Security Risk Management in Emergencies

Overview

This section provides a basic understanding on the UN Security Risk Management approach.

IOM has been a member of the UN Security Management System (UNSMS) since 1998. The terms and responsibilities of IOM towards the UNSMS and vice versa are stated in the 2013 IOM-UNDSS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). See IOM Security Management System for more information.

Security Risk Management (SRM) in the UNSMS is the analytical process for assessing the operational context of the UN in order to identify the risk level of threats that may affect UN personnel, assets, premises and operations on the basis of which, security management decisions are made.

Description

The SRM is the heart of staff security management. Most of the security management decisions and requirements stated in the UNSMS Security Policy Manual, such as MOSS and RSM (former MORSS), are based on SRM. The Security Risk Assessment (SRA) is a part of the SRM. The UNSMS Security Policy Manual defines the SRA as the process of identifying risks that could affect IOM personnel, assets or operations and IOM's vulnerability to them. SRA is required when for the following:

- Establishing a new office;
- There is a change or development in the area that directly or indirectly affects IOM operations and/or activities;
- Whenever new mission is to be deployed;
- Expansion of programmes into new areas of a country;
- Operations are resuming after a programme suspension, relocation or evacuation for security reasons.

In very high-risk areas, the UNSMS requires a specific SRA prior to issuing a mission security clearance. Within IOM, the specific SRA and mission security clearance are coordinated with OSS in Headquarters and approved by the Office of the Director General.

SRAs are conducted by a UNSMS Security Professional. A country and area SRA are conducted by the UNDSS and passed on to the security cell members for review. Once reviewed in the security cell, the SRA is presented to the SMT for endorsement. Upon receiving endorsement from the SMT, the SRA is submitted to UNDSS Headquarters' Division of Regional Operations for approval and publishing. For implementation of required security measures, such as MOSS, RSM and local Cost-Shared Budget, the SRA is a pre-requisite. If put in a position to review or deal with security documents such as the SRA, MOSS, RSM, Cost-Shared Budget, etc., please contact OSS for assistance.

The UNSMS policy on Security Risk Management is found at the UNDSS Security Policy Manual.

Relevance to IOM’s Emergency Operations

One of the most important rules in security management found in the UNSMS Security Policy Manual is this: Management decisions must not be based on the threat! Only when we are clear on our vulnerability to a threat should we decide what to do next.

Security Risk Management is of significant importance as it helps you achieve your objectives by lowering the impact of threats associated to your duty station and/or programme. Risk is defined in the UNSMS as the likelihood of a harmful event occurring and the impact of the event if it were to occur. Risk Management in the UNSMS is the systematic determination and implementation of timely and effective approaches for managing the effects of threats to the organization. As security measures, especially physical security measures, may have a significant impact on your operational budget, it is important to understand that each security requirements established in your duty station is based on a systematic, factual, relevant and approved Security Risk Assessment.

Links

- UNDSS Security Policy Manual

Contacts

For generic inquiries, please contact the Office of Staff Security (OSS): OSS@iom.int.

For inquiries on safety and security policies and trainings, please contact OSS Headquarters: OSSHQ@iom.int.

Key Points

- IOM is a member of the UN Security Management System (UNSMS). Therefore, we are required to comply with the security requirements set-out by UNSMS.
- Management decisions must not be based on the threat but on the vulnerability to a threat.
- Security Risk Management is a component of all UNSMS policies and directly link to operations; therefore, it is important to have a basic understanding of it.
- Security requirements may have an impact on your programme budget; therefore, it is important to understand that each security requirements must be based on a systematic, factual, relevant and approved Security Risk Assessment.

References and Tools

- UN Security Management System Policy on Security Risk Management

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