

# **United Nations (UN) Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) Concept**

**Endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group, at its 60<sup>th</sup> Meeting in Rome, on 22 March 2005**

## **Introduction**

In most humanitarian emergencies (complex and natural) the UN agencies and the members of the international humanitarian community responding to the disaster will encounter armed actors. Now, more than ever before, there are likely to be multiple types of forces, including foreign, international or multinational forces. When such actors are present there are significant coordination challenges in the realms of security, medical evacuation, logistics, transport, communications, information management, and others. The challenges include such issues as ensuring that humanitarians have the access they require, but at the same time do not become a target. Other challenges include minimizing the competition for scarce resources such as ports, supply routes, airfields and other logistics infrastructure.

In addition, most of these armed actors are likely to seek to establish relationships with the civilian population and in many cases attempt to provide them assistance. In some cases, the military forces can provide useful resources and support to the affected country or region, population or humanitarian actors. In other cases, the perceived association with the armed actors can compromise the humanitarian efforts and may pose an additional security threat. Dealing with these challenges requires training, appropriate experience and in some cases dedicated staff.

Recognizing the need for effective UN Civil Military Coordination (UN CMCoord) in these situations, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) endorsed various guidance and reference material on this subject. Implementation of this guidance normally requires the deployment of dedicated personnel. Throughout this document UN CMCoord is to be understood as civil-military coordination for humanitarian action undertaken by UN CMCoord trained officers on behalf of the international humanitarian community under the direction of the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator (HC/RC).<sup>1</sup> The persons performing this task are referred to as UN CMCoord Officers which is different to that of a Military Liaison Officer (MLO) deployed by UN Agencies and other coordination and liaison actors as defined in the IASC reference paper "Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies" dated 28 June 2004.

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<sup>1</sup> Reference is made to the IASC Reference Paper on Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies and the Guidelines On The Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets To Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (MCDA Guidelines). The UN CMCoord Concept is limited to the essential dialogue and interaction between humanitarian actors and military actors. In these documents the term military actors refers to the official military forces of states. This document is not intended to cover the dialogue and interaction that may be necessary with non-state armed actors. The IASC is currently working on a "Manual on Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups".

## **Aim**

This concept paper describes when and how UN CMCoord Officers are to be mobilized, deployed and employed in emergencies where there is likely to be a need for the humanitarian community to coordinate with military forces and to protect humanitarian space. This interaction may range from simply maintaining the minimum necessary dialogue with a military force to arranging for the use of military resources to support humanitarian activities. The concept will:

- Define the role of UN CMCoord Officers in general.
- Identify the Terms of Reference (TOR) for UN CMCoord Officers. (Current generic TORs from Agencies that have Military Liaison Officers and UNJLC CMCoord Officers are included at Annex A for ease of reference.)
- Describe the basic civil-military coordination structures envisioned for most situations.
- Explain the process envisioned for deployment and support of UN CMCoord Officers.
- Establish the resources required to deploy and sustain UN CMCoord capability.

## **General Approach**

UN CMCoord Officers, deployed in support of the HC/RC, are advisors and facilitators. They advise the leadership of the humanitarian community on civil-military issues and facilitate the establishment, maintenance and review of appropriate relations between the humanitarian and armed actors present. Depending on the situation, they may also serve as liaisons from the humanitarian community to military forces. (See Terms of Reference at Annex A.) Experience has shown that in almost all emergencies some level of CMCoord is required and that failure to establish effective and appropriate civil-military relations can have severe consequences both in current operations and in the later stages of the emergency.

When required UN CMCoord officers will be deployed as early as possible. When possible they should be deployed in advance of any international military force. This deployment will be phased as follows:

- Phase I - will be the initial deployment to assist in planning, assessing the CMCoord requirements, and preparing a CMCoord strategy with appropriate guidelines.
- Phase II - will focus on disseminating the guidelines, implementing the strategy, and building appropriate coordination mechanisms.
- Phase III - is intended to sustain and improve the UN CMCoord capacity as long as the need for this function exists

The immediate response will come from UN CMCoord trained officers in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). These personnel are referred to as “OCHA UN CMCoord Officers” throughout this document. Their deployment will normally be followed by UN CMCoord Officers provided by National Standby Teams. If a deployment of greater than six months is required, qualified individuals will be hired as UN CMCoord Officers from a UN CMCoord Expert Roster maintained by the Military and Civil Defence Unit (MCDU) of OCHA. (See Phased Deployment Process at Annex B.)

UN CMCoord Officers and/or MLOs may be deployed at different levels. While the UN CMCoord Officer assigned to the HC/RC is responsible for the civil-military relationship at the policy level, other CMCoord Officers and/or MLOs may be assigned to coordinate humanitarian effort at the operational level by their respective organizations. (See Conceptual Diagrams at Annex E.)

One of the primary responsibilities of the OCHA UN CMCoord Officer(s) during the initial phase of the operation is to assist the HC/RC and the Country Team (CT) in developing guidelines on the civil–military relationships, based on established guidance (see [www.Reliefweb.int](http://www.Reliefweb.int) for the most recent versions of these documents). The UN CMCoord Officer will also recommend to the HC/RC an appropriate coordination strategy and structure that could be applied in the emergency (see UN CMCoord Strategy, Methods and Structures at Annex C). This initial assessment in the first phase of the deployment will help to determine if and how many UN CMCoord Officers are needed in the near and mid-term and at which levels and locations. Together with the UN CMCoord structure this will help to determine the equipment package to be deployed in the second phase (see Equipment Packages at Annex D).

### **Mechanism for Triggering Deployment of UN CMCoord Officers**

OCHA UN CMCoord Officers will be deployed either at the request of the HC/RC or at the direction of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), after appropriate consultation with the Country Team. As noted above, this capability should be deployed as a matter of course whenever an armed actor is operating in the same geographic space as humanitarian actors.

Factors that may trigger the deployment of UN CMCoord Officers, include but are not limited to situations where:

1. Military action is ongoing or anticipated and is likely to have humanitarian consequences;
2. UN CMCoord expertise is required for contingency planning;
3. Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) may be required by the humanitarian actors;
4. Military forces may be engaged in relief activities;
5. Humanitarian actors lack the necessary CMCoord capacity.

## **Reporting Lines and Authority of UN CMCoord Officers**

UN CMCoord Officers will normally report to the HC/RC as a member of their staff. In some instances the HC/RC may also be the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG). If an OCHA office is present this person may report through the OCHA office in the field, especially during the early stages of an emergency when OCHA UN CMCoord Officers are deployed and involved in their assessment. CMCoord Officers assigned to coordinate operational logistic planning will report to the Chief UNJLC, MLOs will report to their respective organizations.

UN CMCoord Officers have no authority over persons coordinating the activity of UN agencies, implementing partners or other humanitarian actors with military forces.

Irrespective of reporting lines all personnel involved in CMCoord must keep each other informed. (See Annex E for suggested coordination lines.)

## **Role of UN CMCoord Officers and Scope of Activities**

Under the direction of the HC/RC, and in consultation with the Country Team, the UN CMCoord Officer's role will normally include the following five critical functions. These functions focus on the UN CMCoord Officers' responsibilities as a member of the HC/RC's staff. The relative importance of these functions, as well as how they are accomplished, will vary depending on the situation.

In addition, the HC/RC may make the services of the UN CMCoord Officer available to organizations that lack a CMCoord capacity or prefer indirect liaison.

1. Support the establishment and sustainment of dialogue with military forces. This dialogue should be opened as early as possible. In addition to the exchange of critical information, the UN CMCoord Officer is expected to be an advocate for the humanitarian community.
2. Assist in the development and dissemination of guidelines for the humanitarian community's interaction with military forces and armed actors. Country or emergency specific guidelines provide a framework for the interaction with military forces and other armed actors. These guidelines must be reviewed and updated as the situation changes.
3. Establish a mechanism for the coordination of the UN humanitarian interaction with military forces and other armed actors. This mechanism should ensure that the necessary information is exchanged and that the relevant actors are kept informed regarding activities and issues.
4. Monitor assistance activities undertaken by the military forces. Relief and reconstruction activities of military forces can have significant implications for humanitarian activities. UN CMCoord Officers should encourage the appropriate focus of these activities, their coordination, and adherence to accepted standards, including the concept of "do no harm" (see IASC reference paper on "Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies" dated 28 June 2004).

5. Assist in the negotiation of issues in critical areas of coordination. On frequent occasions the UN CMCoord Officer will be required to negotiate solutions to issues on either the military or civilian side of the CMCoord interface. These issues will normally involve the policy dimensions of areas such as security, transport, communication, medical evacuation, etc.

### **Structures, Location and Staffing**

The structure of the UN CMCoord capability must be flexible and able to adapt to the particular emergency. Therefore, three different structures are envisioned dependent on the situation. Due to the dynamic nature of most emergencies the UN CMCoord Officers need to be prepared to switch between these structures as the emergency evolves.

- UN CMCoord (Light). These are one or two individuals assigned to the HC/RC staff that will draw support from the CT or mission.
- UN CMCoord (Medium). This is a two-person team with dedicated vehicle and communications based with the CT or mission.
- UN CMCoord (Heavy). A team of at least two persons equipped to operate from a separate facility or offices outside the CT or mission compound.

The initial assessment of the emergency and the UN CMCoord requirements will be made on behalf of the HC/RC by an OCHA UN CMCoord Officer, who will then recommend an appropriate UN CMCoord strategy and methods for interaction. (See Annex C.)

The manning of these teams will be based on three distinct groups of personnel.

1. OCHA UN CMCoord Officers: These are OCHA officers trained in UN CMCoord that are prepared to deploy on 48 hours notice for a period of two to six weeks.
2. UN CMCoord Officers from National Standby Teams: These are two-person teams pre-trained by MCDU, maintained by Member States and equipped with stockpiled, UN or national resources, for deployment on three weeks notice for a period of one to four months.
3. UN CMCoord Officers from the UN CMCoord Expert Roster: These are experienced and trained UN CMCoord personnel on a roster maintained by MCDU that can serve for periods greater than six months, with at least sixty days notice.

### **Transition Strategy**

The need for UN CMCoord does not necessarily end with the conclusion of emergency operations. As long as there is an armed actor on the ground, some type of dialogue must be maintained with these forces and the actions of the humanitarian and development community must be coordinated with, or take into account, the action of the

military forces. This is a mutual responsibility of the humanitarian community and the military force.

- If a UN peace operation is envisioned, OCHA will recommend to the HC/RC, or the DSRSG with responsibility for humanitarian activities, the inclusion of the UN CMCoord function in the HC's staffing plan. OCHA MCDU will identify individuals to fill this position from the UN CMCoord Expert Roster. The deployed OCHA personnel or UN CMCoord Standby Teams will be withdrawn once these positions are filled.
- If a long-term humanitarian presence is planned OCHA will include in the Consolidated Appeal for the emergency the appropriate UN CMCoord capability including personnel, equipment and support. OCHA will then hire these personnel and deploy them in support of the mission.
- If a long-term reconstruction or development effort is envisioned, the HC/RC will recommend to the mission or UN Development Programme (UNDP) whether or not to continue to have personnel dedicated to the UN CMCoord function or to have this responsibility absorbed by the mission or the host government.

### **Training and Preparedness**

All personnel to be employed as UN CMCoord Officers or included on the UN CMCoord Expert Roster must have the necessary experience and skills, and complete both levels of the UN CMCoord Training Programme. The experience necessary for these positions is reflected in the terms of reference for each position and has to be tailored for the particular emergencies. The training ensures that they have the basic knowledge of the guidelines and policies and have had the opportunity to benefit from the lessons learned by other UN CMCoord personnel in past emergencies.

OCHA UN CMCoord Officers must also have completed the UNDAC training programme to ensure that they have the basic skills necessary to operate in the field, including communications, reporting requirements, etc. Personnel on the National Standby Teams who have not had UNDAC training must complete a comparable course such as the WFP or UNHCR emergency roster training programme.

OCHA personnel eligible to deploy as UN CMCoord Officers and the UN CMCoord Officers provided by National Standby Teams will undergo one UN CMCoord refresher training per year, if they have not deployed in the last twelve months. Standby teams who have not deployed in the last twelve months will participate in at least one exercise per year, under the supervision of a trained UN CMCoord expert, and will be evaluated on their performance.

Personnel on the UN CMCoord Expert Roster will receive appropriate refresher and pre-deployment training prior to their mission. They are responsible for maintaining currency on the UN CMCoord policy and procedures by attending the UN CMCoord Training Programme every other year.

**Annexes:**

- A. Terms of Reference (OCHA, UNJLC, UNHCR, WFP)
- B. Phased Deployment Process
- C. UN CMCoord Strategy, Methods and Structures
- D. Equipment Packages (Detailed equipment lists to be determined)
- E. Conceptual Diagrammes