General Assembly

Seventy-ninth session
Item 72 of the provisional agenda*
**Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and
disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including
special economic assistance**

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

     The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/118, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it a comprehensive and updated report on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel, including an assessment of the impact of safety and security risks on such personnel and of related United Nations system policies, strategies and initiatives.

     Consideration of the current global security environment shows that current compound and unpredictable crises, including complex humanitarian emergencies, protracted conflicts, increased civil unrest, crime, misinformation and disinformation, and environmental calamities, all have a significant effect on the safety and security of humanitarian and United Nations personnel,[a] including locally recruited personnel. The observations and recommendations of the present report focus on the need for Member States' support in order to further enhance collective efforts to prevent and mitigate current and emerging risks and joint security initiatives in line with respective United Nations mandates.

     Building on the coherent management of security risks within acceptable levels of risk, the report provides details of the efforts that have enabled the delivery of humanitarian, development, peace and security activities. Such efforts include initiatives of the Department of Safety and Security and the United Nations security management system to further enhance security capabilities and policies to facilitate the anticipation of and effective response to current and future security challenges. Managing security risks helps the Organization realize the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

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Development. Without such a process, the collective ability of the United Nations to strengthen international peace and security, achieve sustainable development and deliver humanitarian assistance would be compromised.

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[a] For the purposes of the present report, the term "United Nations personnel" refers to all personnel covered by the United Nations security management system, including United Nations system personnel, United Nations Volunteers, individually deployed military and police personnel in peacekeeping or special political missions, consultants, individual contractors, experts on mission and other officials with a direct contractual agreement with an organization of the United Nations system. The term does not refer to military members of national contingents or members of formed police units when deployed with their contingent.

I. Introduction

1.   In its resolution 78/118, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly, at its seventy-ninth session, a comprehensive and updated report on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel and on the implementation of the resolution, including an assessment of the impact of safety and security risks on such personnel, and the development, implementation and outcomes of policies, strategies and initiatives of the United Nations system in the field of safety and security.

2.   The present report contains an overview of the global security environment, the security threats faced by humanitarian and United Nations personnel, and initiatives of the Department of Safety and Security alongside other members of the United Nations security management system[1] and partners, to anticipate, plan and address such challenges. The report concludes with observations and recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

II. Global security environment

3.   The divides in political, economic, social, technological and environmental spheres, and the intersectionality of those spheres, have added complexity to the global security environment. Conflicts have reached levels not seen since 1945,[2] affecting nearly 308.5 million[3] people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection and putting a considerable strain on public institutions. The situation is compounded by the pervasive presence of transnational crime and violent extremism,[4] and the expanding sphere of influence of non-State armed groups. Such occurrences contribute to reduced levels of inter-State and intrasocietal solidarity, and to the increasing loss of public trust in institutions and civil unrest, which could affect the voting behaviours of the close to 2 billion people casting a ballot in 2024.

4.   The security of personnel is affected by environmental crises, which remain the defining challenge of the present day, reinforcing instability and displacements,[5] and exacerbating hazards to personnel, assets and property. Technology and artificial intelligence can be misused as vectors of misinformation and disinformation, affecting public perceptions and the reputation of humanitarian and United Nations personnel and activities (see A/77/CRP.1/Add.7). Attention should also be paid in particular to drawdowns, transitions or reconfigurations of peacekeeping operations and special political missions that lead to a decrease in security capacities of the integrated security workforce at the same time as assessed security requirements of the Department of Safety and Security and the United Nations country teams increase.[6] Such situations require sustained engagement with Member States on

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[1] The United Nations security management system is composed of all United Nations system organizations and other international organizations that have signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations on security management.

[2] United Nations Development Programme, "Trends report: the landscape of development" (New York, 2024).

[3] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Inter-agency coordinated appeals: May update". Available at https://humanitarianaction.info/article/inter-agencycoordinated-appeals-may-update.

[4] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Study on Homicide 2023* (New York, 2023).

[5] United Nations Environment Programme, "Climate change and security risks". Available at https://www.unep.org/topics/fresh-water/disasters-and-climate-change/climate-change-and-security-risks.

[6] United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Policy brief on the Security Council's consideration of the protection of civilians in armed conflict" (New York, 2024).

identifying necessary operational security capacities in order to enable the continuity of United Nations programmes.

5.   Assessments of such trends contributed to the formulation and implementation of context-specific security risk management measures. Those measures helped the Department of Safety and Security and other members of the United Nations security management system to enable critical efforts across the humanitarian, peace and security, and development spectrum through thousands of missions in areas categorized by respective security risk assessments as high or very high risk.

A.   Responses to emergencies

6.   The Department of Safety and Security, together with other United Nations security management system members, supported programme delivery throughout various crises, many of which overlapped and were protracted in nature, requiring multi-actor emergency responses, as well as surge deployments.

7.   In Myanmar, in order to respond to the humanitarian needs of around 18.6 million people, including thousands of forcibly displaced persons, the Department of Safety and Security enabled inter-agency high-risk missions amid the highest levels of violence[7] through contingency planning in the central regions and the States of Rakhine, Kachin and Shan. Regularly assessing and managing security risk levels remains crucial to the implementation of the Myanmar humanitarian response plan.

8.   Since the onset of conflict in 2017 in Mozambique, insecurity has progressively affected humanitarian assistance, including the provision of food and medicines, to over 132,800 displaced persons, most of them children in Cabo Delgado Province. Despite significant security incidents, the United Nations security management system organizations maintained programme activities in order to assist people in need through the mitigation of security risks amid prevailing and unpredictable armed conflict.

9.   The Department of Safety and Security provided tailored security analyses to United Nations country team and humanitarian country team members in the Niger to allow them to navigate the complex security landscape and broader stressors in the Sahel region and take informed decisions, enabling assistance for some of the 4.3 million people in need. Crisis preparedness and response support was also provided for security professionals for effective security risk mitigation.

10.   In Yemen, security management system organizations supported partners through 3,443 United Nations missions, including 272 high-risk missions, by providing risk mitigation amid inter-tribal clashes, carjacking, air strikes and drone threats. In collaboration with the host Government and neighbouring States, they facilitated the release of five personnel held hostage for 18 months.

11.   With nearly 15 million people in Ukraine currently requiring humanitarian assistance, [8] security management system organizations assessed the country's security contingency plans and worked closely with local authorities to enable 38,799 humanitarian, monitoring and other assistance missions across the country, of which 3 per cent were assessed as very high-risk. Despite risk levels remaining high, the

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[7] United Nations, "As crisis in Myanmar worsens, Security Council must take resolute action to end violence by country's military, address humanitarian situation, speakers urge", 4 April 2024. Available at https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15652.doc.htm.

[8] United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan: Ukraine* (New York, 2023).

organizations managed to increase programme activities by 12 per cent compared with the previous reporting period.

12. In Haiti, security management system organizations continued to operate in an extremely complex and dynamic security environment, including through over 200 high-risk and very high-risk missions in gang-controlled areas characterized by increasing crime rates, violence and attacks against State institutions and critical infrastructure, especially in Port-au-Prince. The missions, conducted primarily in internally displaced persons camps, facilitated the delivery of life-saving assistance and critical capacity-building support by the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, the United Nations country team and the humanitarian country team. The security management system also ensured that agencies could stay in the area and continue delivering vital assistance to affected communities, such as medical support missions of non-governmental health organizations under the Saving Lives Together framework. The Department of Safety and Security enabled access to land routes bordering the Dominican Republic in order to facilitate the relocation of some personnel to various regions to retain operations.

Regional security implications following the attacks on 7 October 2023 and the subsequent Israeli military operations in Gaza

13. In delivering humanitarian assistance to the 2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza, the United Nations has been operating in a context of extraordinary risk (see also para. 40 below). Risks are exacerbated by an inadequate system for coordination and notification with the relevant authorities, and impediments to the import of basic security and communications equipment, on which security management system leadership has provided advocacy and negotiation. Since October 2023, security management system organizations have supported in excess of a thousand life-saving missions, through 7,144 notified movements and 1,088 coordinated missions using agile security risk management approaches and advice, and substantial acceptance of risk by the most senior leaders of the United Nations. In order to stay and deliver in one of the world's most insecure environments, the Department of Safety and Security has reassessed and set in place context-specific security risk management measures, and has provided advice, analysis, technical expertise and operational support, security information, security planning (including emergency contingency planning) and liaison with the broader United Nations system and leadership, and Saving Lives Together partners. To facilitate person-centred security, the Department provided security training courses to personnel, including on safe and secure approaches, individual first aid kits and women's security awareness. Security management system organizations also enabled several humanitarian missions across the West Bank. The crisis has had regional repercussions, increasing threats to personnel and challenging programme delivery.

14. From Egypt, security management system organizations supported humanitarian operations in Gaza and 53 inter-agency missions to North Sinai to facilitate the entry and exit of personnel through the Rafah border crossing. They also supported the evacuation of more than 298 non-essential personnel and their family members, coordinated 55 rotations of critical United Nations and humanitarian personnel through the temporary United Nations hub in Arish, and carried out six medical evacuations.

15. In Lebanon, following the escalation of exchanges of fire across the Blue Line, the Department of Safety and Security enhanced situational awareness for security decision makers and personnel through timely threat assessments and preparedness activities. Coordination with national authorities helped enable 10,672 United Nations humanitarian, peacekeeping, development, political and other missions, including over 500 in conflict-affected areas north and south of the Litani River. In

the Syrian Arab Republic, the Department supported 19 United Nations entities in conducting 9,095 missions, including over 700 with physical security support. The Department's security risk assessments and scenario planning facilitated missions conducting humanitarian needs assessments and other assistance missions in high-risk and very high-risk areas in the north-west of the country.

Cross-cutting emergency safety and security assistance

16. In line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Department of Safety and Security has been enhancing streamlined information-sharing and coordination efforts, including through digital transformation initiatives, to better prepare and respond to the dramatic increase in environmental hazards[9] affecting United Nations personnel, assets and premises.

17. After Storm Daniel struck eastern Libya in September 2023, causing floods that affected 884,000 people, security management system organizations facilitated 38 humanitarian missions to Darnah, undertook various security assessments of roads and office facilities in the coastal areas of Darnah, Susah and Bayda' and coordinated aid delivery from nine United Nations entities over eight months.[10] Similarly, following a 6.8 magnitude earthquake in the Provinces of Al Haouz and Chefchaouen in Morocco, they secured access to affected areas and supported the deployment of humanitarian personnel to the United Nations country team for rapid response efforts.

18. In emergency situations across Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Mali, the Niger, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the Department of Safety and Security coordinated culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate psychosocial support for United Nations personnel. It also provided stress management and family liaison services in 10 hostage incidents affecting United Nations personnel and families, and prioritized counselling for locally recruited personnel in high-risk areas. The Department's physical security assessments, including bunker designs in Lebanon and protection measures in Somalia, enabled continued programme delivery despite missile threats.
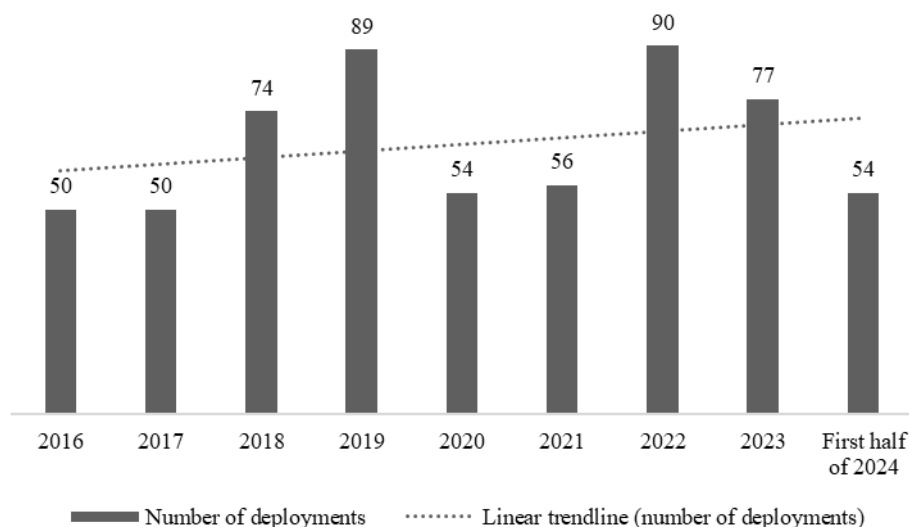
B. Surge deployments

19. The Department of Safety and Security undertook 77 surge deployments (4,177 days) to bolster security support for critical United Nations development, humanitarian and peace operations, including in Chad, Egypt, Haiti, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Lebanon, the Sudan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Five days after 7 October 2023, the Department's Emergency Response Team deployed in order to meet the distinct security needs of humanitarian partners before their arrival. In order to respond to the diverse security requirements in emergencies, the Department strengthened strategic partnerships for surge deployments through standby arrangements, ensuring expertise in analysis, information management and security telecommunications. In the first half of 2024, the Department carried out 54 surge deployments, including to Chad, Israel, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (see figure I).

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[9] World Meteorological Organization, *State of the Global Climate 2023* (Geneva, 2024).

[10] World Bank, *Libya Storm and Flooding 2023: Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (Washington, D.C., 2024), p. 18.

Figure I
Surge deployment of United Nations security professionals

C.   **Support for transitions**

20.   Closures, reconfigurations or drawdowns of integrated peacekeeping operations and special political missions lead to a reduction of the integrated security workforce,[11] coupled in some settings with the potential for continued or increased instability. When components of integrated peacekeeping operations and special political missions are reduced rapidly, it is essential to identify alternative security capacities and capabilities for the United Nations country team and Department of Safety and Security presence. Embedding evolving security requirements in early planning efforts is key to attaining predictable support and mitigating security risks for United Nations personnel, operations and assets. While incorporating security scenarios and capacity requirements appears feasible for the transition in Iraq,[12] other recent sudden drawdowns exposed remaining personnel to increased safety and security risks.

21.   Following the breakout of conflict in the Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces and after the termination of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, security management system organizations and Saving Lives Together partners have enabled the delivery of humanitarian assistance to some of the 7.5 million forcibly displaced persons, accounting for two thirds of the population, inside the Darfur region and neighbouring countries. Ad hoc security risk management processes enabled over 50 missions within the Darfur region to allow for the provision of life-saving measures to displaced persons and refugees and the restocking of warehouses. Security analyses and agile security responses are essential for the United Nations to continue serving the increased needs of communities.

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[11] The integrated security workforce comprises Department of Safety and Security personnel at Headquarters, United Nations offices away from Headquarters and in the field, and United Nations safety and security personnel employed by peacekeeping operations, special political missions and service centres.

[12] Security Council resolution 2732 (2024).

22. The withdrawal of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali in late 2023, which had involved 11,600 troops and 1,500 police, reduced the integrated security workforce by 81 per cent and halved the United Nations operational capacity. The withdrawal reduced access to communities requiring assistance and affected security risk management capabilities. Previously, peacekeepers provided essential protection to displaced communities, secured airfields and facilitated safe movement of convoys. Despite armed clashes, improvised explosive device threats and blockades, the Department of Safety and Security recalibrated its security capacities through assessments, enabling the resumption of missions to the Regions of Timbuktu and Mopti in order to support displaced persons. To support United Nations crisis response efforts in the Sahel, synergies are needed, including to be able to use regional medical evacuation and air assets stationed or pre-arranged in a regional hub to support programme continuity.

23. Following the disengagement agreement between the Government and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in November 2023, and the handover of all 14 bases in South Kivu on 30 April 2024, human rights and protection requirements have increased in the east of the country. The integrated security workforce continued to support United Nations entities and Saving Lives Together partners in delivering food and medical supplies to displaced persons exposed to increased levels of violence.[13] Following elections in the country in December 2023, the Department of Safety and Security's quick reaction team responded to security incidents involving personnel related to criminality and civil unrest, in close collaboration with host government security forces.

24. In Somalia, the integrated security workforce enabled extensive humanitarian, development and stabilization operations, and supported planning in the context of a phased drawdown of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia. It also enabled five high-risk inter-agency missions to the region claimed by both Somaliland and Puntland, supporting the provision of United Nations humanitarian assistance to over 200,000 internally displaced persons.

III. Security threats against United Nations personnel

A. Security incidents affecting the United Nations security management system

25. Recent trends in safety and security incidents show a rise in fatalities from acts of violence, especially in armed conflicts, with significant increases in the Sudan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The number of safety-related incidents, in particular road traffic crashes, also continue to rise, leading to more fatalities. Criminal incidents, intimidation and harassment are also on the increase. On the other hand, based on reported incidents where victims consented to data inclusion, abductions and sexual assaults have decreased, although hostage-taking remains a concern.

1. Main types of incidents and their impact on United Nations security management system personnel
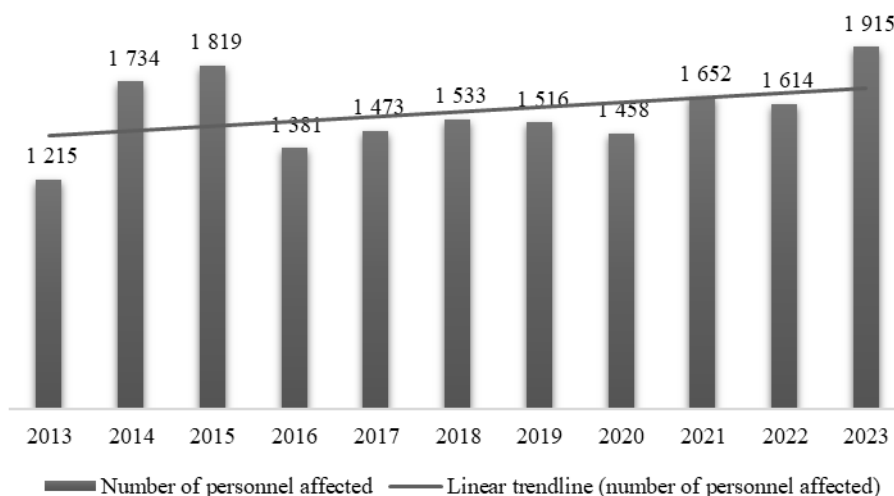
26. Overall, incidents related to safety and security affected 1,915 personnel in 2023, compared with 1,614 in 2022 (see figure II). The increase was due to a rise in cases of robbery (36.4 per cent), residential break-ins and burglaries (32.5 per cent),

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[13] United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "DRC: UN and partners warn escalating conflict is fuelling unprecedented civilian suffering", 30 April 2024.

and incidents of intimidation and harassment (13.7 per cent). In 2023, female personnel accounted for 45 per cent of those affected by security and safety incidents. In the first half of 2024, 820 safety and security incidents affected United Nations personnel. The number of personnel affected by safety and security incidents in 2023 was the highest in the last decade. Between 2016 to 2023, the number of affected personnel increased by 38.7 per cent. Particularly noteworthy is the 96 per cent rise in the number of personnel affected by robbery, increasing from 375 in 2016 to 735 in 2023 (see figure VI).
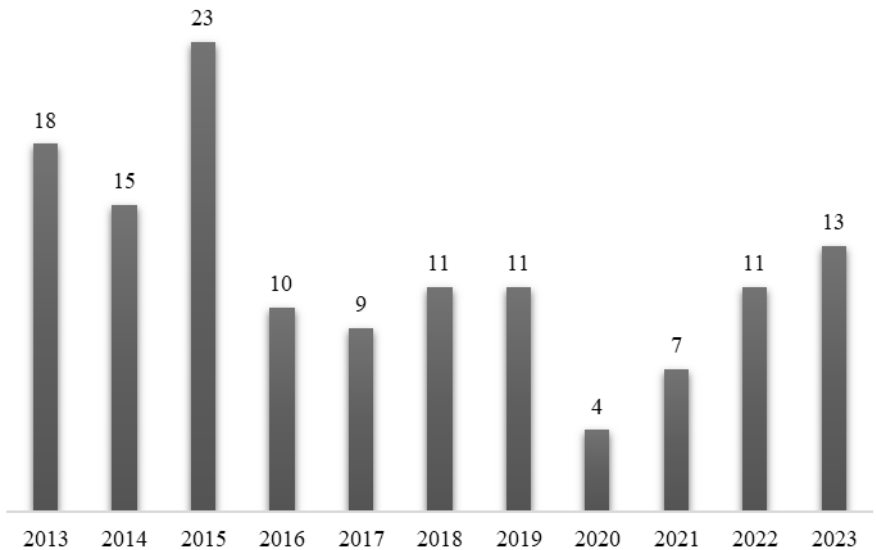
Figure II
United Nations security management system personnel affected by safety and security incidents

27. In 2023, 13 personnel[14] lost their lives because of acts of violence, compared with 11 in 2022, making 2023 the year with the highest number of fatalities resulting from violence since 2015 (see figure III). The fatalities occurred in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Somalia, the Sudan, and Yemen. In the past three years, while the number of fatalities resulting from crime and terrorism has remained relatively constant, the number of fatalities resulting from armed conflict has increased.
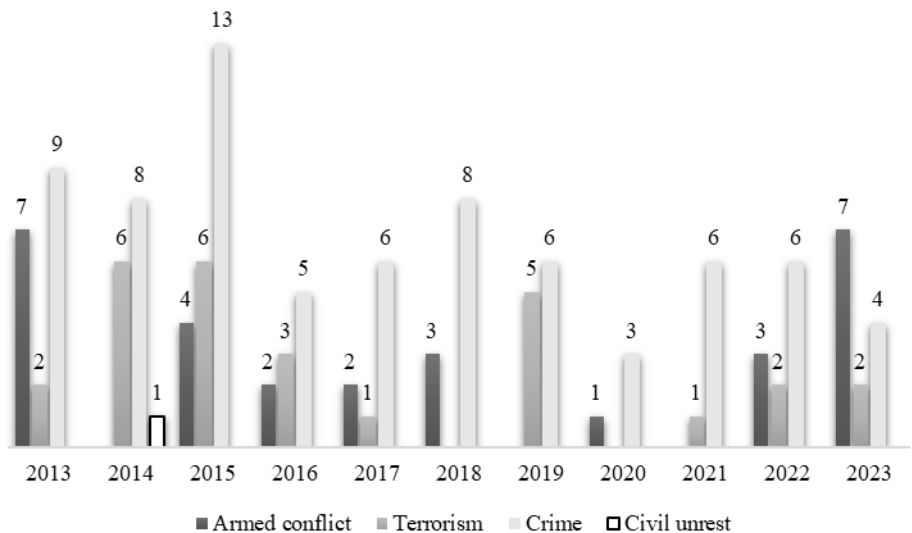
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[14] United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) area personnel are not covered by the United Nations security management system. See para. 40 for data regarding those personnel.

Figure III
Fatalities of United Nations security management system personnel resulting from violence

28. A total of 7 out of the 13 fatalities were the result of armed conflict, 4 were attributed to crime and 2 to terrorism (see figure IV). In the first half of 2024, two United Nations personnel lost their lives because of conflict and violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Pakistan, of which one was attributed to armed conflict and one to crime.

Figure IV
Fatalities of United Nations security management system personnel resulting from violence, by category of threat
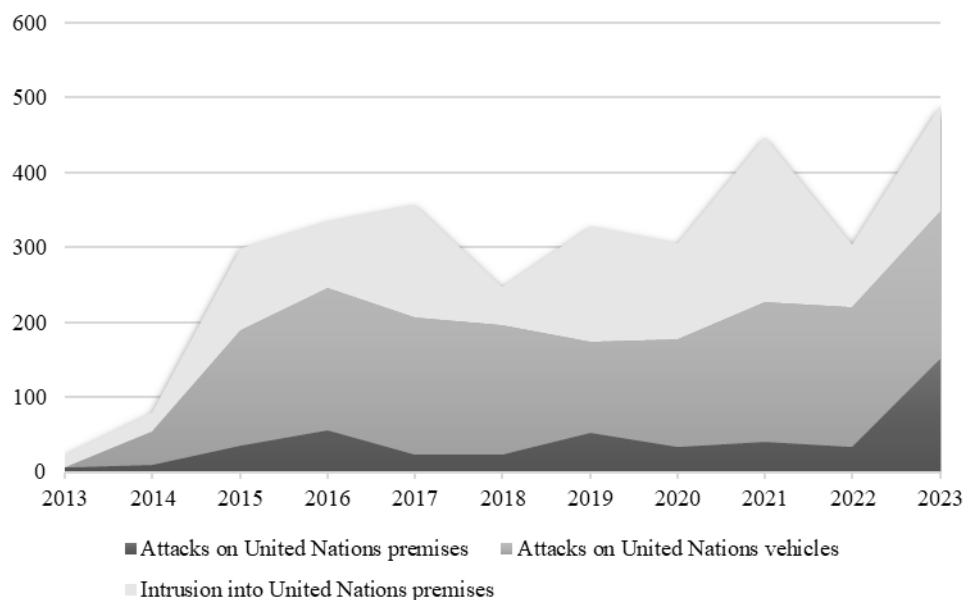

29. In 2023, there were 151 attacks on United Nations premises, 198 attacks on United Nations vehicles and 142 intrusions into United Nations premises, for a total of 491 incidents, compared with 34 attacks on premises, 187 attacks on vehicles and

83 intrusions in 2022 (see figure V and annex II). Most attacks occurred in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Sudan and Mali. In 2023, the number of attacks on United Nations premises reached its highest point in the past decade. In addition, a United Nations aircraft was hit by small arms fire in Mali. In the first half of 2024, there were 142 attacks on United Nations premises, 142 attacks on United Nations vehicles and 44 intrusions into United Nations premises, for a total of 328 incidents. Most incidents occurred in Haiti, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and South Sudan.

Figure V
Attacks on United Nations premises and United Nations official vehicles

Crime

30. Of the 1,915 personnel affected by safety and security incidents in 2023, 1,080 were affected by crime, which included robberies, residence break-ins, burglaries, aggravated assault and sexual assault. Of the personnel affected by crime in 2023, 659 were locally recruited. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of personnel affected by robbery saw a significant increase, rising from 539 to 735 (see figure VI). In the first half of 2024, 405 personnel were affected by crime.

Figure VI
United Nations security management system personnel affected by crime, by category

Terrorism

31. In 2023, two personnel were killed as a result of terrorism. One incident occurred in Somalia, where a locally recruited personnel was killed in an attack involving two person-borne improvised explosive devices and active shooters. The other incident occurred in Yemen, where an international personnel was fatally shot.

Abductions

32. A total of 17 personnel were abducted in 2023, compared with 24 in 2022 (see figure VII). Of the 17 abductions, 8 evolved into hostage situations. In 2023, most abduction incidents occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Somalia. The exposure of personnel to such incidents was heightened when those personnel were on the road. In the first half of 2024, five personnel were abducted. Of those five, three incidents evolved into a hostage situation.

Figure VII
Abductions of United Nations security management system personnel

Safety-related incidents, including road traffic crashes

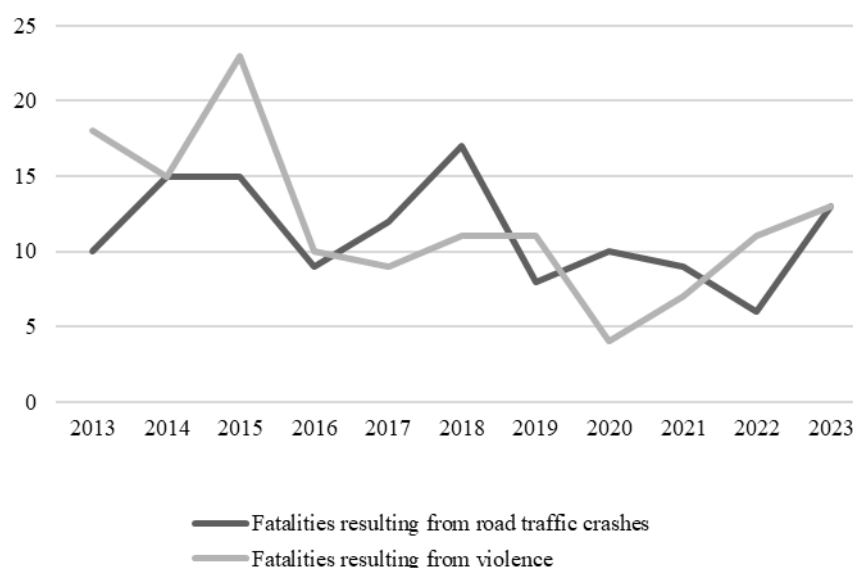33.   According to the World Health Organization *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023*, nearly 1.2 million people die in road crashes annually. Rapid motorization in low- and middle-income countries, inadequate safety measures and lack of institutional capacity exacerbate the crisis. Increased focus on education, law enforcement, vehicle quality and road infrastructure are needed to achieve target 3.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals of halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030. Road traffic injuries are also one of the leading causes of death for United Nations security management system personnel. A total of 19 personnel lost their lives due to safety-related incidents in 2023, compared with 15 in 2022 (see figure VIII). A total of 13 of those 19 personnel died due to road traffic crashes. Safety-related incidents resulting in death were reported in Afghanistan, Brazil, Kenya, Madagascar, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania. In addition, 177 personnel were injured following safety-related incidents, which represents an increase compared with 165 in 2022. In the first half of 2024, 6 personnel lost their lives and 85 were injured due to safety-related incidents.

Figure VIII
Fatalities of United Nations security management system personnel resulting from road traffic crashes, compared with those resulting from violence

Gender-based violence, including sexual assaults

34. The number of reported sexual assaults on personnel in 2023 decreased to 9 cases from 16 cases in 2022. Taking into account underreporting of cases of gender-based violence, including cases of sexual assault, the United Nations security management system organizations need to further support victims on reporting, including by training security professionals on a victim-centred approach. Sexual assault incidents occurred in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar and Sri Lanka. In the first six months of 2024, one incident of sexual assault was reported.

Intimidation and harassment

35. There were 399 reported incidents of intimidation and harassment of personnel in 2023, an increase from 351 incidents reported in 2022. Most cases occurred in Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, South Sudan and the Sudan. In Afghanistan, locally recruited personnel, especially women, have been the target of intimidation and harassment incidents due to their employment or association with the United Nations. Related incidents include the extortion of money, threats and access restrictions at checkpoints or while in transit to United Nations offices. In the first half of 2024, 202 personnel reported incidents of intimidation and harassment.

Arrests and detentions

36. In 2023, 103 personnel were arrested or detained by national authorities, compared with 107 in 2022. In the first half of 2024, the number of personnel arrested or detained was 54, which includes recent arrests in Yemen.

2. Security of locally recruited personnel

37. The safety and security of locally recruited personnel has remained a concern as they have been affected by security incidents to a greater extent in terms of absolute numbers (1,268 out of 1,915) compared with internationally recruited personnel (647
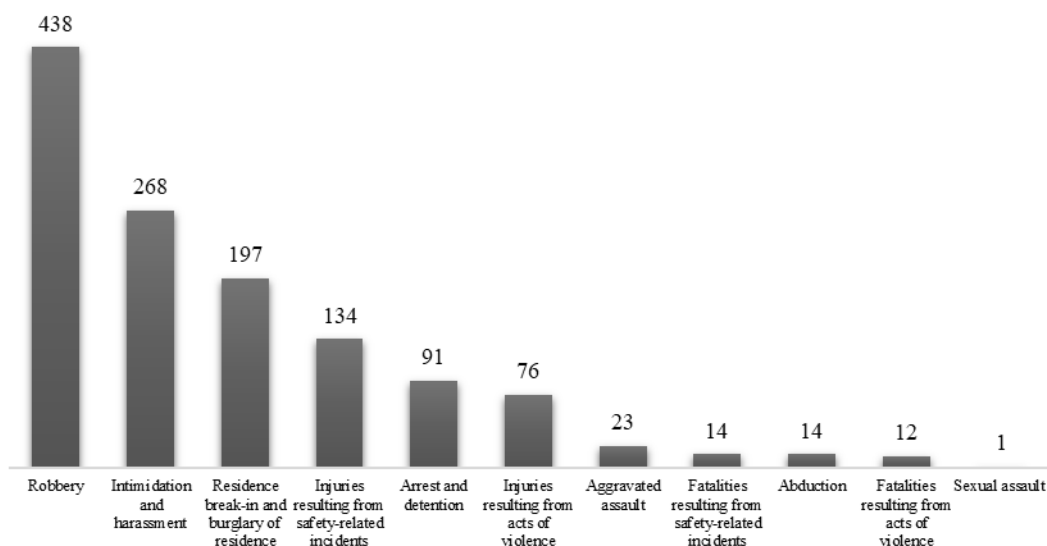
out of 1,915). The incidents include fatalities, injuries, abduction, robbery, residence break-ins, aggravated assault, intimidation, harassment, and arrest and detention (see figure IX).

38. In 2023, locally recruited personnel accounted for 14 out of 19 personnel killed due to safety-related incidents. Furthermore, 14 out of the 17 personnel abducted were locally recruited, with many incidents related to gang violence in Haiti. In Myanmar and South Sudan, locally recruited personnel were targeted for arrest owing to their political affiliations and were frequently stopped for document verification while on United Nations missions.

39. The Department of Safety and Security is prioritizing the provision of specialized security training tailored to the specific risks faced by locally recruited personnel, including situational awareness, conflict de-escalation techniques, and emergency response procedures. Work has also begun to establish robust channels for locally recruited personnel for reporting security incidents and receiving timely updates on potential threats. In Myanmar, the Department of Safety and Security actively engaged with local, de facto and non-State security actors in order to ensure better protection for locally recruited United Nations and humanitarian personnel. The Department has continued to advocate for policies at the organizational and governmental level that prioritize the safety and security of locally recruited United Nations and humanitarian personnel.

Figure IX
Incidents affecting locally recruited personnel, 2023

3. **Security incidents affecting area personnel of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East**

40. Employing some 32,000 area personnel in five fields of operation, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) delivers a range of humanitarian assistance to approximately 5.9 million Palestinian refugees.[15] In 2023, 325 area personnel (218 men and 107 women) were affected by

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[15] The UNRWA data are based on security incidents reported to and recorded in the UNRWA security information management system.
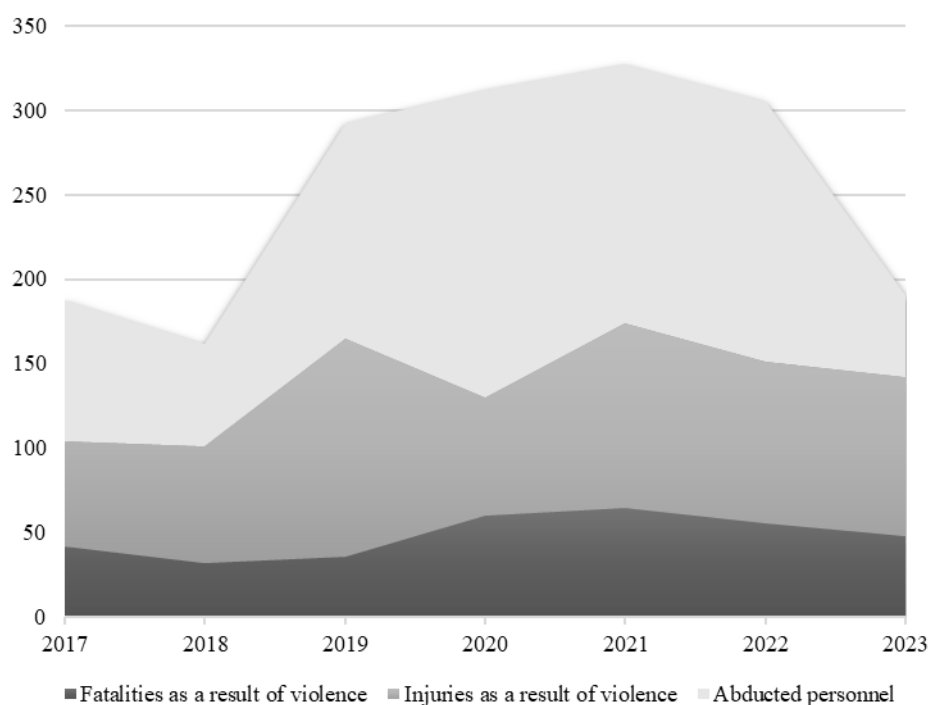
safety and security incidents. A total of 140[16] area personnel were killed during the ongoing conflict in Gaza, and one in the Syrian Arab Republic. That total is the highest number of personnel killed in a single year since the United Nations was established and includes teachers, doctors, support staff, engineers and logistics experts, who were killed while in their homes or in the line of duty. In addition, 70 area personnel sustained injuries in security and safety-related incidents, with 57 of those injuries resulting from acts of violence and armed conflict, and 13 stemming from safety-related incidents. Notably, 30 area personnel were assaulted while executing their duties, while 44 faced instances of intimidation, threats of violence, and harassment. There were no reported abductions, sexual assaults or sexual harassment incidents involving area personnel. There was, however, 1 incident of robbery reported, and 39 incidents of arrest and detention reported involving area personnel throughout 2023. In the first half of 2024, 191 area personnel were affected by safety and security incidents. That number includes 36 area personnel who were killed, two fatalities resulting from safety-related incidents and 61 area personnel who sustained injuries.

B. Security incidents affecting humanitarian personnel of non-governmental organizations and other personnel

41. In 2023, 48 non-governmental organization (NGO) humanitarian personnel working in close cooperation with the United Nations were reported killed, 94 were injured as a result of acts of violence and 49 were abducted, compared with 56 killed, 95 injured and 154 abducted in 2022 (see figure X). There were seven attacks on premises, 66 intrusions into premises and 46 attacks on vehicles. As in previous years, NGOs and implementing partners shared reports on security incidents with the Department of Safety and Security on a voluntary basis. The figures should, however, be seen as minimum numbers rather than a fully accurate reporting of incidents. In addition, the data cannot be verified or compared with other existing databases, as the methodologies of those databases differ. In the first half of 2024, 20 NGO and other personnel were reported killed, 69 injured and 26 abducted. At the time of reporting, no reliable data were available on humanitarian personnel of NGOs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

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[16] The figures given do not include individuals working under the UNRWA job creation programme. The programme supports employment opportunities for youth, women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in Gaza, providing positions ranging in duration. UNRWA received reports of 18 personnel on the programme who had been killed by various types of armed-conflict-related incident.

Figure X
Security incidents affecting personnel of non-governmental implementing partners, as reported to the Department of Safety and Security

IV. Strategic opportunities for strengthening security collaboration

42. In line with the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, Member States hosting humanitarian and United Nations personnel, including locally recruited personnel, are first and foremost responsible for providing security and protection for personnel, premises and assets. To date, only 95 Member States have ratified the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and only 33 are parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

43. The Department of Safety and Security is considering options to enhance interoperability. The options include upgrades to its Safety and Security Incident Recording System, comprising information on incidents that affect United Nations personnel, assets and premises, and to increase situational awareness, improve incident reporting and analysis and enhance decision-making at the strategic, operational, and tactical level. Collaboration with host Governments and civil society organizations contributes to the monitoring of attacks against humanitarian personnel, strengthening the implementation of international humanitarian law.

Strengthening engagement with host Governments

44. The Department of Safety and Security continued to collaborate with host Governments on security support matters, such as forecasts, threat and risk analysis, implementation of security risk management measures and reinforcement of capacities, including for managing security crises. In several instances, the

collaboration entailed addressing challenges to deploy appropriate security-related equipment, such as armoured vehicles, personal protective equipment and communications-tracking devices.

45. In ensuring the security of the United Nations Headquarters, offices away from the Headquarters and regional commissions, the Department of Safety and Security liaised with host Government authorities on protecting United Nations premises, including implementing a common security platform that includes digitization of identification passes. The locations host 43,879 personnel and 6,000 delegates on a regular basis and receive almost 1 million visitors and participants in events and conferences every year. To keep premises safe for all, the Department conducted 1.3 million vehicle screenings, over 20,000 bomb sweeps and 3,175 investigations over 2023 and the first six months of 2024. It also facilitated 195 joint exercises with law enforcement partners in the areas of fire safety, active shooter training, evacuation drills and explosive detection, thereby ensuring the security and safety of participants in events and conferences, including of Heads of State. Security was also provided for over 16,000 events held on United Nations premises and 17 major United Nations events held outside United Nations premises, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Saint John's and the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva. More than 130,000 participants attended those events, facilitating deliberations on major multilateral frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Strengthening partnerships with non-governmental organizations and other partners

46. Under Saving Lives Together, which comprises the security platforms of international NGOs, international organizations and the United Nations in high-risk areas, information-sharing, the provision of operational coordination and training support, including in the areas of hostage incident management and security crisis management, was maintained. Efforts also included enhancing collaboration on contingency planning, joint approaches to obtaining support from host Governments, and operational resource and logistical resource-sharing, in order to prepare and respond to security incidents and crises. The members of Saving Lives Together, in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross, continue to collaborate in order to tackle global security coordination issues, address policy gaps and explore opportunities to mitigate the exposure to risks for cooperating partners. Reviewing Saving Lives Together is an opportunity to ensure that it meets partners' emerging security requirements.

V. Strengthening the United Nations security management system

47. The Department of Safety and Security, together with other security management system members, have made considerable strides in collectively strengthening the system at the strategic and operational level.

48. Strengthening measures have included streamlining and refining the security risk management practices and processes to enable the diverse set of organizations to deliver critical programmes within acceptable levels of security risk, applying person-centred approaches. Efforts are under way to reflect emerging good practices and lessons in updated guidance, and to improve data collection on security incidents, including modifications to the online tool to ensure confidentiality and consent for entries relating to sexual assault.

49.   The United Nations is spearheading collective action to strengthen the integrity of the information ecosystem, promoting freedom of expression, including access to information, and addressing risks to information integrity such as misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. The United Nations Global Principles for Information Integrity constitute a rallying call for Member States, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations system. Within the United Nations, collaboration is under way to enhance the capacity of the Organization for information integrity, both in relation to specific mandate areas and through inter-agency collaboration.
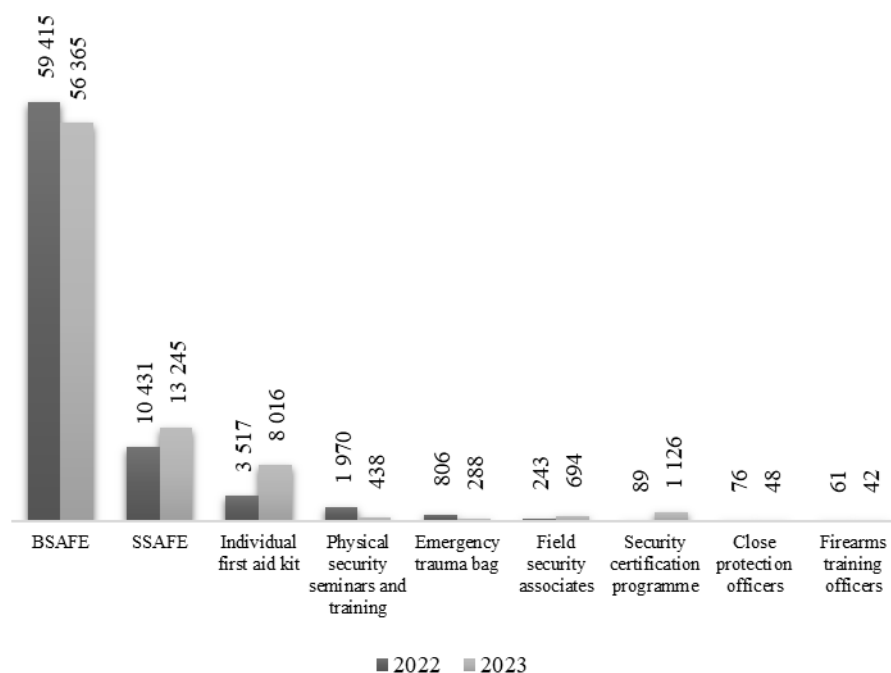
50.   Efforts also focused on further strengthening the normative basis, collaboration and cooperation through the Inter-Agency Security Management Network,[17] which has developed and revised system-wide security guidance. Specifically, the Network promulgated a revised policy on security learning and training which better captures the role of learning in the security management system. It also endorsed a revised policy on risk avoidance that outlines clearer procedures for relocation and evacuation. It also approved a new fire policy that defines the key roles and responsibilities and essential prerequisites for fire risk management, as well as enhanced guidance on blast protection. In the area of security communications, the Network continues to rely on the Telecommunications Security Standards service, which trains United Nations security management system personnel on the latest security communications systems. The service conducted in-country assessments on connectivity application procedures to assist with the establishment of pragmatic and cost-effective security communications solutions, including regional training programmes for 234 participants. The Network also developed an approach for inter-agency mobility for information exchange and professional and organizational growth.

51.   Efforts are under way to enhance policy comprehension and implementation through guidelines on security lessons learned, guidance development and compliance. The efforts include enhancing the security capabilities of United Nations personnel, security decision makers, security personnel and partners, where feasible, through training.

52.   Training opportunities contributed to a proactive, agile, and swift crisis response among personnel. Under the coordination and oversight of the Department of Safety and Security and in close collaboration with some of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, the security management system delivered 22 different types of training course to 332,937 participants worldwide between July 2023 and June 2024. The Network launched the first online training programme for country office security focal points, with 139 participants, and facilitated crisis management tabletop exercises for security decision makers in Afghanistan, Mozambique and Pakistan. Hundreds of personnel attended the Women's Security Awareness Training courses, and 14 training sessions were held for 171 designated officials. Hybrid training arrangements contributed to an exponential increase of content delivered to personnel.

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[17] The organizations of the security management system are de facto members of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network. They are represented in the Network by their security focal points.

Figure XI
Training for security personnel

Bar chart showing training figures for 2022 and 2023:
- BSAFE: 59 415 (2022), 56 365 (2023)
- SSAFE: 10 431 (2022), 13 245 (2023)
- Individual first aid kit: 3 517 (2022), 8 016 (2023)
- Physical security seminars and training: 1 970 (2022), 438 (2023)
- Emergency trauma bag: 806 (2022), 288 (2023)
- Field security associates: 243 (2022), 694 (2023)
- Security certification programme: 89 (2022), 1 126 (2023)
- Close protection officers: 76 (2022), 48 (2023)
- Firearms training officers: 61 (2022), 42 (2023)

■ 2022 ■ 2023

Abbreviation: SSAFE, Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments.

53.   Critical incident stress preparedness for United Nations personnel was sustained through stress management and resilience-building, including training sessions in stress management, coping mechanisms and resilience, which was delivered to 18,870 personnel and 179 security managers and decision makers between July 2023 and June 2024. To mitigate the impact of critical incidents on United Nations personnel, counsellors, 60 per cent of whom were locally recruited personnel, responded by delivering, among other things, 14,550 sessions of psychological first aid and stress counselling between July 2023 and June 2024. The counsellors also advanced efforts to destigmatize psychosocial support, with the Department of Safety and Security strengthening professional standards of critical incident stress management across the security management system by providing guidance for training and certification courses on the provision of psychosocial support services during evacuations and relocations.

54.   The Department of Safety and Security provided personal protection services to senior United Nations officials and others within the United Nations security management system. The Department supported the most senior officials of the United Nations, namely the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, by facilitating their visits to more than 73 destinations, including several in areas of humanitarian crisis. That support enabled preventive diplomacy and high-level engagements at the political and strategic level. Leveraging technological innovations, the Department, with the support of the Office of Information and Communications Technology, developed a protective services reconnaissance mobile application integrated with a virtual operations centre featuring extended reality technology, which enhances close protection operations in high-risk areas, safeguarding lives, saving resources, increasing situational awareness and upskilling personnel.

55. The Department of Safety and Security also led physical security assessments and provided technical advice, including on blast protection, in relation to United Nations premises and assets. In addition, the Department provided guidance for strengthening the physical security knowledge of United Nations security professionals overseeing United Nations premises, and trained 111 personnel on the use of the physical security assessment tool between July 2023 and June 2024. Furthermore, it assessed 39 buildings for 19 United Nations organizations in 23 countries, including areas of high risk such as Afghanistan, Libya, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen.

56. United Nations security management system personnel convened a security week, a global event engaging over 3,500 United Nations personnel in 110 countries and comprising over 30 webinars and exhibitions, during which common security queries were addressed and the important role played by security was presented to the wider United Nations community. Security management system organizations also contributed to the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week, which allowed for exchanges on risk perceptions, the impact of security risk management, the person-centred approach in security risk management, strategic insights on security analysis to optimize humanitarian operations, adaptive security planning and security risk management, challenges and best practices in implementing measures to avoid risk, and navigating dilemmas in high-risk environments. The fourth Security Symposium brought together practitioners and academics, developing the approach of security management system organizations to tech-enabled and innovative security risk management.

VI. Contribution of the Department of Safety and Security

Advice and support for security professionals and decision makers

57. The Department of Safety and Security continued to provide operational security support for programme delivery and personnel through security coordination, and advisory services for improving the effectiveness and relevance of security risk management processes, including enhanced measures. The support included providing consistent operational guidance in preparation for security crises and during the management of security crises, including through indications of possible emerging security threats and the deployment of security professionals to crisis settings and security contingencies following initial responses, including in the Central African Republic, Cuba, Haiti, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, the Sudan and Ukraine, in order to enable programme delivery in high-risk environments. The Department also maintained efforts to develop capacities and access to tools for capturing and analysing data for delivering analytical products for security decision makers in order to facilitate data-driven, context-specific and risk-informed decisions.

Situational awareness, readiness analysis and emergency response, strategic foresight and planning

58. In consultation with the relevant in-country United Nations system organizations, the Department of Safety and Security continued developing country programmes that integrate security contributions into United Nations results as presented in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and in humanitarian response plans. In Nigeria and the Philippines, security risk management options were realigned to anticipate United Nations country team priorities, with the country programming process allowing the Department to better plan for the capacities and services required to support programme activities over the

medium term. Integration with country programme requirements facilitated greater transparency with all partners, including Member States and financial contributors, by articulating how security funding requests are linked with the implementation of the Framework, a practice that will be replicated in 13 additional countries in 2024.

59. Between July 2023 and June 2024, the Department of Safety and Security also produced over 400 security risk assessments, including global forecasts, regional assessments, country-specific assessments, topic assessments, briefings, presentations and situation reports. In addition, it trained 92 United Nations security professionals in three security analysis process and practice courses, and provided eight online security threat information training sessions to 173 participants with the aim of strengthening the analytical skills of United Nations security personnel.

60. Building on previous requests for adequate and predictable resources, the Department invested in its institutional capacity to diversify and sustain meaningful partnerships with a range of relevant actors. The process included mobilizing time-bound extrabudgetary support for field operations and global strategic initiatives, as well as deepening relations with security think tanks and academia, in order to prepare for future challenges. Strengthening gender equality and inclusion remained a top priority for the Department, with efforts under way to implement the newly launched strategy and action plan that focus on gender-transformative efforts relating to recruitment and retention, training and mentoring, strategic mainstreaming, and communications and awareness. Efforts also entailed developing digital transformation initiatives to support safety and security processes through efficient management of information and data analysis in order to improve situational awareness, manage risks, inform tactical operations and enable strategic decision-making. The Department's main aims continue to be to enhance its strategic foresight and planning capacity, strengthen its digital infrastructure and enhance the digital literacy of its personnel.

VII. Observations and recommendations

61. United Nations and humanitarian personnel continued to serve people in need at significant personal risk. I mourn the 219 United Nations personnel who have lost their lives and express my sincere condolences to their families and loved ones. Among those who lost their lives, 181 (178 from UNRWA) were working in Gaza. This is by far the highest number of United Nations personnel killed in a single conflict or natural disaster since the creation of the Organization. I am equally saddened by reports received of humanitarian personnel from non-governmental organizations who perished while serving people in need.

62. I am gravely concerned by the increased number of humanitarian crises as well as the scope and scale of those crises, which led to a considerable surge in humanitarian needs, increasing the demands on the United Nations and its humanitarian partners for humanitarian assistance and protection, and also affecting the implementation of United Nations human rights, development, and peace and security activities.

63. I appeal to all Member States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and the Optional Protocol thereto.

64. The primary responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel rests with host Governments. I therefore encourage Member States to

continue fully supporting the United Nations security management system, under the leadership of the Department of Safety and Security.

65.   **Concerning misinformation and disinformation, the United Nations continues to monitor, analyse and respond to false narratives on its activities relating to the implementation of its mandates. I call on Member States to adhere to the recommendations outlined in the United Nations Global Principles For Information Integrity and strengthen national laws and practices.**

66.   **Deeply concerned about the impact of road crashes on personnel, as communicated by my Special Envoy for Road Safety, I urge Member States to continue strengthening road safety through legislation, infrastructure development and application of behavioural science, and call for system-wide adherence to guidance and safety protocols, so that we can realize the global goal of halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes.**

67.   **I call upon Member States to support the Department of Safety and Security in its leadership of the United Nations security management system and in the collective efforts to assess and recalibrate safety and security requirements commensurate with the threat environment through integrated transition planning, in particular in cases of the closure or downsizing of peacekeeping and special political missions, including through proactive dialogue with host Governments and relevant partners, where the Department of Safety and Security and the United Nations country teams must continue to provide the security support necessary to ensure the continued implementation of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities.**

Annex I

United Nations personnel affected by safety and security incidents

Category of safety or security incident	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*	*2023*	*2024 (Jan.–June)*
				Number of personnel affected				
Fatalities resulting from acts of violence	9	11	11	4	7	11	13	2
Fatalities resulting from safety-related incidents	13	20	33	14	11	15	19	6
Injuries resulting from acts of violence	70	67	92	100	82	124	107	61
Injuries resulting from safety-related incidents	111	114	100	89	98	165	177	85
Abduction	8	11	6	17	9	24	17	5
Robbery	402	401	423	462	563	539	735	293
Residence break-in and burglary of residence	406	382	375	312	270	228	302	99
Aggravated assault	47	41	51	62	47	34	34	12
Sexual assault	28	10	12	7	2	16	9	1
Intimidation and harassment	316	391	327	307	386	351	399	202
Arrest and detention	63	85	86	84	177	107	103	54
Total	**1 473**	**1 533**	**1 516**	**1 458**	**1 652**	**1 614**	**1 915**	**820**

Annex II

Attacks on United Nations premises and official vehicles[a]

Category of security incident	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (Jan.–June)
Attacks on United Nations premises	23	23	53	33	41	34	151	142
Attacks on United Nations vehicles	184	174	121	144	186	187	198	142
Intrusion into United Nations premises	150	51	154	129	220	83	142	44
Total	**357**	**248**	**328**	**306**	**447**	**304**	**491**	**328**

[a] Technical corrections have been made to capture information that was previously not included.

Annex III

United Nations civilian personnel affected by security incidents, 2023

Category of security incident	Number of personnel affected	Recruited internationally	Recruited locally	Men	Women	Number of countries	Circumstances of security incidents
Fatalities resulting from acts of violence	13	1	12	9	4	9	Armed conflict (7); crime (4); terrorism (2)
Fatalities resulting from safety-related incidents	19	5	14	13	6	15	Road traffic crashes (13); other safety-related incidents (6)
Injuries resulting from acts of violence	107	31	76	65	42	48	Armed conflict (9); civil unrest (6); crime (89); terrorism (3)
Injuries resulting from safety-related incidents	177	43	134	94	83	67	Vehicular accident (146); other safety-related incidents (31)
Abduction[a]	17	3	14	15	2	8	All persons were released
Robbery[b]	735	297	438	379	356	103	
Residence break-in[c] and burglary of residence[d]	302	105	197	165	137	76	
Aggravated assault[e]	34	11	23	17	17	19	
Sexual assault	9	8	1	–	9	7	
Intimidation[f] and harassment[g]	399	131	268	205	194	76	
Arrest and detention[h]	103	12	91	85	18	24	5 remain in detention
Total	**1 915**	**647**	**1 268**	**1 047**	**868**		

[a] Act of restraint through the use of, or the threat of the use of, force or through fraudulent persuasion, including hostage-taking involving demands as conditions for liberation, executed by non-State actors.

[b] Act or instance of unlawfully taking property through the use of violence or the threat of the use of violence.

[c] Unauthorized and forceful entry with intent to commit a felony or a crime aggravated by use of force or physical assault.

[d] Unauthorized and forceful entry with intent to commit a felony or crime.

[e] Unlawful act that places personnel, without consent, in fear of immediate bodily harm or battery.

[f] Act of making someone timid or fearful or of deterring by threats.

[g] Act of systematic or continued unwanted and annoying actions that serve no legitimate purpose, causing substantial emotional distress.

[h] Act or acts executed by State actors.

Annex IV

Critical security incidents affecting personnel of United Nations implementing partners, as reported to the Department of Safety and Security

Category of security incident	Number of personnel affected							
	2017	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*	*2023*	*2024 (Jan.–June)*
Personnel who lost their lives as a result of acts of violence	42	32	36	60	65	56	48	20
Personnel injured as a result of acts of violence	62	69	129	70	109	95	94	69
Abducted personnel	84	61	127	182	153	154	49	26
Armed attacks on premises	11	21	11	27	36	44	7	1
Intrusion into premises	68	59	105	73	89	153	66	7
Armed attacks on vehicles	114	72	159	166	212	310	46	13
Total	**381**	**314**	**567**	**578**	**664**	**812**	**310**	**136**

Annex V

Security incidents affecting area personnel of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in Near East

Category of safety or security incident	Number of personnel affected							
	2017	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*	*2023*	*2024 (Jan.–June)*
Fatalities resulting from acts of violence	-	1	–	1	–	–	141	36
Fatalities resulting from safety-related incidents	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	2
Injuries resulting from acts of violence	5	6	18	28	29	22	57	59
Injuries resulting from safety-related incidents	3	4	5	14	8	7	13	2
Abduction	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
Robbery	10	9	1	2	1	4	1	4
Residence break-in and burglary of residence	–	1	–	1	2	–	–	–
Assault	56	49	12	43	47	30	30	25
Sexual assault	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Intimidation and harassment	109	128	57	49	87	96	44	34
Arrest and detention	21	3	7	11	19	36	39	29
Total	**204**	**203**	**101**	**149**	**193**	**195**	**325**	**191**

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