

Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP)

Overview

In 2013, the UN system adopted a [Human Rights Due Diligence Policy](#) (HRDDP, or Policy) that sets out the measures required to assess the human rights risk of support provided by UN entities to non-UN security forces, in order to ensure that such support is consistent with the UN's Purposes and Principles as set out in the Charter. As a member of the UN system, IOM has chosen to be guided by those Purposes and Principles, and to develop its own internal procedures for conducting human rights due diligence in relation to its engagement with non-UN security forces.

IOM's Guidance Note provides information on the Organization's implementation of the HRDDP on United Nations Support to Non-United Nations Security Forces. This Guidance Note is an internal IOM tool to support Country Offices' and emergency operations' understanding of their obligations towards implementing human rights due diligence when conducting activities that provide support to security forces that are not part of the UN system. This due diligence by IOM will help prevent or mitigate the risks of grave violations being committed by those forces. This guidance includes information on interacting with UN HRDDP Country Mechanisms, conducting the requisite human rights due diligence risk assessments, implementing measures to mitigate the risk of violations, and developing and implementing procedures for intervention and cessation of support when grave violations systematically occur.

Description

The HRDDP was endorsed by the Secretary General in 2013 and outlines the measures required of all UN entities to ensure that any support provided by those entities to non-UN security forces is consistent with the principles set out in the UN Charter and international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law.¹

The overall objectives of the Policy are to contribute to the respect for international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law, including by placing greater accountability on the UN and host country's security institutions; to protect and maintain the legitimacy, credibility, and public image of the UN; to ensure compliance with the Charter and the UN's obligations under international law; and to enable the UN's support in complex political and operational environments.²

Promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights is a core UN obligation (Charter, Article 1.3) and a guiding principle of IOM's work in ensuring respect for the rights, dignity, and well-being of migrants. IOM's Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF) articulates the 'adherence to international standards and the fulfilment of migrants' rights' as its first principle, expressed as the tenet that "humane and orderly migration requires compliance with international law. The obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of individuals is paramount and applies to all individuals within a State's territory, regardless of nationality or migration status and without discrimination, in order to preserve their safety, physical integrity, well-being and dignity."³ The [2019-2023 Strategic Vision](#) reinforces IOM's commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, including 'upholding human rights for all' and lays out the Organization's strategic objectives, which encompass advocating with Governments for the rights of all migrants.⁴

Relevance to IOM's Emergency Operations

IOM's role in supporting States to build capacity in migration governance and the provision of emergency assistance to migrants, including those forcibly displaced as well as host communities, is a core element of its mandate and strategic vision. In operational terms, this support often translates into the provision of funds, services, and assistance to national and regional security forces that are not part of the UN system. Whether partnering with national border forces, detention center guards, national police, or military units, this engagement can be critical to ensuring the timely and safe provision of aid and assistance to forced migrants and the respect of their human rights, dignity, and well-being.

Nevertheless, engaging with non-UN security forces is not without risk. In particular, the possibility that IOM-supported forces commit grave violations of human rights, humanitarian, and refugee law is ever-present. In fragile and crisis-affected emergency contexts with weak rule of law, this possibility can become a concrete human rights, reputational, and institutional risk that negatively impacts the Organization's ability to ensure both the safety and security of the most vulnerable and IOM's capacity to operate ethically and effectively.

In order to mitigate those risks, the UN system adopted the HRDDP in 2013 that sets out the measures required to assess the human rights risk of support provided by UN entities to non-UN security forces, in order to ensure that such support is consistent with the UN's Purposes and Principles as set out in the Charter.

As a member of the UN system, IOM has chosen to be guided by those Purposes and Principles, and to develop its own internal procedures for conducting human rights due diligence in relation to its engagement with non-UN security forces. This internal Guidance Note is intended to set out those procedures and ensure that IOM can continue to support governments while upholding its responsibility to respect, promote, and encourage respect for international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law.

Guidance on the Process

The HRDDP, as well as being a policy, is a tool to help UN entities prevent and mitigate the risk of human rights violations being committed by their support recipients.

Scope of Application

The IOM HRDDP Framework must be applied for all forms of support, assistance, and services, including service for fees, to all national or regional non-UN security forces. The HRDDP's scope of application includes all forms of support and assistance provided to non-UN security forces to mitigate for the risk of those forces committing grave violations. These concepts are defined in **Annex I: HRDDP Scope and Definitions** (see References and Tools section).

Preconditions for Provision of Support to Security Forces

In order to be considered for support, the following preconditions must be met:

- **National ownership.**⁵ Requests for support must be made in coordination with national authorities responsible for the command and control of security forces and cannot be made by security forces directly without host Government involvement. Requests for support must be made with full

knowledge of the executive Government of the host country and cannot be considered if ministries or institutions involved are operating independently of the Government. At the outset of any support provided, IOM must define who the key Government focal point and their counterpart at IOM are. Decisions related to the provision of support to security forces should not be made outside of that arrangement.

- **Non-enforcement of the death penalty.**⁶ IOM will not engage in supporting security or other forces and units responsible for the direct enforcement of the death penalty. This includes:

1. No construction, rehabilitation, and/or upgrading of detention centres where death sentenced prisoners are executed.
2. No support to units used as 'firing squads'.
3. No support to units and/or other personnel involved in carrying out any other method of capital punishment, including hanging, lethal injection, electrocution, gas inhalation, or beheading.
4. No provision of material, technical, and/or logistical support directed at enabling the enforcement of the death penalty, such as towards the construction of gallows or guillotines, supply of drugs and medical materials used to administer lethal injections, construction of chambers, or supply of lethal gases.
5. Ensuring that any material or structural support provided by IOM is not used in the enforcement of the death penalty subsequent to the end of the project period.⁷

- **No weapons.** IOM will not be involved in the purchasing of armaments, lethal or less-lethal weapons, or any form of ammunition.⁸ The Organization will similarly not provide any material or logistical support towards the manufacture or assembly of any type of lethal or less lethal weapons, including through the provision of spare parts, construction of weapons storage facilities, or support towards the transportation, import, or export of weapons or any of their constituent parts.
- No direct enhancement of immediate combat capacity. Requests for support for military units will not be considered if the request's explicit aim is to enhance their operational capacity for immediate combat.⁹

UN Coordination at Country Level

IOM, like other UN entities, has the primary responsibility for applying the HRDDP to the relevant forms of support it provides.

In countries where an HRDDP Country Mechanism has been established under the overall coordination of the most senior UN official in country (Special Representatives of the Secretary General, Resident Coordinators, or Humanitarian Coordinators), IOM should endeavour to work collaboratively within the established Mechanism; participate in joint, interagency HRDDP assessments (known as General Preliminary Risk Assessments – GPRAFs); and communicate its decisions on the results of its own risk assessments, including on continuation, mitigation, or cessation of support, in line with the agreed upon standard operating procedures (SOPs) defined for HRDDP implementation.

Nevertheless, the decision to participate in HRDDP Country Mechanisms rests with the IOM Head of Mission. Similarly, although the Policy obligates UN entities to conduct their own human rights due diligence, it does not mandate any one specific UN country-level mechanism, including any particular SOP, clearance process, or system for communicating decisions on support. These procedures and other elements of HRDDP Country Mechanisms should be developed and agreed upon by all involved UN entities to ensure they take into account the *"specific mandates of the United Nations entity concerned, as well as the nature and extent of the support, and the political and operational context in which it is delivered."*¹⁰

Conducting Risk Assessments

Human rights due diligence, conducted via the **HRDDP Risk Assessment (IRA) Tool** and the **IRA Summary Document** (See References and Tools section) must be carried out at the project conceptualisation stage, before a project is fully developed and activities begin. Conducting a risk assessment is a key step in the conceptualisation cycle, and should be undertaken alongside needs, capacity, priority, and stakeholder assessments. See the IOM HRDDP Implementation Framework for instructions on how to use the IRA Tool and the IRA Summary Document (also located in the References and Tools section).

The objective of carrying out an HRDDP Risk Assessment is to ensure IOM does not provide unqualified support to non-UN security forces that are at risk of committing, or are actively committing, grave human rights violations.

HRDDP Risk Assessments can be carried out at the project level, or, if there are multiple projects engaging with the same security force, at the support recipient level.

In countries where HRDDP Country Mechanisms exist (see above), IOM may be asked to participate in a joint risk assessment, commonly referred to as a GPRAF. GPRAFs are conducted at the country level and can be useful sources of human rights information for subsequent project- or recipient-level risk assessments conducted by IOM.

The IOM Head of Country Office must determine the validity of the results of HRDDP Risk Assessments at the outset to ensure a consistent application across all projects.

Adoption of Mitigating Measures

An integral part of the HRDDP Risk Assessment process involves the identification and implementation of mitigating measures, which should be integrated into projects and programmes and communicated to recipients of support in order to minimize the risk of violations occurring.

Mitigating measures may be developed and agreed upon at the country or interagency levels, where HRDDP Country Mechanisms exist. IOM may also individually develop measures at a project level.

Mitigating measures should not be generic but should instead be developed to address the specific factors that contribute to higher levels of risk, as identified during the course of the risk assessment.

Where potential risks have been identified before activities have begun, mitigating measures should be included into projects at the outset, to minimize those risks. However, if project activities are underway and risks/incidents have been identified, mitigating measures should be included as corrective actions to enable project activities to continue where possible.

You can find examples of mitigating measures in the HRDDP Implementation Framework (see References and Tools section).

Monitoring

HRDDP monitoring should be not only integrated into the project itself to monitor possible violations occurring within the scope and duration of the project (see above), but should also be included as an element of a project's M&E framework to measure due diligence compliance as a factor towards fulfilling project objectives.

Intervention and Cessation of Support

The commission of "grave violations" does not automatically lead to suspension or withdrawal of support. It triggers a responsibility for the UN entity providing support to engage with recipients and national authorities and to request them to take corrective measures and mitigate risks.

Suspension and withdrawal are clearly defined as last resort options when recipient entities have failed to take adequate remedial measures to stop grave violations from continuing.

Procedures for potential intervention and cessation of support on the basis of HRDDP risk assessments and possible outcomes should be defined at activities' outset.

Where HRDDP Country Mechanisms are established, intervention and cessation procedures are normally outlined in the HRDDP Country SOPs and agreed upon by all entities. Those procedures place the responsibility for formal communication on cessation of support with the most senior UN official in country, after consultation with all UN entities.

Where there is no functioning HRDDP Country Mechanism, IOM should set up its own internal procedure for communicating decisions to the Government, according to each office's mandate and operational context.

Contacts

Technical support for drafting internal and interagency SOPs, conducting risk assessments, adopting mitigating measures, and other HRDDP responsibilities can be sought from IOM HQ at hrddp@iom.int or contact Sara Ferro Ribeiro at sribeiro@iom.int.

Key Points

- The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) is a 2013 UN system-wide policy that applies to all UN entities – including IOM - that provides support to state or regional security forces that are not part of the UN.
- The policy sets out key due diligence actions that must be undertaken by UN entities to ensure they do not provide unmitigated support to security forces at risk of, or actively, committing grave human rights violations.
- IOM's HRDDP Guidance Note provides information on the IOM-level implementation of the HRDDP, its relevance to emergency operations in support of forced migrants, and how to conduct the requisite human rights due diligence risk assessments for projects engaging with non-UN security forces.

References and Tools

- [UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations Support to Non-United Nations Security Forces](#)
- [Politique de diligence voulue en matière de droits de l'homme dans le contexte de la fourniture d'appui par l'ONU à des forces de sécurité non onusiennes](#)
- [Política de diligencia debida en materia de derechos humanos en el contexto del apoyo de las Naciones Unidas a fuerzas de seguridad ajenas a la Organización](#)
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- [UNSDG Guidance Note on the HRDDP](#)
- [UNSDG Guidance Note on Human Rights for Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams](#)

- [IOM HRDDP Implementation Framework](#)
- [Annex I - HRDDP Scope and Definitions](#)
- [Annex 2 – HRDDP Internal Risk Assessment \(IRA\) Tool](#)
- [Annex 3 – HRDDP Internal Risk Assessment \(IRA\) Summary Document](#)

Document date

Document last updated: Apr 2023

