

Safety and Security

Staff of political missions routinely work in highly insecure environments, where they are at risk from abductions, hostage-taking, banditry, armed conflicts, terrorism, intimidation, harassment, and safety incidents. These risks exist, to varying extents, in all mission environments, but are most prevalent in high-threat contexts, including Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. There, the presence of peace operations have helped defray the costs of security measures, but UNAMA and UNAMI have had to increase their own measures at significant cost as such operations begin to draw down. For 2011, for instance, 24 percent of UNAMA's proposed net operating budget is for security needs.¹

The UN continues to improve its security management system to better mitigate the risks of violence to its personnel, property, and activities. The UN's approach to security management is based on "how to stay" – i.e., on finding ways to keep required personnel where they need to be and as safe as possible.² On 1 January 2011, the UN replaced the previous security phase system with a new system based on objective threat assessment that helps missions to identify the threats they face, which are most acute, and what specific mitigation measures may be required. The UN has also developed guidelines for acceptable risk, establishing an Executive Group on Security, extended security training to nationally recruited personnel, and introduced a new Security Policy Manual.

Primary responsibility for the security and protection of UN personnel rests with the host government. Yet, to date, 89 of the UN's 193 member states are parties to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel; only 25 are parties to the Option Protocol, which specifically covers the delivery of policy assistance in peacebuilding and which has yet to enter into force.

- 1 United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on Estimates in Respect of Special Political Missions, Good Offices and Other Political Initiatives Authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan*, A/65/328/Add.4 (19 October 2010).
- 2 United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on Safety and Security of United Nations and Associated Personnel*, A/65/344 (10 September 2010).