

***ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment 2013 side event, 16 July 16:15 – 17:30, Geneva***

## **Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys: To Use or Not to Use?**

**World Vision International and UN OCHA Civil-Military Coordination Section**

**Sponsored by Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva**

The ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment is an excellent platform to introduce, promote, and encourage the implementation of the updated “IASC Non-Binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys” to a wide and relevant audience.

Principled civil-military coordination is facing a number of major and often interconnected challenges including restrictions imposed by State and non-State actors, the Global War on Terror, stabilization strategies, and targeted attacks on humanitarian personnel and operations. Today these guidelines are increasingly relevant given the growing complexities of the environments where humanitarian action is required and armed escorts are frequently considered as a means to obtain access to the affected people.

The guidelines are intended to assist members of Humanitarian Country Teams, and the wider humanitarian community, in making informed, collective (where possible) and coordinated decisions regarding the movement of humanitarian supplies, goods, assets and personnel. . The document is designed to assist humanitarian organisations make principled and pragmatic decisions, while balancing the humanitarian imperative with security risks and the principles of operational independence, impartiality and neutrality, necessary to maintain the civilian character of humanitarian assistance and protect humanitarian operating space.

***A panel discussion will take place followed by a Q&A session.***

A Representative from the Australian Permanent Mission will Chair the event. (Individual TBC)

Panel Members are:

- **Ms. Jules L Frost**, World Vision International, Senior Advisor for Civil-Military & Police Relations and Chair of the IASC Task Force committee that revised the Guidelines
- **Ms. Sophie Solomon**, UN OCHA, UN-CMCoord Officer recently returned from Mali.
- **Ms. Julie Dunphy**, UNHCR, Senior Liaison Officer (Security), Field Safety Section, Division of Emergency, Security and Supply
- Representative of the Australian Civil-Military Centre and/or UNHCR representative (TBC)

Questions that the expert level panel will address include:

1. The use of armed escorts is recommended only as a "last resort". What does this actually mean?
2. What are some key alternatives to using armed escorts for humanitarian convoys?
3. What are the potential consequences of using armed escorts and can these be mitigated or managed?
4. Describe the criteria, according to the Guidelines, that must be fulfilled in order to use armed escorts for humanitarian convoys.
5. If a decision is made to use armed escorts, what are the Guidelines' principles to assist an agency or group of agencies to do this successfully?
6. How can we avoid becoming dependent on armed escorts?