

United Nations Under Secretary-General Department of Safety and Security

Brief to 83rd Interpol General Assembly

02-07 November 2014

Slide 1: The UN in a Global Context - Introduction

The United Nations (UN) comprises 193 Member States, employs 150 000 UN personnel and is present in across 187 countries

There are currently over 100 000 UN peacekeepers, from 122 countries, employed in 16 peacekeeping operations: Haiti, Liberia, Lebanon, India and Pakistan, DRC, Mali etc.

Guided by the UN Charter, the organization has a mandate to maintain international peace and security, through the General Assembly, Security Council and other bodies and committees

Slide 2: The UN in a Global Context – Mandate and Programs

In order to achieve its mandate, the UN and its family of agencies are engaged in a vast array of work that seeks to improve people's lives around the world, and reach every corner of the globe. The organization works on a broad range of issues in order to achieve its goals and coordinate efforts for a safer world. A few examples of these are:

- **Peace and Security**
 - In addition to its peacekeeping and observer missions, the UN contributes to conflict prevention and mediation between States through the deployment of Special Envoys and Special Representatives, such as in Libya, Ukraine and Mali. Also undertakes missions in support of disarmament and Inter-state conflict such as disputed borders, through the International Court of Justice.
 - The UN promotes and strengthens States' democratic institutions, including by providing electoral assistance to more than 100 countries, such as in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Sudan.
- **Humanitarian and Development**
 - The UN has helped governments in times of crises by providing humanitarian assistance to more than 60 million refugees.
 - The UN coordinates the 2000 Millennium Development Goals assisting States achieve their aims in areas of poverty reduction and good governance, as well as health.

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- **Human Rights and Rule of Law**

- The UN Rule of Law program helps governments strengthen their legal and political frameworks, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations. The UN has deployed Judicial Affairs, Corrections and Police Officers to assist States restore the Rule of Law across nearly 20 missions.
- The UN has supported the advancement of minorities' and women's rights. Development programs aimed at increasing women's participation in peace-building and decision-making have led to important gains in the areas of to education, healthcare and justice.
- UN efforts are in place to combat international crime. For example the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) works with HG to counter transnational organized crime by providing legal and technical assistance to fight corruption, money laundering, drug trafficking and smuggling of migrants. The UN has also established and supported a number of international courts and tribunals since the early 1990s to hold individuals criminally responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide conducted in States including Rwanda, Former Yugoslavia, Cambodia and Lebanon.

Slide 3: Evolving Threat Environment

The UN special mandate to maintain peace and security had, until the early 1990s, largely protected UN staff deploying under the impartial “blue helmet” banner. Attacks against UN staff members were largely localised and context specific, reflecting the often internalised character of conflict in the immediate post-Cold War era.

The attacks of 11 September 2001 and the new global security environment saw a concurrent increase in the *direct* and *strategic* targeting of the UN: In 2003, founding member of Al Qaeda Abu Musab al Zaqawi ordered a complex attack against the UN premises in Baghdad, Iraq killing 15 UN staff members. This was to be the first in nearly 40 direct attacks by AQ and affiliates against the UN to date. The UN has recorded 155 fatalities as a result of direct and indirect extremist attacks against the UN. It is clear: the UN remains a priority target of AQ and affiliated groups, including the evolving Islamic State.

While the threat of transnational terrorism persists, recent years have seen additional unprecedented challenges to UN programs deployed across a record number of conflict arenas. The growth of transnational crime has had direct impact on the ways in which the UN does business.

- The criminalisation of terrorism has seen a rise in both sophistication and evolution of methodology, with direct impact on UN operations in country. For example, the increased use of abductions-for-ransom in support of *terrorism* activities has increased globally. Extremist kidnappings for purely political purposes have been superseded by resource-driven abductions, resulting from newly forged linkages with criminal networks. This nexus can be seen in locations such as Colombia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the southern Philippines where the UN runs vital peace-

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building and development activities. There is an average of 20 abductions of UN personnel per year, primarily affecting UN national staff members.

- The UN has also witnessed a rise in the technical capabilities of extremists due to the transnational nature of modern extremism. Insufficient border controls, disputed territories and structural insecurity allow the easy transport of fighters, resources and capacities across conflicts. An attack against UN headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria in 2011 for example, was conducted by Boko Haram members who received training and funding from al-Shabaab in Somalia. We share the concerns of many HGs regarding the threat of attacks by returnees from the Syrian/Iraqi conflict.
- The global jihadi ideology has been used to exploit local vulnerabilities. UN programs such as the Polio Eradication Initiative, and gender empowerment, health and education programs have all faced threats and violent attacks, often perpetrated by local criminals, yet justified by transnational extremism ideology.

The UN Mandate increases its vulnerabilities: The UN's mandate to maintain peace and security and promote human rights and the rule of law threatens the very power structures that support those seeking to do harm.

In looking specifically at transnational crime: UN capacity building measures that strengthen the rule of law necessarily challenge the capabilities of criminals.

- For example, programs aiming to counter drug-trafficking or limiting illicit crops threaten the resources of criminal networks. The UN becomes vulnerable to criminal attack in return, or even to acts of terrorism where these links exist.
- UN investigations into alleged international crimes can concurrently raise the threat to UN operations: attempts to redress human rights violations on account of gender, race or religious minority can challenge discriminatory power structures, and can result in violent opposition.

Slide 4: Role of Member States and the security of UN personnel

How can the UN protect itself against this range of transnational threats, while ensuring vital program delivery in fulfilment of its mandate? With the support of Host Governments. The UN is present in each country under the agreement of that government, and is guaranteed under international Conventions and MOUs:

- *Convention on Privileges and Immunities 1946*
- *Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel*
- *International Criminal Court Rome Statute 2002*

The UN's presence is based on the fundamental principle that the primary responsibility for safety and security of personnel, assets and programs lies with the Host Government.

The UN complements this work. Under my department, the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), we provide a range of security advisers, coordination officers, analysts and other experts in-country to enhance and support the role Host Governments have to play in the protection of UN assets and personnel. We are not a police force: we cannot arrest or investigate. We rely on your governments to share security information, allocate appropriate

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resources, undertake investigations where necessary, and ensure appropriate justice is served to those who injure, harm or cause death to UN personnel.

It is crucial that the UN be able to undertake its vital humanitarian, development and peace-building programs - this complex, challenging and diverse work of the UN is key to the stability and security of States and the maintenance of international peace and security.