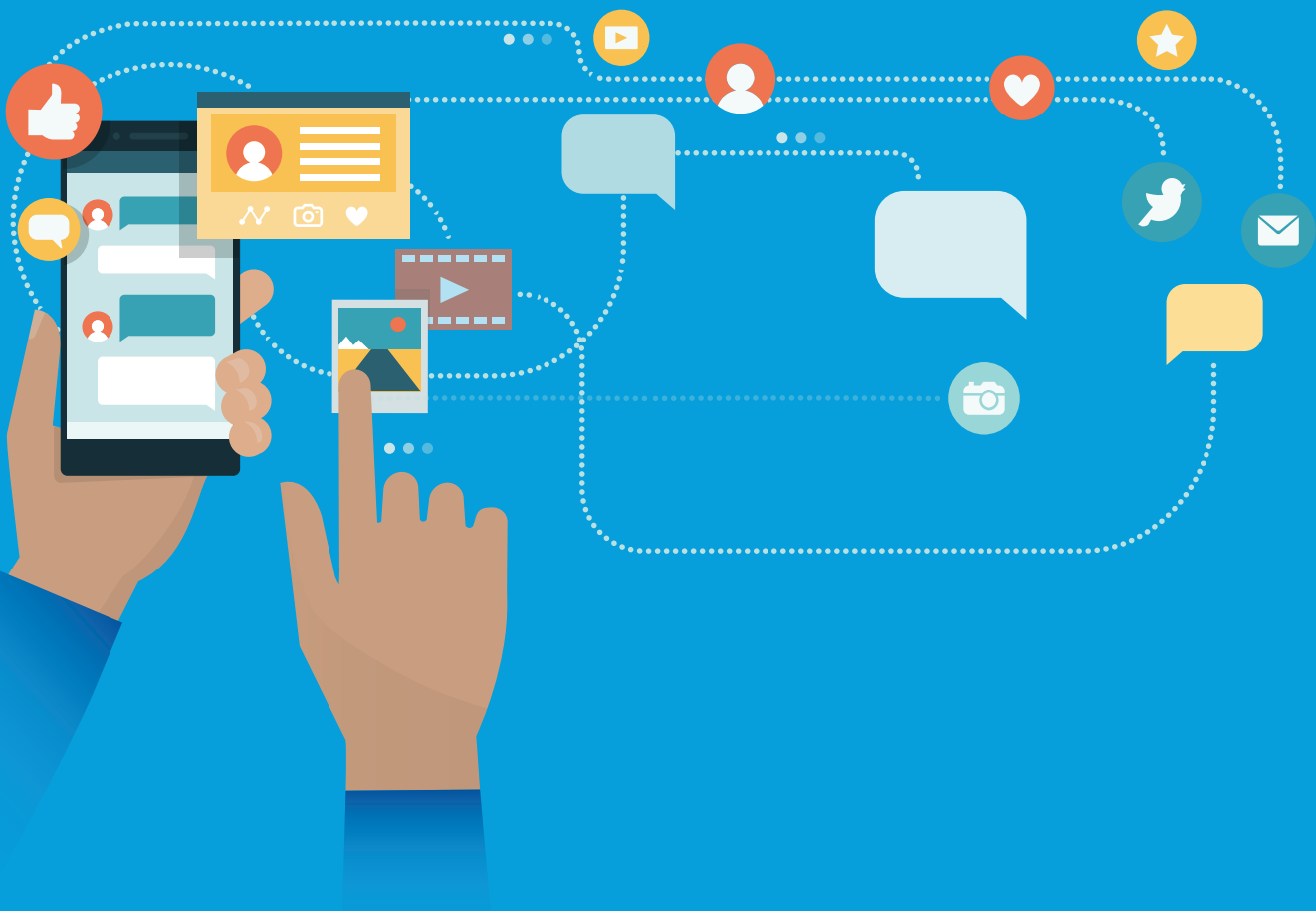


Leadership Dialogue 2023

Personal use of social media: How is my online behaviour?

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE AND MATERIALS



Welcome

Thank you for taking part in the 2023 United Nations Leadership Dialogue. This annual exercise is a unique opportunity for you and your colleagues to discuss meaningful subjects that impact how each of us carries out our daily work.

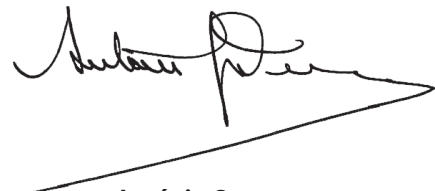
Each year, senior leaders conduct a guided Dialogue with their teams, who in turn, lead their own direct reports in a similar discussion until every United Nations staff member has participated.

The first Leadership Dialogue in 2013 focused on what it means to be an international civil servant. Last year's Dialogue centred around the new United Nations Values and Behaviours Framework.

This year's topic covers the personal use of social media. The discussion will explore how we, as international civil servants, can use social media responsibly, exercising freedom of expression and communicating about our lives, including our work, while fulfilling United Nations obligations. Responsible use of social media is critical in an era of misinformation and disinformation. We do not want to inadvertently spread misinformation – and countering disinformation requires media and information literacy, as well as good judgment.

The Dialogue will seek to remind each of us of our important role as the face of the Organization, including on social media. Our online behaviour must reflect the principles and values enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service.

I encourage your active participation in this Leadership Dialogue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', written over a long horizontal line that tapers to a point on the right side.

António Guterres
Secretary-General

Table of Contents

Welcome to the United Nations Leadership Dialogue	2
I. Background and Introduction	4
II. Before and After the Dialogue	9
III. Scenarios	10
Scenario 1: Omar’s Instagram activities: in official or personal capacity?	10
Scenario 2: Sepideh’s Twitter activities: legitimate complaints or prohibited conduct?	13
Scenario 3: Gumisai’s Facebook activities: information sharing or leaking?	15
Participant Evaluation of Facilitator Form	17
Leadership Dialogue Contact Information	18

I. Background and Introduction

Most of us have used social media in one form or another, whether to: tweet a commentary to a story that we agree with, like a Facebook post of vacation pictures from family and friends or make a TikTok video about our favourite dance routine. Instagram, WeChat, etc, the list of social media is endless. The UN has its own internal social media platform, Yammer.

While social media can be a helpful tool to connect with friends, family, and the society that we live in, it can also be a powerful medium for exercising our freedom of expression on other matters that are dear to our heart.

There is, however, a line where our freedom of expression, when not properly exercised, could cross over into interfering with our obligations as international civil servants. Staff regulation 1.2(f) states,

“While staff members’ personal views and convictions, including their political and religious convictions, remain inviolable, staff members shall ensure that those views and convictions do not adversely affect their official duties or the interests of the United Nations. They shall conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting their status as international civil servants and shall not engage in any activity that is incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties with the United Nations. They shall avoid any action and, in particular, any kind of public pronouncement that may adversely reflect on their status, or on the integrity, independence and impartiality that are required by that status”

In this Leadership Dialogue, we explore this thin line between our freedom of expression and our obligations as international civil servants on social media. We ask:

1. When does freedom of expression turn to inappropriate public political partisanship, partiality, or criticism?
2. When does voicing personal opinion cross into prohibited conduct such as online bullying and harassment?
3. When does sharing of UN-related information become leaking of confidential official information?

We shall review why international civil servants have an additional obligation of discretion in relation to putting their own opinions out in the public, when it comes to contentious or sensitive matters that relate to the UN. Our online behaviour should be guided by the same norms that guide our offline behaviour. Online anonymity should not be an excuse for partiality, incivility, or unauthorized disclosure of protected information.

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT GUIDELINES FOR THE PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, FEBRUARY 2019

The UN Secretariat guidelines remind us that even when used personally, social media can reflect on the Organization.




1. Think before posting and use common sense.
2. Even if a disclaimer is added, such as “views expressed are my own”, your behaviour on social media is not exempt from the impartiality and conduct required, and befitting, of an international civil servant. Help protect the reputation and integrity of the United Nations as a whole, as well as the privacy, security, and well-being of its employees.
3. The use of the name and emblem of the United Nations to further personal or third-party interests is prohibited as it is reserved for the official purposes of the United Nations.
4. Be aware of privacy settings and manage them accordingly.
5. Even if it is not stated publicly on your social media profile, your status as a UN staff member is not private.
6. Remember that official information that has not been made public cannot be disclosed through social media, except with prior authorization.
7. Don’t use a professional email address to set up personal social media accounts.
8. Don’t use a pseudonym or false name to make comments or publish content related to the United Nations.
9. Be mindful of sharing and liking posts from other accounts, which could be interpreted as an endorsement of the facts and opinions such posts represent.
10. Respect the privacy rights of colleagues, partners, and beneficiaries, particularly when posting photos and videos.
11. If you’re not sure about whether your social media activity is consistent with your obligations as an international civil servant, consult your supervisor, the Executive Office, the local administrative or human resources office, or the Ethics Office for advice and guidance.

PERSONAL VS. OFFICIAL USE

The following diagram, developed by our colleagues in the UNFPA, gives some guidance on what amounts to private use as distinguished from official use.



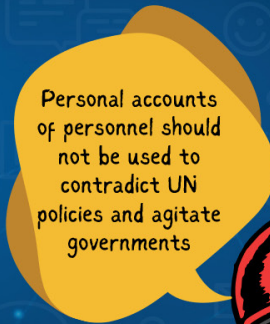
SOCIAL PROFESSIONAL

-  Appointed with specific technical expertise
-  Seen to be a subject matter expert but not official/professional user
-  Identified as staff but with disclaimer in profile as personal views



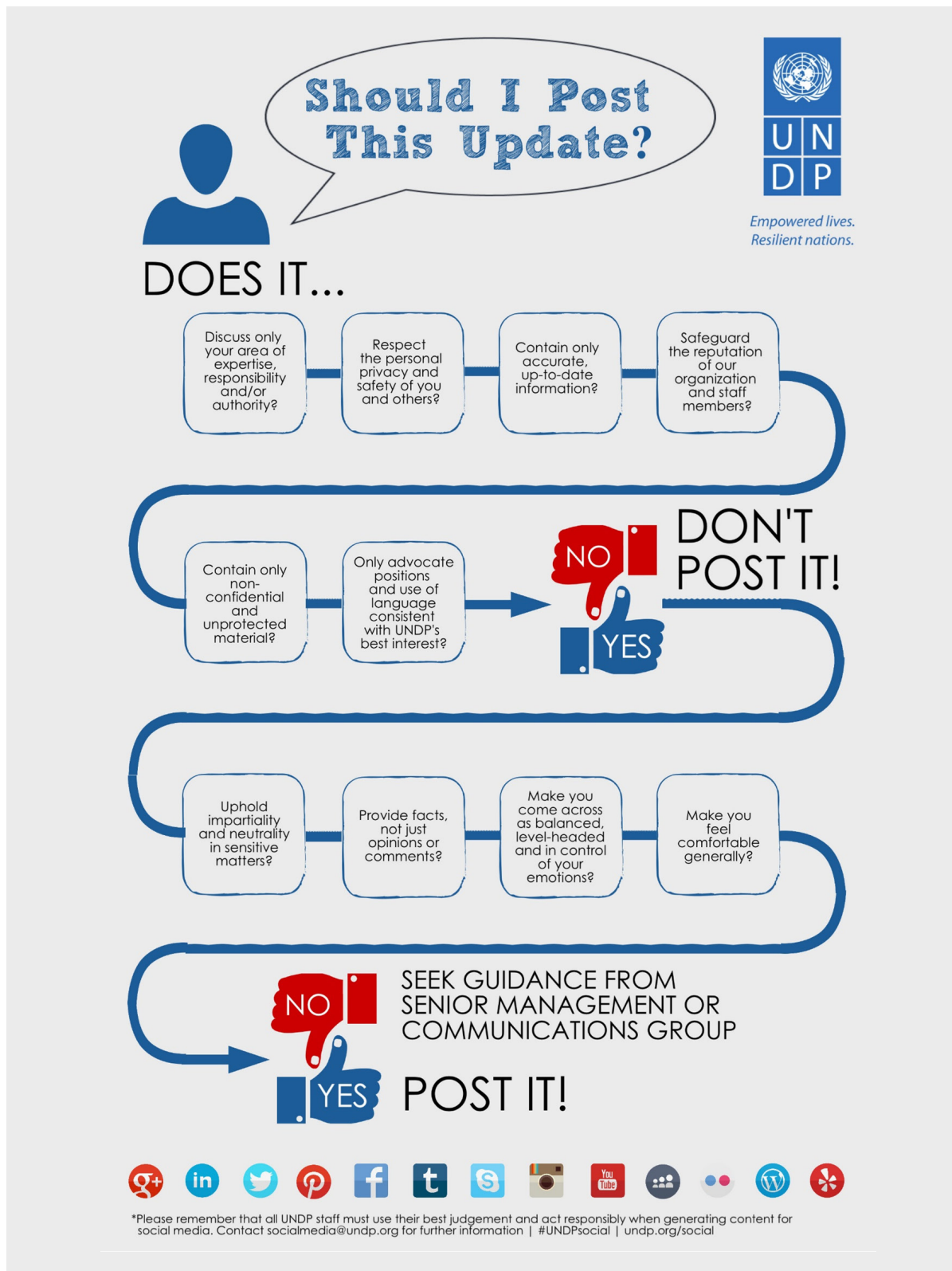
PRIVATE USER

-  Engaged on personal basis and not professional capacity



SHOULD I POST THIS?

Our colleagues in UNDP developed a diagram that describes the thought process that we could consider prior to posting content on our personal social media.



II. Before and After the Dialogue

The host of your Leadership Dialogue (in general, your manager) will facilitate a discussion lasting around 90 minutes on at least two of the scenarios. To help you and others get the most out of this year's Leadership Dialogue, we would encourage you to take the following four steps before and after the Dialogue:

STEP 1: PRE-READING

Please take a look at the following resources prior to the Dialogue:

- [Staff Regulation 1.2 \(f\)](#)
- [United Nations Secretariat guidelines for the personal use of social media](#)
- [Twitter guidelines for UN senior staff and spokespeople](#)
- [Department of Public Information social media guidelines](#)
- [ST/SGB/2019/5, Institutional use of social media](#)

STEP 2: PREPARE TO PARTICIPATE

1. Please come to the discussion ready to actively participate, ask questions and contribute relevant examples/ discuss relevant situations you may know of or have heard about.
2. **Multilingualism:** The United Nations is a multilingual environment. While different duty stations will have specific languages that are mandated for official communication, not all colleagues will be able to express themselves freely and passionately in them. As the Leadership Dialogue is meant to encourage the exchange of ideas, we encourage you to embrace the use of multiple languages in the Dialogue and to maximize participation, by offering to assist colleagues with translation, if you speak the needed language(s). The Ethics Office, on its part, will endeavour to increase the languages in which the Dialogue is available.
3. Let your Leadership Dialogue host know if you have any needs related to disability or working hours, or any other requirements that need to be addressed, in order to enable you to fully participate.

STEP 3: SCENARIOS

- Please read through the three scenarios below, reflecting on the discussion questions if you have time.

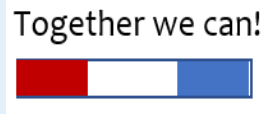
STEP 4: AFTER THE SESSION

- Submit Appendix F online (see page 12) to evaluate your discussion leader/session facilitator's conduct of the leadership dialogue session. You can opt to submit anonymously.

III. Scenarios

SCENARIO 1: OMAR'S INSTAGRAM ACTIVITIES: IN OFFICIAL OR PERSONAL CAPACITY?

Nala received an official email from her colleague, Omar. Nala noticed that Omar's UN email signature block includes a link to his personal **Instagram** account and a tagline that reads "Together we can!" along with a small banner underneath:



Omar had recently joined the UN regional office in his home country. Among his responsibilities as a Public Information Officer is taking photographs of UN events and officials. Prior to joining the UN, Omar was a photographer and a political activist. He remains a freelance photographer in his personal time and is still very interested in politics.

There are upcoming national elections, and the entire country is mobilized. Civil society organizations as well as new and unknown political parties are competing for attention and power. Omar belongs to the Horizon Party, a long-established political party that has not held office since the military coup in the late 1990s. The Party's slogan is "Together we can!" Although Omar is excited about the developments in his country, he is careful not to express his political views in his personal social media activities.

Nala is curious about her new colleague, so she clicks on his Instagram link. Omar seems like an outgoing, fun person with a lot of friends. Nala finds a link to Omar's **personal website**, which includes a bio and refers to his current UN position. His website showcases photographs he has taken in his official capacity as a Public Information Officer and in his personal capacity as a freelancer; the bottom of the page includes the disclaimer: "Photographs © 2021 Omar Rodriguez".

Nala also notices essays, photographs, and videos on the human rights situation in his home country (their duty station) and a video promoting the Horizon Party's presidential candidate. Omar opines in a caption under the video that the candidate is the best hope for protecting human rights in the country. The page also includes a variety of articles analysing and criticizing the political landscape and the dangers to human rights posed by the other candidates.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What is happening in this scenario?
 - What personal views does Omar include in his official UN signature block?
 - What information does Omar combine between his official and personal capacities in his Instagram account?
 - What do you think of Omar's public expression of endorsement of a political candidate?
 - Do you think that Omar is publicly supporting criticism against the host government or its policies?

- What if Omar had posted this information on his UN Yammer account instead? Would your opinion be different?
 - What if Omar’s social media contains controversial posts from his days before joining the UN; what should he do about them?
2. What is Omar’s primary functional responsibility for the UN?
 - Who owns the copyright of UN work product, including photographs?
 - Can those photos show up on personal social media platforms?
 3. What is Omar’s outside activity? What does it mean for staff not to use their office, or the knowledge gained from their official function for private gain?
 - Could Omar’s outside activity create a functional conflict of interest?
 - Do you know which outside activities require prior approval?
 - Do you think Omar’s freelance photography and political activities amount to outside activities that require prior approval?
 - Do you know who approves outside activities?
 - What was Omar using to promote his photo gallery?
 - Can staff use their access to the UN compound or its officials for private gain?
 - Can staff use their work product for private gain, how?
 4. Can Omar belong to a political party? Can Omar support a political candidate? Can Omar criticize his government or government’s policies?
 - What does the principle of independence mean as an international civil servant?
 - What does the principle of impartiality mean as an international civil servant?
 - What is the difference between belonging to a political party and actively supporting a political candidate?
 - Does Omar advocate for any party or candidate on his website?
 - Does Omar demonstrate his opposition to government parties and policies on his website?
 - Could his affiliation with the UN be used by the opposition for political reasons?
 - Are staff members not allowed to voice any opinion whatsoever on current events?
 5. Who owns the information that Omar posts on social media platforms? Should Omar include his UN affiliation in his personal accounts?
 - When restricting privacy settings, does that mean posts and photos will remain private?
 - When a member of the public notices a staff member’s UN affiliation, how do you think that impacts them? What expectation do you think they have?

RELATED RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- [ST/SGB/2023/1, Staff Regulations 1.2 \(f\), \(h\), \(o\), \(p\) and 1.3 \(a\)](#)
- [ST/SGB/2023/1, Staff Rules 1.2 \(r\), \(s\), and 1.9](#)
- [ST/SGB/2016/9, Status, basic rights, and duties of United Nations staff members](#)
- [ST/AI/2000/13, Outside activities](#)
- [ST/IC/2006/30, Outside activities](#)
- [Standards of conduct for the international civil service, paragraphs 8, 9 and 33](#)
- [The United Nations Charter, articles 100 and 101](#)
- [United Nations Secretariat Guidelines for the Personal Use of Social Media \(2019\)](#)
- [ST/SGB/2019/5, Institutional use of social media, paragraph 3.1](#)
- [ST/SGB/2004/15, Use of information and communication technology resources and data, sections 1, 3.1.](#)

SCENARIO 2: SEPIDEH’S TWITTER ACTIVITIES: LEGITIMATE COMPLAINTS OR PROHIBITED CONDUCT?

James Bello is the Director of the UN Gender Office in the field. He has recently recruited a new Senior Gender Officer (P-5). Sepideh is outraged over Simone’s selection and her own non-selection. Sepideh has been with the Gender Office for three years and has served at the P-4 for seven years, often serving as OiC. She believes she is better qualified and is convinced the Director is having an affair with Simone.

Sepideh has a personal Twitter account but is careful not to include her UN affiliation in her profile. So, she freely expresses her views through this account.



Three people are discussing on Twitter:



Sepideh @dis_gruntled
Promotions are about who you know, failing that, who you sleep with!



Navdeep @dis_illusioned123
I know, right? She doesn't have the qualifications or experience. I would know, I used to work with her.



Tatiana @dis_gusted
Then she must have lied in her resume.
😏



Sepideh @dis_gruntled
He used to work with her at UNPOP. It was widely known they were together. It’s so painfully obvious what’s going on here.



Tatiana @dis_gusted
How can anyone sleep with him?!? 🤔 He is so abusive and creates such a toxic environment in the Office.



Sepideh @dis_gruntled
He is one of the worst narcissists. When he’s angry, he launches into ad hominem attacks against select staff.



Navdeep @dis_illusioned123
It seems the 2019 delegation of authority has turned everything on its head. There’s no oversight anymore. It’s every Entity for itself!
[#DumpsterFire](#)



Sepideh @disgruntled
It’s time for the Scoop to get a call. [*The Scoop is an online magazine with a special interest in UN accountability/scandals.*] The whole thing is corrupt. Do you remember the P-4 position in the front office? The CoS changed the requirements to exclude most and include others and by others, I mean one.



Navdeep @dis_illusioned123
Of course, no one is above the rules Sepideh, but did you file a management evaluation request about the P-4 recruitment or file a complaint of abuse of authority?
[#Nervous](#)



Sepideh @dis_gruntled
You know that won’t change anything.



Navdeep @dis_illusioned123
Maybe, maybe not. But publicly accusing a manager of recruiting someone based on an alleged personal relationship between them is designed to smear their reputations, not change anything. If the Organization finds out that you are maliciously disclosing inside information and making baseless allegations against management and staff in the press, you may find yourself under investigation!



Tatiana @dis_gusted
I don’t think making angry and baseless allegations to the press qualifies you as a whistle blower or grants you protection. 🤔

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What is happening in this scenario?
 - Does it matter that Sepideh does not list her UN position in her profile?
 - Does it matter that none of the dialogue includes the names or offices about whom they're talking?
 - Can this dialogue spread beyond these three staff members? How?
 - Are these slanderous comments or a report of wrongdoing?
 - How does this dialogue make the Organization appear to anyone who would read them? Who could potentially see them?
2. What are these staff members doing publicly?
 - What are the responsibilities of staff vis-a-vis the public?
 - How does this exchange reflect on staff and the Organization?
 - Are staff permitted to air their personal grievances against the Organization publicly?
3. Could James or Simone file allegations of harassment against Sepideh and the others?
 - Do you think Sepideh's conduct is meant to cause offence or humiliation?
 - What could be the consequences of Sepideh's behaviour? What about Tatiana's and Navdeep's?

RELATED RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- [ST/SGB/2023/1, Staff Regulations 1.2 \(g\) and \(i\); Article XI](#)
- [ST/SGB/2023/1, Staff Rules 1.2 \(c\); Chapter XI](#)
- [ST/SGB/2016/9, Status, basic rights, and duties of United Nations staff members](#)
- [Standards of conduct for the international civil service, paragraphs 35 and 37](#)
- [ST/SGB/2011/7Rev.1 Central review bodies](#)
- [Rules of Procedure Central Review Board](#)
- [ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1 Protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations](#)
- [ST/AI/2017/1 Unsatisfactory conduct, investigations, and the disciplinary process, section 4](#)
- [ST/SGB/2019/8 Addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority, sections 1.4 and 5](#)
- [United Nations Secretariat Guidelines for the Personal Use of Social Media \(2019\)](#)
- [Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services website](#)
- [Office of Administration of Justice website](#)

SCENARIO 3: GUMISAI'S FACEBOOK ACTIVITIES: INFORMATION SHARING OR LEAKING?

- Also available in [video format](#)

Gillian has been serving in her UN peacekeeping mission for one and a half years. Her socially conservative duty station is a hardship one. Although she likes her work and her colleagues, she misses her family, friends, and social life. Still, she finds ways to stay social and have fun. This Friday is Phillip's birthday and Gumisai is retiring, and a big party is planned. Gillian has volunteered to help out and serve drinks. Due to heavy rains, a last-minute decision was made to hold the party in the warehouse hanger next to the transport section.

Scene: Extremely loud music and raucous behaviour

Gillian: This is such a great party! So many people are here. Some staff even brought dates!

Gumisai: [shows up at the bar] What a great send-off! I will miss everyone and my life in the field, the most rewarding part of my UN career. I want to make sure I get pictures with everyone tonight!

Gillian: Oh, please share your pictures. I want keepsakes from my time in the field too.

Gumisai: I promise to put them up on my **Facebook** before I leave.

On Saturday, Gumisai posted to his **social media** accounts a thank you note to his colleagues for a wonderful send-off and tagged them in all the pictures from the farewell party; staff sent back well-wishes and shared photos they had taken at the party.

Scene: Monday morning in the Office

Chief of Mission Support, CMS: [worried, panicked and holding onto her head] But how did this happen Mr. Singh?

Chief Security Officer, CSO, Mr. Singh: Well, it seems it was a combination of factors. First, because of the rain and the large number of people expected at the party, a last-minute decision was made to hold the party in the warehouse. The warehouse contained our new computer shipment, which was still being tagged and inventoried. That shipment appeared to have been in several of the photos taken the night of the party. Also, several photographs were taken at the entrance of the warehouse, showing the Transport Section in the background. All those photos were posted on personal **Facebook** accounts and shared extensively. It seems thieves used the photos to locate the Transport Section first and then the warehouse sometime early Sunday morning. The compound was breached, the warehouse broken into, and several computers and other supplies were stolen.

CMS: How do you know the photos were used to locate the warehouse?

CSO, Mr. Singh: Because several copies were found on the ground, with markings showing the security positions.

CMS: You will have to deal with the theft Mr. Singh because I've been getting calls all morning from the local press about the loud partying in the UN compound.

This was so irresponsible; our staff should have better sense. We can't just post anything on our social media accounts! Where to begin?!?!

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What is going on in this scenario? When holding an unofficial event on UN premises, what factors should be considered?
 - Is a retirement party an official event?
 - Who approves such parties?
 - Do you think the planners of the retirement/birthday party considered how their party might be received by the local community being served?
 - Do you think the party and the behaviour of the partiers demonstrated respect for the local population's suffering and culture?
2. How did the behaviour of Gumisai, Gillian and their UN colleagues at the party reflect on the Organization?
 - What should UN staff serving in a conservative duty station consider in their activities during their personal time?
 - What is the impression/risk of having people (incl. UN staff) engaging in raucous behaviour in a UN compound
 - What are the risks of damage to the UN's image?
3. Did Gumisai and his colleagues engage in a witting or unwitting disclosure of sensitive (photos) information?
 - What are staff responsibilities surrounding information/photos?
 - Beside potential theft, can the disclosure of information/photos create other operational risks for the Organization?

RELATED RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- [ST/SGB/2023/1, Staff Regulations 1.2 \(a\) and \(i\)](#)
- [ST/SGB/2016/9, Status, basic rights, and duties of United Nations staff members](#)
- [Standards of conduct for the international civil service, paragraphs 40 and 42](#)
- [United Nations Secretariat Guidelines for the Personal Use of Social Media \(2019\)](#)
- Directives and Circulars specific to the Mission
- [Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations](#)

Appendix F: Participant Evaluation of Facilitator Form (Online)

INSTRUCTIONS: Each participant should **submit the information below online** using the link <https://forms.office.com/e/nHXme3p6wZ> **OR** the QR Code below. For non un.org addresses, please contact ethicsoffice@un.org for an alternative link.



Prepare to fill in the information below online:

1. Date of session
2. Name of discussion leader
3. Your entity
4. Was the discussion leader knowledgeable and prepared?
5. Did the discussion leader engage your interest?
6. Did the discussion leader give sufficient time to complete discussions and exercises?
7. Did the discussion leader encourage you to participate?
8. Did the discussion leader listen to your comments, ideas, or questions?
9. Did the discussion leader limit his/her intervention to an appropriate level to focus the discussion on the views of the participants rather than his/her own?
10. Any other comments

Leadership Dialogue Contact Information

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO COMMENT, CONTACT:

United Nations Ethics Office

www.un.org/en/ethics

(Available via iSeek or the public United Nations site)

Email: ethicsoffice@un.org

Phone +1-917-367-9858

Also, please consult these resources, available on our website:

[Putting Ethics to Work: A Guide for UN Staff](#)

[The Roadmap: A Staff Member's Guide to Finding the Right Place](#)