive remnants of war/improvised explosive devices) coordination, and protection. Although this risked compromising the unique and limited liaison structure, it resulted in establishing effective dialogue and producing tangible outcomes. In this way, the HuMiCC became a core component that facilitated broader platforms for civil-military dialogue.

Figure 10: Example of a Joint Humanitarian Military Platform, Mali, 2014

Cellule de coordination civilo-militaire - Mali



6.4.2.2 CMCoord Platform for Humanitarians

In complex emergencies, establishing and maintaining a joint humanitarian military platform may prove difficult, as military forces and other armed actors may not prioritize or be available and humanitarians may have security or perception concerns about meetings with armed actors.

Case Study: Humanitarian Platform, DRC, 2014

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a platform for humanitarians only was established in 2014, with the following purpose:

- Facilitate the update and/or revision of the “Guidelines for Interaction between MONUC Military and Humanitarian Organizations (2005)”.
- Facilitate the dissemination of the “Guidelines for the Interaction Between the Humanitarian Community and Military Forces” to relevant actors.
- Function as the mechanism for the coordination of humanitarian interaction with military forces and other armed actors.
- Facilitate information sharing to achieve a common situational awareness of the humanitarian situation.
- Facilitate discussions on support activities undertaken by military forces and other armed actors, if any, and closely observe them to avoid duplication and optimize their benefits.
- Facilitate discussions in other critical areas of coordination such as access negotiation, use of armed escorts (or not), and serve as a humanitarian principles advocacy platform.
- Facilitate the conduct of training and awareness-raising activities.

6.4.2.3 Coordination with a UN Mission

The humanitarian community and OCHA will have multiple interaction and coordination tools with UN Missions, depending on its mandate and structure. The role and interface of CMCoord needs to be determined in the assessment. There are a few points to consider and link into:

Table 20: Coordination with UN Missions	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a Civil Affairs officer/unit? (This is almost always the case.) Does Civil Affairs implement QIPs? Do contingents implement QIPs at the tactical level?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the UN mission multidimensional and/or integrated?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the HC a triple-hatted DSRSG/RC/HC? What is the relation to the HoMC/ Force Commander?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there components of the mandate (Security Council resolution) with importance to humanitarian assistance, e.g. PoC, support to humanitarian assistance, security for humanitarian actors?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What is the security management structure? Who is the DO? Is there a security cell or working group under the SMT? How is the DSS presence structured? What are the security regulations for UN organizations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the UN mission have assets and capacity to protect or provide armed escorts for humanitarian actors, e.g. Guard Units, military components?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there an IAP process on-going? Link into the process and related coordination structures, such as the JOTC. (See chapter 2, section 2.8.3.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the CIMIC capacity in the mission headquarters (U9) and in individual military components.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do individual military components have capabilities and resources that may be/are useful for humanitarian assistance? Do they carry out their own QIPs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is any interaction with specific military components required? E.g. aviation, engineering, etc.?

6.4.3 Negotiations in Critical Areas of Interaction

In situations of armed conflict and other situations of violence, armed actors are generally granted or assume greater control or authority in areas where they operate, in some cases in functions normally undertaken by civilian authorities. Furthermore, the humanitarian situation may be the result of or worsened by the actions or inactions of armed actors. CMCoord Officers are often the best placed to engage with military forces and other armed actors in such situations. The HCT and HC may also ask the CMCoord Officer to engage on other topics that involve armed actors. The topics often include access, protection and security. Where OCHA offices have focal points for access and protection, CMCoord Officers support them in their engagement with military forces and other armed actors. Where no such focal points are present, CMCoord Officers may find themselves partially or entirely filling this role. More details on CMCoord engagement in these cross-cutting areas can be found in section 6.5 of this chapter.

6.4.4 Development and Dissemination of Context-Specific Guidance

In complex emergencies, context-specific CMCoord guidance will normally be required if military forces and other armed actors are present and/or if their actions have a significant impact on the work of humanitarian actors. This can also be the case for the coordination with military components of peacekeeping operations. A guide to context-specific guidance can be found in chapter 3, section 3.2.7. Context-specific guidance should include consensus on the role of CMCoord in areas such as HNS4D, access, PoC, security and armed escorts. This can be part of a general CMCoord guideline, or addressed in an individual guidance, discussion paper or SOP.

6.4.5 Observe the Activity of Military Forces and Other Armed Actors

In complex emergencies, military forces and other armed actors conduct operations that directly impact civilian populations and humanitarians, especially in the areas of humanitarian access, protection of civilians (PoC) and security. The CMCoord Officer can assist in conveying the impact of their action or inaction to their interlocutors. Plans and processes to alleviate, prevent or cease such consequences can be fed back to the humanitarian community.

For example, the Protection Cluster can record, collate and prioritize PoC issues that stem from military forces and other armed actors so that the CMCoord Officer can raise it with them. This requires engagement with the Protection Cluster to ensure that incident records include information that is relevant for CMCoord, such as date, time, location, and unit/personnel involved, and to ascertain that details of civilians are protected.

The strategy to achieve the greatest extent of civil-military distinction as well as military actors' understanding of humanitarian principles and concerns, depends on the context. It includes open and constructive dialogue and training. It may be helpful to bring military forces and other armed actors on board when drafting context-specific guidance.



As an interlocutor, the CMCoord Officer has to communicate needs, concerns and strategies between the humanitarian and military communities. Successful communication sometimes depends on personalities. Much depends on how the content is communicated.

6.5 Cross-Cutting Areas of Engagement

Over the past years, the CMCoord function has been faced with the reality that there are increasingly apparent operational linkages between CMCoord, access, protection and security. CMCoord Officers have had to perform in these functions and/or coordinate with access and protection focal points.



[CMCoord as Auxiliary to Humanitarian Access, Protection and Security \(2017\)](#)

6.5.1 UN-CMCoord and Humanitarian Access

Chapter 1, section 1.5, discusses different impediments and enabling factors for humanitarian access. Among the impediments are damaged infrastructure, lack of transportation, the security situation, bureaucratic hurdles, lack of acceptance, or deliberate blockages to access. Military forces and other armed actors can be the cause of some of these impediments – or may help to overcome them.

Under [UNGA resolution 46/182](#), OCHA has the responsibility to actively facilitate humanitarian access with all actors in a conflict. OCHA offices and humanitarian actors may have designated Humanitarian Access Officers or Units who negotiate with civilian authorities or armed groups. In other instances, the functions of access and CMCoord are combined because the interlocutors for both functions are military forces and other armed actors. Humanitarian access negotiations and advocacy with armed actors is one significant part of the CMCoord Officer's work. He/she may be expected to participate in the formulation of an access strategy or work plan, developing common advocacy or messages, and in developing and collating information for the [Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework \(AMRF\)](#).

Military operations often entail restrictions in the movement of civilian staff and goods, including humanitarians perceived as not aiding armed actors in achieving their objectives. CMCoord Officers are expected to advocate for humanitarian access and the preservation of humanitarian space in accordance with humanitarian principles and relevant normative frameworks of international law. Humanitarian programming is not commonly taught to military forces and other armed actors and CMCoord Officers may have to explain this to interlocutors in order to gain access.

The host government has an obligation to facilitate humanitarian assistance and is responsible for the security of humanitarian actors on its territory. The passage of humanitarian assistance may be slowed down by security measures at checkpoints. In coordination with the civilian authorities, military forces and other armed actors, agreements for the quick passage of relief can be made.

Engagement by CMCoord Officers with military forces and other armed actors can determine the accessibility of routes, checkpoints and bridges, including any expected delays and the processes required to gain access. Ideally, access should be rapid and unimpeded, however conflicting parties often insist on a process of notification. Engagement on such notification processes should seek to:

- Minimize information to the absolute essential, which could include:
 - Route.
 - Destination.
 - Date and time.
 - Vehicle details.
 - Personnel details. Within each context, the extent of how much personal information should be shared should be discussed among humanitarian actors and endorsed by the HCT.
- Reduce the duration of time it takes authorities to process that information.
- Extend the duration for which access is available under a notification.

In consultation with the HCT, CMCoord staff can assess the feasibility of [specific arrangements](#), such as HNS4D, humanitarian pauses (temporary cessation of hostilities to enable the delivery of assistance), humanitarian corridors, and area security (see chapter 1, section 1.5). If warranted, strong CMCoord capacity should be placed within the HCT to support the implementation of these access strategies and to coordinate with relevant parties. In complex emergencies, access can also be constrained by attacks or conduct of hostilities in general. CMCoord Officers may be required to address such specific access impediments.



The Role of CMCoord Platforms in Access

CMCoord platforms play a key role in countries with UN integrated presence, such as in Mali and CAR. Platforms provide a space to discuss access issues that inform the HC, HCT and the OCHA HoO on access challenges and developments. The following are some of the common added values of CMCoord platforms to humanitarian access. They:

- Contribute to the development, analysis and operationalization of access strategies; they can also serve as platforms to identify and analyze access constraints.

- Support negotiations on access with all actors on the ground, including dissemination and awareness-raising of IHL and other legal frameworks.
- Serve as an alternative forum to develop training materials and/or conduct training on access negotiations.
- Complement access coordination platforms or serve as the venue for the development and management of access monitoring and reporting frameworks.



- [OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Access \(2017\)](#)
- [OCHA Manual for Practitioners and accompanying Guidelines on Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups \(2006\)](#)
- [Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict, Practitioner's Manual, Version 2, \(2014\)](#)
- [Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict: Handbook on the International Normative Framework \(2014\)](#)
- [Oxford Guidance on the Law Relating to Humanitarian Relief Operations in Situations of Armed Conflict \(2016\)](#)
- [ICRC Q&A and lexicon on humanitarian access \(2014\)](#)
- [ICRC, The law regulating cross-border relief operations \(2013\)](#)

Case Study: Humanitarian Access during the Mosul Operation

Humanitarian access is the remit of OCHA's CMCoord team in Iraq. During the Mosul operation in 2016-2017, the team took the lead, on behalf of the HC, on engagement with military forces and other armed actors for all aspects of humanitarian-military interaction.

Access was facilitated by the CMCoord team through liaison with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Kurdish Forces, primarily at the senior level, who produced letters that guaranteed humanitarian access. The ISF assigned a Lieutenant General to act as the humanitarian focal point for the operation. An access process was established through him and his office, where information could be submitted and access letters generated and issued for humanitarian use. The letter was valid for one month and was recognized by all forces, including the armed non-state actors because of the seniority and reputation of the ISF officer signing the letters. Additionally, an access hotline was established that allowed access incidents to be reported to CMCoord and resolved through engagement with the armed actors responsible for such restrictions.

When access restrictions were anticipated at military checkpoints or bridges because of military necessity, the information was conveyed in advance via CMCoord channels to the humanitarian community, to allow them to preposition humanitarian stocks.

6.5.2 UN-CMCoord and Protection

In complex emergencies, the greatest threats to civilians are normally posed by action or inaction of armed actors. There is a clear role for CMCoord Officers to engage these actors also on issues relating to the protection of civilians (PoC).

CMCoord Officers should work closely with the Protection Cluster (PC) and protection mandated organizations to effectively engage armed actors on PoC issues. They may:

- Advise the PC on advocacy strategies to address existing protection concerns. The PC will establish a system to report threats and incidents against civilians and will take the lead on verifying, prioritizing and validating reports. Based on their knowledge of the context and their understanding of the relationships within and between armed groups and stakeholders, CMCoord Officers can advise on how best to approach protection issues as prioritized by the humanitarian leadership.
- Facilitate PC engagement with armed actors. The humanitarian leadership may ask the CMCoord Officer to support the Protection Cluster or other designated humanitarian interlocutors in establishing links to military forces and other armed actors. He/she can also be tasked to engage directly on protection issues on the basis of existing relationships. In either instance, it is important to share the outcomes from such engagement with each other.
- Raise awareness of context-specific protection guidelines developed by the PC, for instance guidelines on evacuation of civilians by the military, treatment of unaccompanied minors found by armed actors, and so on.
- Proactively and preemptively convey protection concerns to military forces and other armed actors during their operational planning.
- Seek to influence an environment within military forces and other armed actors conducive to respect for individual rights, for example ensuring that they receive training in IHL.

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- [ICRC Professional Standards for Protection Work \(2018\)](#)
 - [IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action \(2016\)](#)
 - [IASC Principles on the Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action \(2013\)](#)
 - [OCHA on Message: Protection of Civilians \(2017\)](#)
 - [The Global Protection Cluster](#)
 - [Security Council Aide Memoire on Protection of Civilians \(2014\)](#)
 - [Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations \(2009\)](#)

Case Study: Civil-Military Protection Working Group for Syria

In 2017, during the Raqqa City offensive in north-east Syria, the Humanitarian-Military Coordination Cell (HuMiCC) for Syria attempted to address a wide range of protection-related concerns with the Coalition and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Due to limitations in liaison arrangements and the lack of familiarity in the Coalition with issues related to protection of civilians, the HuMiCC struggled to achieve any successful results in this area. The formal Request for Information (RFI) process was ineffective.

After many months of attempted engagement with the Coalition on protection concerns regarding IDP screening and sponsorship, detention of women and children, civil documentation, civilian casualties, child recruitment and conditions for return, OCHA CMCoord persuaded the Coalition leadership to engage the humanitarian community in a sustained dialogue. Once agreed, a Civil-Military Protection Working Group was established. The Group committed to bi-monthly calls and monthly in-person meetings to address critical protection issues in north-east Syria. The Coalition senior representative to the working group was the Deputy Commanding General of the Special Operations Joint Task Force (SOJTF). Additionally, the Coalition appointed a Lieutenant Colonel as a "Protection Advisor" to the command leadership as a single focal point at the technical level. The working group included the military, donors, UN agencies, INGO forum representatives, and the ICRC.

At the first Protection Working Group meeting a briefing of key concerns, trends, and recommendations was provided to the Coalition by the Whole of Syria Protection Sector and Cluster focal points. These were then systematically worked through in successive meetings and calls to resolve ongoing issues. A dashboard was created which tracked progress made, using a stoplight visual to easily convey success areas, unresolved issues and outstanding areas for action. OCHA CMCoord played a central role in convening the working group meetings, organizing and preparing briefs and ensuring all relevant focal points were included.

The key lesson for the HuMiCC was that for protection concerns in Syria, sustained and direct dialogue with all relevant parties was required, rather than utilizing a more distanced form of engagement through liaison. Direct engagement with parties to the conflict, facilitated by but not limited to CMCoord Officers, was required to achieve effective outcomes.

6.5.3 UN-CMCoord and Security

CMCoord Officers are not Security Officers but they can be OCHA security focal points. They do not have any authority or liability in security matters. However, CMCoord Officers can facilitate information sharing in this regard, as they may have access to such information from armed actors and have established networks that can help Security Officers in assessing the situation and conducting security risk assessments (SRA). Likewise, UNDSS, INSO or UN agency and NGO Security Officers may assist CMCoord Officers in their role. Joint SRAs and Humanitarian Support Cells can improve cooperation with UN Security Officers, as outlined below.

If security risk management measures as described in chapters 1 and 2 are not creating an acceptable level of safety and security for aid workers, the provision of security conditions conducive to humanitarian activities is one of the main expectations of humanitarian actors from military components in peacekeeping operations.

However, deterrent measures and armed protection are a last resort before having to cease life-saving assistance. As a general rule, humanitarian convoys will not use armed escorts. If the HC and HCT have decided to deviate from this general rule, the CMCoord Officer plays a crucial role in establishing guidance, protocols and mechanisms for the use of armed escorts.

Good Practice: CMCoord platforms may regularly invite Security Officers from UNDSS, UN agencies and NGOs for an update on security-related issues and developments. This is especially the case where security issues have implications on the work of humanitarian actors. Feedback generated from this interaction contributes to the Security Cell analysis and subsequently to Security Management Team (SMT) discussions. CMCoord issues such as the use (or non-use) of armed escorts can be raised through the CMCoord platforms. Outcomes can then be disseminated and shared with relevant colleagues to inform the SMT of the humanitarian implications of decisions.

6.5.3.1 Joint Security Risk Assessment

UNDSS security recommendations may seem challenging for humanitarian actors to operate in some areas. A recommendation to use armed escorts provided by a (perceived) party to the conflict may have a detrimental effect on the security of humanitarian actors and the population they try to assist.

While the CMCoord Officer is not a Security Officer, to increase common understanding between humanitarian actors and UNDSS, it is beneficial for the CMCoord Officer to coordinate with UNDSS and AFP Security Officers. CMCoord Officers may also participate in joint security risk assessments (SRAs). SRAs are explained in more detail in chapter 2, section 2.9.

The CMCoord Officer, on behalf of the humanitarian community, can propose informed and appropriate measures in various forums, such as Area Security Management Teams (ASMT), Security Management Teams (SMT) and Security Cells. AFP Security Officers are authorized to conduct SRAs that can be submitted to the ASMT / SMT.

Good Practice: CMCoord Officer's Participation in SRAs

As a CMCoord Officer, it can be useful to get involved in the prioritization and conduct of SRAs, to:

- Identify priority humanitarian action areas.
- Assist UNDSS in identifying mitigation measures that are consistent with humanitarian principles and that ensure safe delivery of humanitarian assistance, e.g.
 - Invest in networking.
 - Increase communication on humanitarian programmes and principles with all parties, including parties to the conflict.
 - Avoid military presence during activities, to maintain distinction.
- Identify potential humanitarian priorities during SRAs and inform humanitarian partners accordingly.
- Establish close coordination with UNDSS and AFP Security Officers. The UNDSS Field Security Coordination Officer (FSCO) can contribute to information exchange and enhance trust between humanitarian actors and UNDSS.

6.5.3.2 Humanitarian Support Cell

CMCoord and security management are required to collaborate with regard to access and the use of armed escorts. This relationship has been formalized in some contexts, with the establishment of a Humanitarian Security Support Cell consisting of CMCoord staff, UNDSS and UN agency security focal points. UNDSS staff are assigned to directly support CMCoord, access and other humanitarian missions such as emergency assessments. Missions to negotiate access and conduct CMCoord liaison should be categorized as Programme Criticality 1 (PC1) and prioritized by the UNCT. See also chapter 2, section 2.9.1.

Case Study: Humanitarian Support Cell in Iraq

A Humanitarian Support Cell was established in Iraq specifically to support access during the Mosul response in 2016-2017. The cell consisted of one or two DSS officers seconded to OCHA to directly support humanitarian missions to areas recently retaken and becoming accessible. These missions were conducted along routes and to villages as they were cleared by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). These joint missions normally consisted of CMCoord staff to liaise with armed actors, DSS to provide security advice and conduct security risk assessments, UNMAS to assist with explosive remnants of war (ERW) threats, and sometimes agency/cluster staff to conduct rapid assessments. This joint approach avoided multiple missions by different actors, reduced risk to humanitarian staff and expedited the response. This was especially important as the ISF regularly established and moved muster points where IDPs were gathered for transport out of the conflict area and where humanitarian actors provided emergency food, water, medical treatment and protection monitoring. If needs were known in advance, humanitarian assistance, such as water and medical supplies, were carried forward with the mission.

6.5.3.3 UN-CMCoord and Armed Escorts

In insecure contexts, the use of one-size-fits-all armed escorts for humanitarian actors often become the rule, instead of the exception. This often compromises humanitarian principles and increases the blurring of the lines between humanitarian actors and the military. This tends to increase the risks for humanitarian actors as well as for affected people, rather than serve as a mitigation measure. It is crucial for the CMCoord Officer to support the humanitarian community to promote humanitarian guidelines and principles, agree on a consistent approach to security, and dismantle structural obstacles (e.g. working with the SMT/ASMT and UNDSS to avoid one-size-fits-all armed escorts).

Case Study: The Use of Armed Escorts in DRC

In some parts of DRC, MONUSCO is perceived as a party to the conflict, supporting the national military. The MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) is engaged in offensive operations against some non-state armed groups, especially in the North Kivu Province, and are regarded with suspicion in areas under the control of non-state armed groups. Using armed escorts to access these areas increases the risk of attacks. Concerned non-state armed group commanders claim that humanitarian actors are usually granted access to assist their population if unescorted. As a result, the few organizations with access to the controlled areas are those

negotiating with all parties and not using escorts, which in turn limits assistance considerably. In addition, inconsistent security risk management within the humanitarian community often has consequences for distinction and can expose those opting out from the escort model to greater risks.



The use of armed escorts can weaken the perception of humanitarian actors and threaten the operational independence of humanitarian action. Therefore, if all alternatives to deterrence measures have failed, the humanitarian community needs to work together on creating alternatives to armed escorts.

Case Study: UN Armed Escorts in South Sudan

In South Sudan the HCT has agreed to a structured FMA and armed escorts approach. OCHA, on behalf of humanitarian partners and the Logistics Cluster, has a weekly interface with the Force Headquarters CIMIC to action FMA and escort requests which have been submitted to OCHA the week before.

The OCHA CMCoord/Access Unit determines if FMA and armed escort requests meet the last resort criteria. If the criteria are met, the request will be forwarded to Force HQ for planning. In cases where the request does not meet last resort requirements, OCHA denies the use of military assets or armed escorts and supports the requesting agency with either facilitation of access and/or recommendations for suitable civilian alternatives. This structure has resulted in a significant decrease in the use of FMA and armed escorts and supports the humanitarian community in access negotiations and safety assurances.

Case Study: Military Escorts in Nigeria

In north-east Nigeria, where the military is a party to the conflict, the Nigerian Army provides armed escorts for humanitarian movements. In most areas, it is unwilling to permit movement without escorts.

In line with the country-specific CMCoord guidance, the OCHA CMCoord/Access Unit provides recommendations to the HCT on a monthly basis on the current use of armed escorts. This includes a monthly revision of the last resort nature. In case the CMCoord unit finds and recommends that other civilian alternatives are available and feasible, the CMCoord WG provides this recommendation to the SMT and HCT.

The case of north-east Nigeria is especially problematic since the escort provider is a party to the conflict and because the physical proximity might put partners at risk and negatively impact the perception of the humanitarian community vis-à-vis the parties to the conflict.



6.6 Advice and Advocacy in Complex Emergencies

It is the responsibility of the HC to identify a coherent and consistent humanitarian approach to civil-military engagement in support of humanitarian activities. The OCHA office and CMCoord Officer support the HC and HCT in identifying risks and challenges and in developing and implementing a common civil-military engagement strategy and position.

The advisory and advocacy role of the CMCoord Officer covers several aspects in complex emergencies:

- Advice to the HC and HCT on civil-military engagement modalities and outcomes to enable humanitarian activities.
- Sensitization of the humanitarian community on CMCoord principles and concepts and dissemination of context-specific guidance.
- Awareness-raising on humanitarian principles, civil-military distinction and “do no harm” approaches.
- Awareness-raising on humanitarian access, protection of civilians (PoC) and security of humanitarian actors.
- Coordination with UN peacekeeping operations and information on eventual Integrated Assessment and Planning (IAP) processes with humanitarian considerations.

If the HCT has an Advocacy Working Group, it can assist in advocacy efforts, which can be particularly effective if advocacy undertaken by CMCoord Officers and other humanitarian representatives is reinforced by “public diplomacy” through external communication methods and stakeholders, such as donors.

The advocacy and advisory role of the CMCoord Officer will focus on the following:

- Distinction, “do no harm” and protection of civilians: Advocate with commanders of military forces and other armed actors for liaison arrangements and information sharing on humanitarian assistance related activities, to ensure that military forces and

- other armed actors understand the importance of civil-military distinction, and that neither local populations nor humanitarian organizations are put in harm’s way because of perception.
- Humanitarian access and humanitarian space: Advocate with commanders of military forces and other armed actors to gain, maintain and improve access to critical services for both humanitarian actors and civilians. Further advocacy can be undertaken to preserve humanitarian space by ensuring that military and other armed actors respect the space utilized by humanitarian actors, in all its forms.
- Coherent CMCoord approach: Advocate for and promote a coherent and consistent approach within the humanitarian community.

Key Terms and Definitions

Armed Conflict	This general expression covers confrontations between: two or more states; state and a body other than a state; a state and a dissident faction; two or more organized armed groups within a state. (ICRC)
Ceasefire	A suspension of fighting agreed upon by the parties to a conflict, typically as part of a political process. It is intended to be long-term and often covers the entire geographic area of the conflict. Its aim is usually to allow parties to engage in dialogue, including the possibility of reaching a permanent political settlement.
Civil-Military Cooperation (UN-CIMIC)	A military function which contributes to facilitating the interface between the military and civilian components, as well as with the humanitarian development actors in the mission area, to support UN Mission objectives. (United Nations Civil-Military Coordination Specialized Training Materials (UN-CIMIC STM).
Cluster Approach	Aims to strengthen overall humanitarian response capacity and effectiveness, in support of national authorities' efforts, in five key ways: to ensure sufficient global capacity in all main sectors/areas of response; to ensure predictable leadership in all main sectors/areas of response; to promote the concept of partnerships (e.g. clusters) between UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; to strengthen accountability; and to improve strategic field-level coordination and prioritization by placing responsibility for leadership and coordination of these issues with the competent operational agency.
Colocation	Locating humanitarian and military actors in one operational coordination facility in the adoption of a cooperation strategy.
(Military) Command	A position of authority and responsibility to which officers are legally appointed.
Complex Emergency	A humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/ or the ongoing United Nations country program. (IASC)
Country-Specific Guidelines	Country specific civil-military guidelines based on existing global guidelines to ensure a consistent and coherent approach to interaction of the humanitarian community with military actors.
Days of Tranquility	A mechanism used primarily by UNICEF, often in collaboration with WHO, to enable children to have access to health care during conflict, for example to undertake national immunization campaigns or other exclusively humanitarian activities. Days of tranquility require the agreement of all relevant parties to grant access to and not interfere with the work of medical and other personnel during the designated days.
Distinction	Principle of IHL: In armed conflict, all parties to the hostilities must at all times distinguish between civilian and civilian objects on the one hand and combatants/fighters and military objects on the other.

Disaster	A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses that exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.
Exercises	The "play" of scenarios with organizers assuming how military forces, coalitions, alliances, and humanitarian participants interact.
Humanitarian Access	Humanitarian actors' ability to reach people affected by crisis; and ability of affected people to access humanitarian assistance and services.
Humanitarian Actors	Civilians, whether national or international, UN or non-UN, governmental or non-governmental, who have a commitment to humanitarian principles and are engaged in humanitarian activities.
Humanitarian Advocacy	Using information strategically to influence the policies or practices of key actors with the aim of assisting and protecting people in need. Advocacy entails speaking up (privately or publicly), drawing attention to an important issue and directing decision makers towards a solution.
Humanitarian Assistance	Aid that seeks to save lives and alleviate suffering of crisis-affected people. Military support to humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with humanitarian principles and can be classified into three categories: direct assistance, indirect assistance and infrastructure support, with a diminishing degree of contact with affected people. The UN seeks to provide humanitarian assistance with full respect for states' sovereignty.
Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord)	The essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals.
Humanitarian Coordination	The systematic utilization of policy instruments and structures to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner.
Humanitarian Corridor	Specific routes and logistical methods agreed upon by all relevant parties to allow the safe passage of humanitarian goods and/or people from one point to another in an area of active fighting.
Humanitarian Crisis	A situation in which the health, lives, and well-being of people are in danger because of the disruption of their daily routine and access to basic goods and services.
Humanitarian Pause	A cessation of hostilities negotiated purely for humanitarian purposes. It is a short break in the fighting, sometimes in designated areas, with explicit guarantees given by relevant warring parties to humanitarian actors on the ground so that aid can get through to affected people.
Humanitarian Principles	Humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence. These humanitarian principles provide the foundations for humanitarian action, and they are central to establishing and maintaining access to affected people. These principles are formally enshrined in General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 58/114.
Humanitarian Space	An environment in which humanitarian agencies can work effectively and assist people who need their support, and which is governed by humanitarian principles. Three elements are needed to maintain a humanitarian space: combatants must respect humanitarian principles; humanitarians and peacekeepers must understand their respective roles; and all actors must accept their responsibilities within an overall framework.

Humanity	A humanitarian principle that states that human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable people, such as children, women and the elderly. The dignity and rights of all victims must be respected and protected.	Natural Disaster	A sudden major upheaval of nature, causing extensive destruction, death and suffering among the stricken community, and which is not due to human action. Some natural disasters can be of slow origin, e.g. drought. Other seemingly natural disasters can be caused or aggravated by human action, e.g. desertification through excessive land use and deforestation.
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	People forced or obliged to leave their homes or habitual residence, particularly in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. A series of non-binding Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement based on refugee law, human rights law and international humanitarian law articulate standards for protection, assistance and solutions for IDPs.	Neutrality	A humanitarian principle that states that humanitarian assistance must be provided without engaging in hostilities or taking sides in controversies of a political, religious or ideological nature.
International Humanitarian Law (IHL)	Also called the law of war or armed conflict law, this body of rules seeks, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It forms a part of international law, protects people who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities, and restricts the means and methods of warfare by prohibiting weapons that make no distinction between combatants and civilians, or weapons and methods of warfare that cause unnecessary injury, suffering and/ or damage. The rules are to be observed by governments and their armed forces, and by armed opposition groups and any other parties to a conflict. The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977 are its principal instruments. IHL does not regulate resort to the use of force; that is governed by an important, but distinct, part of international law set out in the UN Charter.	Non-governmental Organization (NGO)	A group of private citizens not subordinate to any State agency. Humanitarian NGOs may be professional associations, foundations, multinational businesses, or simply groups with a common interest in humanitarian assistance activities. They may be national or international and may have consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council or with one of the three NGO consortia in the IASC (Interaction, SCHR, ICVA).
Impartiality	A humanitarian principle that states that humanitarian assistance must be provided without discriminating as to ethnic origin, gender, nationality, political opinions, race or religion. Relief for suffering people must be guided solely by needs, and priority must be given to the most urgent cases of distress.	Peace Enforcement	Involves the use of a range of coercive measures, such as sanctions or blockades. As a last resort, the use of military force may be authorized only with the authorization of the Security Council. (DPKO)
Independence	A humanitarian principle that makes it possible to guarantee that humanitarian action is free of political, economic, denominational, military and ideological influences or bias.	Peacekeeping	Method to help countries torn by conflict to create conditions for sustainable peace. UN peacekeepers (soldiers and military officers, civilian police officers and civilian personnel from many countries) monitor and observe peace processes that emerge in post conflict situations and assist ex-combatants to implement the peace agreements they have signed. Such assistance includes confidence-building measures, power sharing arrangements, electoral support, strengthening rule of law, and economic and social development.
Jus ad Bellum	Refers to the conditions under which States may resort to war or to the use of armed force in general. (ICRC)	Precaution	Rule 15 of Rules of Customary IHL: In the conduct of military operations, constant care must be taken to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects. All feasible precautions must be taken to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects. (ICRC)
Jus in Bello	Seeks to minimize suffering in armed conflicts, notably by protecting and assisting all victims of armed conflict to the greatest extent possible. (ICRC)	Preparedness	Capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazards, events or conditions.
Military Necessity	Permits measures which are necessary to accomplish a legitimate military purpose and are not otherwise prohibited by international humanitarian law. In the case of an armed conflict the only legitimate military purpose is to weaken the military capacity of the other parties to the conflict. (ICRC)	Programme Criticality	The United Nations Programme Criticality (PC) Framework is a component of the UN Security Management System (UNSMS) which is used to determine levels of acceptable security risk for programmes and mandated activities implemented by UN personnel.
Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operation	Typically deployed in the dangerous aftermath of a violent internal conflict, once there is a peace agreement or political process in place, even a fragile one. These operations are generally more involved in peacemaking activities than traditional missions. They work in collaboration with other UN and non-UN actors to support and promote dialogue and reconciliation between different groups to ensure peace agreements are upheld. (DPKO)	Protection	Encompasses all activities designed to obtain full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, and of refugee and international humanitarian law. It involves creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation. Where protection is not available from national authorities or controlling non-state actors, vulnerable people have a right to receive international protection and assistance from an impartial humanitarian relief operation. Such action is subject to the consent of the state or parties concerned and does not prescribe coercive measures in the event of refusal, however unwarranted.

Proxy Forces	Proxy forces are groups acting on behalf of a state on another state's territory. In case the state exercises overall control over the group, the situation can amount to an international armed conflict, as there are states involved on both sides. Overall control exists where a state has a role in organizing, coordinating or planning the military actions of the organized armed group, and finances or equips the group.
Quick Impact Projects	Small-scale, low-cost projects that are planned and implemented within a short timeframe by military actors. QIPs are mainly implemented through local actors including local authorities, non-governmental and grassroots organizations. As such, the implementation of QIPs help build the community's management capacities while broadening a mission's outreach at the local level. (DPKO)
Refugee	A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, or for reasons owing to aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his/her country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his/her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge outside his/her country of origin or nationality, and who is unable or, due to such fear, unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of his/her country of origin or nationality.
Resilience	The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of essential basic structures and functions.
Rules of Engagement (ROE)	Internal rules or directives among military forces that define the circumstances, conditions, degree, and manner in which the use of force, or actions which might be construed as provocative, may be applied. In some nations, ROE have the status of guidance to military forces, while in other nations, ROE are lawful commands. ROE do not normally dictate how a result is to be achieved, but will indicate what measures may be unacceptable.
Sector	Area of concern to be addressed by humanitarian work. Examples of sectors are food and agriculture; education and protection; economic recovery and infrastructure; health and nutrition; water and sanitation; and shelter and non-food items.
Surge Capacity	Swift deployment of experienced coordination experts and other specialized humanitarian personnel when there are unforeseen emergencies and disasters, when a crisis deteriorates, or a when a <i>force majeure</i> affects an office. (OCHA)
Security Management Team (SMT)	A forum which includes the Security Advisor/Officer and heads of offices from all UN agencies and, where there is a peacekeeping operation, the heads of its military and police components.
Security Cell	A working group of security officers from various UN agencies and NGOs that gathers prior to the SMT meetings.

Security Information	An important type of information to be shared, when deemed appropriate and respectful of confidentiality, between military and humanitarian actors, through appropriate information sharing platforms.
Temporary Cessation of Hostilities	The suspension of fighting agreed upon by all relevant parties for a specific period. It may be undertaken for various reasons, including for humanitarian purposes. In such cases, the agreement identifies the geographic area of operations and the period during which specific humanitarian activities will be carried out.
Warning Orders	During the planning phase of an operation, military commanders and leaders use Warning Orders as a shorthand method of alerting their units and individual soldiers to forthcoming tasks or modifications in ongoing tasks.
Vulnerability	Description of people who are at greatest risk from situations that threaten their survival or their capacity to live with an acceptable level of social and economic security and human dignity. These people are often refugees or displaced persons, or victims of natural disasters, health emergencies or poverty brought about by socio-economic crises.

List of Acronyms

AAR	After Action Review
AFP	Agencies, Funds, Programmes
AU	African Union
ANSA	Armed Non-State Actors
AP (GC)	Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention
ASP	Associate Surge Pool (OCHA)
CAR	Central African Republic
CIHL	Customary International Humanitarian Law
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund (OCHA)
CMCO	Civil-Military Coordination (EU)
CMCoord	Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (also UN-CMCoord)
CMCS	Civil-Military Coordination Service (OCHA)
CFI	Civil-Military Interaction (NATO)
CMO	Civil-Military Operations
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFS	United Nations Department of Field Support
DO	Designated Official (UN)
DPA	United Nations Department for Political Affairs
DPH	Direct Participation in Hostilities
DPKO	United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
DSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
E/OR	Enlisted/Other Ranks (NATO)
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	United Nations Economic Community of West African States
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator (as USG also Head of OCHA)
ERR	Emergency Response Roster (OCHA)
EU	European Union
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FC	Force Commander (UN peacekeeping)
FMA	Foreign Military Asset(s)
G1-9	Staff Officer functions in commands higher than brigade level [mil]
GA	United Nations General Assembly

GC	Geneva Conventions
GDACS	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
GENCAP	Gender Standby Capacity Project (IASC)
HAO	Humanitarian Affairs Officer
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCP	Humanitarian Programme Cycle (OCHA)
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HNS	Host Nation Support
HOMC	Head of the Military Component (UN missions)
HuMOCC	Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Concept
IAP	Integrated Assessment and Planning (UN)
IARRM	Inter-Agency Rapid Response Mechanism (IASC)
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDT	Internal Disturbances and Tensions
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMTC	Integrated Mission Task Force (UN missions)
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (OCHA)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework (UN missions)
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance
J1-9	Staff Officer functions in Joint Commands [mil]
JLOC	Joint Logistics Operations Centre (UN missions)
JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Centre (UN mission)
JOC	Joint Operations Centre (UN missions)
JOTC	Joint Operations and Tasking Centre (UN missions)
L3	IASC System-Wide Level-3 Emergency
LOAC	Law of Armed Conflict
LogIK	Logistics In-Kind (online database for cross-border movement of emergency relief items (OCHA))
MCDA	Military and Civil Defence Assets
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MILAD	Military Advisor (UN mission)
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINSUMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MIRA	Multi-Sector Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment
MLT	Mission Leadership Team (UN missions)
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NI-9	Staff Officer functions in Navy Commands [mil]
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer [mil]
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NEO	Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSAG	Non-State Armed Group
O/OF	Officer Ranks (NATO)
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHRM	United Nations Office for Human Resources Management
OPSEC	Operational Security [mil]
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
POC	Protection of Civilians
PoW	Prisoner of War
PROCAP	IASC Protection Standby Capacity Project
QIP	Quick Impact Project
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCRC	Red Cross/Red Crescent (Movement)
RFA	Request For Assistance
S1-9	Staff Officer functions at brigade or battalion level [mil]
SBPP	Standby Partnership Programme
SC	Security Council (UN)
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SITREP	Situation Report
SMG	Senior Management Group (UN missions)
SMT	Security Management Team (UN)

SO	Security Officer
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement [mil]
SOP	Standard Operation Procedures
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TCC	Troop Contributing Country
UI-9	Military Staff Officer positions in UN missions
UN	United Nations
UN CIMIC	United Nations Civil-Military Coordination (in peace operations)
UN-CMCoord	United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (also CMCoord)
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNGA Res	United Nations General Assembly Resolution
UNSC Res	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNAMID	African Union/United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (OCHA)
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (Syria/ Israel)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Services
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or The UN Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMEM	United Nations Military Experts on Mission
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNMO	United Nations Military Observer
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNSCO	Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process
UNSMS	UN Security Management System
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
USAF	United States Armed Forces
USG	Under-Secretary-General (UN Headquarters)
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WO	Warrant Officer [mil]