General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session
Agenda item 72
**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 environments in which the United Nations operates are fraught with unpredictable security risks. Insecurity and volatility are fuelled by misinformation and disinformation, resource scarcity and civil unrest, feeding off years of accumulated political instability, armed conflict and climate change. As the United Nations expanded its programmes and humanitarian response amid unstable security conditions, the role of security as a fundamental enabler of United Nations operations, and the subsequent need for timely, effective and appropriately resourced security responses, were undisputed.

    The Department of Safety and Security continued to work with host Governments and members of the international community to resolve the security-related challenges faced by United Nations humanitarian and security personnel. The Department and the United Nations security management system organizations provided people-centred security support, tailoring risk management approaches to all those they serve and to the communities with which they work. The enabling role of the United Nations security management system helped United Nations country teams preserve development gains and ensure the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals, besides supporting political and peace operations in fulfilling their mandates.

    The present report provides an overview of the global security environment and its impact on the safety and security of humanitarian and United Nations personnel from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023. It details the Organization's response on issues under the purview of the Department of Safety and Security and the United Nations security management system, as well as the initiatives to enhance security support to humanitarian and United Nations personnel within a rapidly evolving, complex and unpredictable global security environment.

I. Introduction

1.   In its resolution 77/31, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly, at its seventy-eighth 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. The Assembly requested that the Secretary-General include in the report 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 covers the 18-month period from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023. It provides an overview of the global security environment, the associated security threats and risks facing United Nations personnel[1] and the initiatives of the Department of Safety and Security to address the security challenges that the Organization faces. The report concludes with observations and recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

II. Global security environment

3.   Political instability continued to expand across many regions of the world, driven by increased polarization, governance failures, human rights violations and abuses and unaddressed grievances. Competition for land and resources, global financial stress, inequality and the misuse of social media for misinformation and disinformation exacerbated uncertainty, in some cases fuelling complex crises and armed conflicts.

4.   Throughout the reporting period, violent extremist groups expanded across the Sahel and Central and East Africa, and remained a persistent threat across many other parts of the world. Those groups continued to issue propaganda casting humanitarian workers and organizations, including the United Nations, as legitimate targets and inciting their affiliates and sympathizers to attack them.

5.   From Latin America to the Sahel and South-East Asia, clashes between criminal groups and security forces attempting to regain control of border regions have increased, restricting humanitarian access and exposing United Nations personnel, assets and operations to a higher risk of collateral harm.

6.   The number of persons forcibly displaced owing to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and abuses and events seriously disturbing public order rose to 108.4 million worldwide at the end of 2022,[2] compared with 89.3 million at the end of 2021. At the end of 2022, it was estimated that 339 million people worldwide would need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2023.[3] By mid-2023, 363 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance.[4]

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[1] For the purpose of this 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.

[2] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Global trends: forced displacement in 2022". Available at https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends.

[3] United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Global Humanitarian Overview 2023". Available at: https://www.unocha.org/2023gho.

[4] United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Global humanitarian overview 2023: July update". Available at: https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2023-july-update-snapshot-31-july-2023.

7.　During the reporting period, attacks against humanitarian workers and on health-care workers [5] remained a serious concern and reflected disregard for international humanitarian law and human rights law. According to the World Health Organization surveillance system for attacks on health care, [6] 1,941 attacks were recorded in 16 countries and territories that resulted in 281 deaths and 607 injuries. This marked a continued increase of attacks from the previous reporting period (1,847 attacks, 476 deaths and 696 injuries).

8.　The Department of Safety and Security, in collaboration with the United Nations security management system organizations, played a key role in enabling the United Nations to conduct its mandated programmes and activities safely and effectively amid the volatile global security environment.

A.　Responses to emergencies

9.　The Department of Safety and Security enabled 1,111 United Nations humanitarian missions to high-risk and very high-risk areas of Ukraine, and 39 missions of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the nuclear power plants in Ukraine, including 10 missions to Zaporizhzhia. In June 2023 alone, the Department facilitated at least nine inter-agency convoys delivering 41 truckloads of life-saving supplies to the people affected by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam in Kherson Oblast of Ukraine.

10.　In Ethiopia, the Department of Safety and Security supported humanitarian operations by facilitating access to local communities affected by the armed conflict, including internally displaced persons. The Department conducted 160 safety and security assessments for roads damaged by the armed conflict during the reporting period. During the armed conflict in Tigray in 2022, the Department conducted at least 215 assessments for United Nations premises and accommodations of international and national personnel.

11.　In South Sudan, amidst the ongoing armed conflict in Upper Nile State, the support of the Department of Safety and Security was instrumental in keeping an important humanitarian supply route operational through information-sharing and liaising with local actors. Following the events in the Sudan in April 2023, the Department's team in South Sudan provided security information and analysis and coordinated with the relevant parties to ensure security arrangements for the reception plan of the United Nations personnel and implementing partners evacuating to South Sudan.

12.　The United Nations also supported the evacuation and relocations of personnel and dependants from the Sudan through daily operational coordination meetings with the diplomatic community and United Nations security management system partners, 24/7 remote support through the Department's Crisis Coordination Centre, and coordination with relevant Member States' crisis centres. As a result, the Department enabled the movement of approximately 1,500 persons, including members of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and members of the diplomatic community. The collaboration with Djibouti, France, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Uganda and the United States of America enabled the movements of 1,100 personnel and family members from Khartoum to Entebbe and Nairobi. This cooperation also enabled the air evacuation of more than a 100 personnel, including members of

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[5] The World Health Organization defines an attack on health care as any act of verbal or physical violence or obstruction or threat of violence that interferes with the availability, access and delivery of curative and/or preventive health services during emergencies.

[6] Available at https://extranet.who.int/ssa/Index.aspx.

international NGOs from El Fasher to Ndjamena, and the air evacuation of personnel and their dependants from Khartoum to Djibouti.

13.   In Mali, the Department of Safety and Security supported 677 field missions to enable humanitarian operations, programme delivery and implementation of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission mandated activities in 2022 and 2023. The Department coordinated and supported eight integrated missions to provide mobile courts, increase state authority presence and provide access to justice in the Timbuktu area.

14.   In Somalia, the Department of Safety and Security enabled humanitarian operations by supporting over 5,000 missions in 2022 to assist local communities facing food insecurity, persistent conflict and climate-related crises, resulting in the delivery of food aid to 235,690 people in Dhuusamarreeb, health assistance to 309,619 people in Beledweyne and non-food items to 39,565 people in Laascaanood, all areas in which aid delivery is complicated by insecurity. Through nuanced analysis of risk and tailored security risk mitigation approaches, the Department was able to extend United Nations access and support missions to very high-risk areas, including parts of the country which were previously inaccessible or did not have a permanent international presence.

15.   Following the devastating earthquakes in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye in February 2023, the Department of Safety and Security, in collaboration with the United Nations security management system, acted to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian aid to vulnerable communities and the safety of United Nations and associated personnel. For instance, in Hasakah governorate, north-east Syrian Arab Republic, the Department enabled an inter-agency mission to support the delivery of essential medicines, cholera kits, and hygiene materials and assess the needs of the local population at Ra's al-Ayn's hospital, for an estimated 30,000 people. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the Department supported cross-border operations through convoy leadership and coordination.

16.   In Haiti, the prevalence of gang violence continued to limit the capacity of humanitarian operations in support of local communities that face a shortage of food, outbreak of diseases and a breakdown of medical and other services. The Department of Safety and Security continued its collaboration with community leaders and host Government authorities to enable humanitarian operations and programme delivery, such as water, sanitation and hygiene and food assistance.

17.   In Yemen, with the escalation of armed conflict in the first quarter of 2022, the overall operational environment was considered as very high risk owing to recurrent air strikes, drones, stand-off attacks, small arms combat and the presence of mines. The Department of Safety and Security provided extensive risk management measures to facilitate programme implementation while ensuring the safety and security of personnel and supported 3,587 humanitarian operations and United Nations programmes.

18.   In Afghanistan, the Department of Safety and Security enabled humanitarian operations amid expanded demands owing to the significant changes in the security environment following the takeover by the Taliban de facto authorities in August 2021. During the reporting period, the Department conducted regular assessments to evaluate threats and manage security risks, in particular as some humanitarian organizations were exposed to threatening messages from terrorist organizations. It conducted assessments of previously inaccessible locations to enable humanitarian operations in support of local communities.

19.   In Myanmar, during Cyclone Mocha in May 2023, the Department of Safety and Security supported 66 inter-agency missions, mostly in high-risk areas owing to

active conflicts. Those missions primarily provided humanitarian support to the internally displaced persons camps, including food distribution, water sanitation and hygiene and provisions for shelter. The Department provided support through security analysis and situational advice, and road assessments to determine access and safe passage of United Nations agencies.

20. These experiences demonstrate the importance of risk-based approaches for ensuring the safe conduct of the mandates, missions, activities, and programmes of the United Nations highlighting the Department of Safety and Security's enabling solutions that help the United Nations system to operate effectively within acceptable levels of risk, thereby ensuring that international investment in the United Nations and its partners remains protected.

B. Surge deployment and support to field missions

21. The United Nations security management system organizations carried out surge deployments to support crisis responses. The Department of Safety and Security conducted 90 surge deployment of security personnel in 2022, compared with 56 in 2021, with a combined total of 7,230 days, thereby enabling critical United Nations humanitarian operations, including in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Niger, Nigeria, Ukraine and Yemen. In the first half of 2023, the Department carried out 34 surge deployments (1,647 days), including in Afghanistan, Haiti, the Niger and Türkiye.

Figure I
Surge deployment of United Nations security professionals
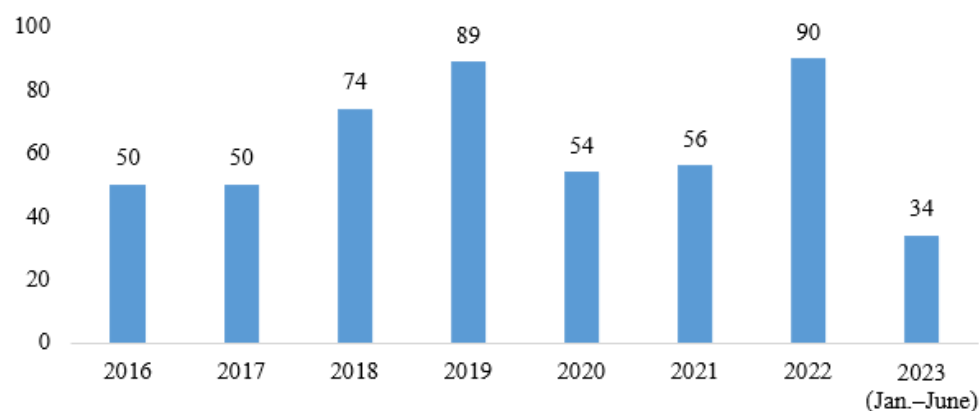
22. During the reporting period, the Department of Safety and Security supported 204 missions in areas of very high-risk – those in which the likelihood and impact of serious security incidents affecting United Nations personnel are deemed to be particularly high – to enable critical United Nations programmes, including in Somalia, Ukraine and Yemen.

23. The Department of Safety and Security also coordinated protective services for senior United Nations officials on 3,734 instances of travel during the reporting period, including 238 missions that were classified as complex operations in high-risk environments.

24. The Department of Safety and Security coordinated the implementation of new technologies as force multipliers. A pilot project of a virtual operations centre based on extended reality technology was deployed in high-risk areas to protect lives, save resources and increase situational awareness.

# III. Security threats against United Nations personnel

A. Security incidents affecting the United Nations security management system[7]

1. Main types of incidents and their impact on United Nations personnel

25.   Overall, incidents related to safety and security affected 1,614 United Nations personnel in 2022, compared with 1,652 in 2021, which represents an approximate 2 per cent decrease but remains higher than the average number of personnel affected between 2013 and 2022 (see figure II). In 2022, female United Nations personnel accounted for 46 per cent of the United Nations workforce[8] and 43 per cent of those affected by security and safety incidents (see annex III). In the first half of 2023, incidents related to safety and security affected 774 United Nations personnel (see annex I), compared with 671 in the first half of 2022.

Figure II
**United Nations personnel affected by safety and security incidents**
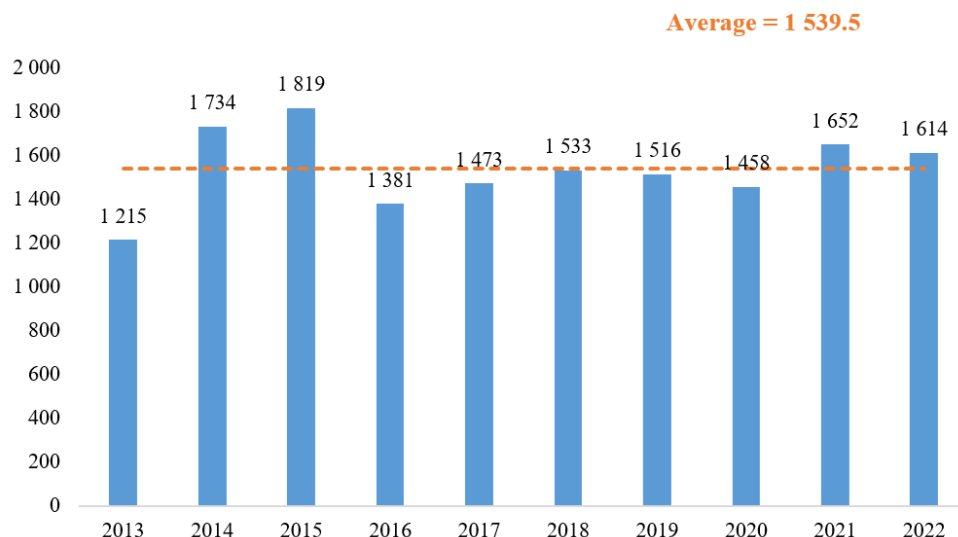
26.   In 2022, 11 United Nations civilian personnel lost their lives as a result of acts of violence, compared with seven in 2021 (see figure III). The fatalities occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Haiti, Kenya, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

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[7] 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.

[8] Calculations of the total number of personnel by gender is based on the Chief Executives Board for Coordination Personnel Statistics published in August 2022.

Figure III
Fatalities of United Nations civilian personnel resulting from violence
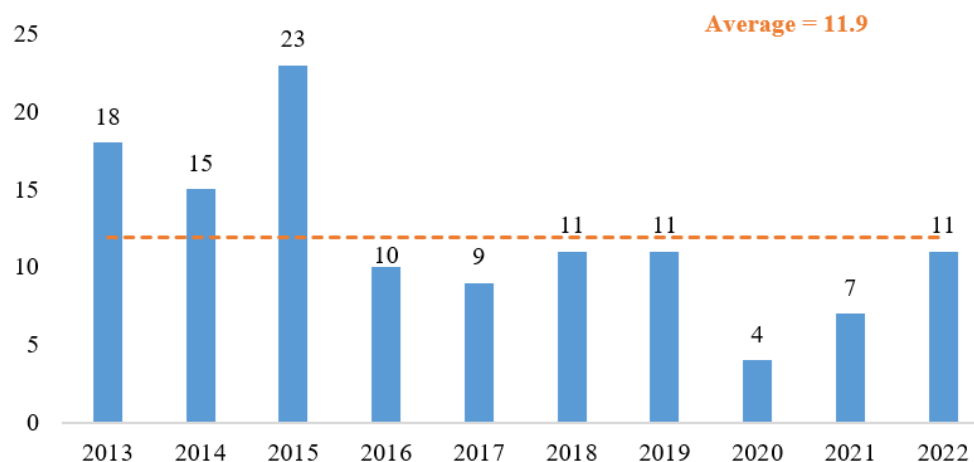
27. In 2022, 6 out of the 11 fatalities were the result of criminal acts, 2 were attributed to terrorism and 3 to armed conflict (see figure IV). Crime-related incidents continued to be the primary source of violent deaths of United Nations personnel.

28. In the first half of 2023, nine United Nations personnel lost their lives as a result of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Somalia and the Sudan. Five of the fatalities occurred as a result of the violence in the Sudan.

Figure IV
Fatalities of United Nations personnel resulting from violence, by category of threat
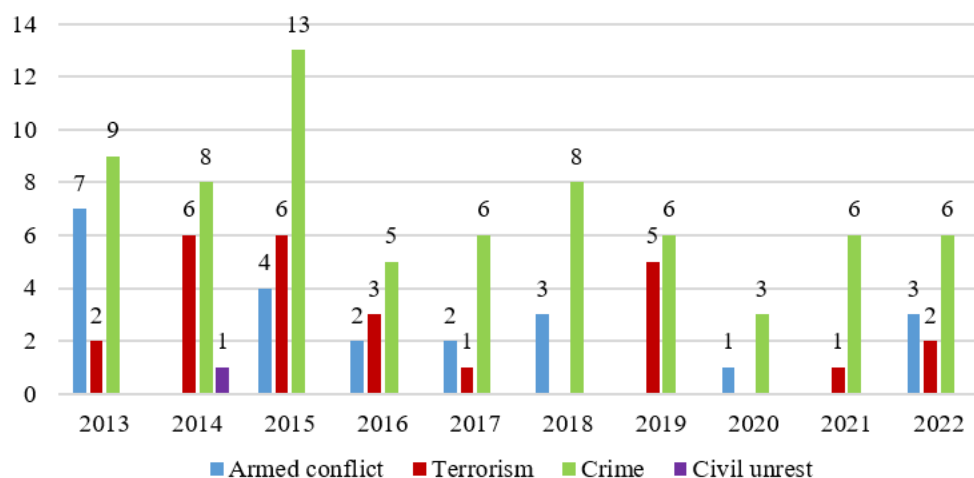
29. In 2022, there were 28 reports of attacks on United Nations premises, 105 attacks on United Nations vehicles and 75 intrusions into United Nations premises, for a total of 208 incidents, compared with 41 attacks on premises, 107 attacks on vehicles and 127 intrusions in 2021 (see figure V and annex II). As a result of these incidents, 69 United Nations vehicles were lost or damaged. Most attacks occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan. In the first half of 2023, there were 39 attacks on United Nations premises, 78 attacks on United Nations vehicles and 94 intrusions into United Nations premises, for a total of 211 incidents. Most incidents occurred during the compound intrusions in the Sudan.

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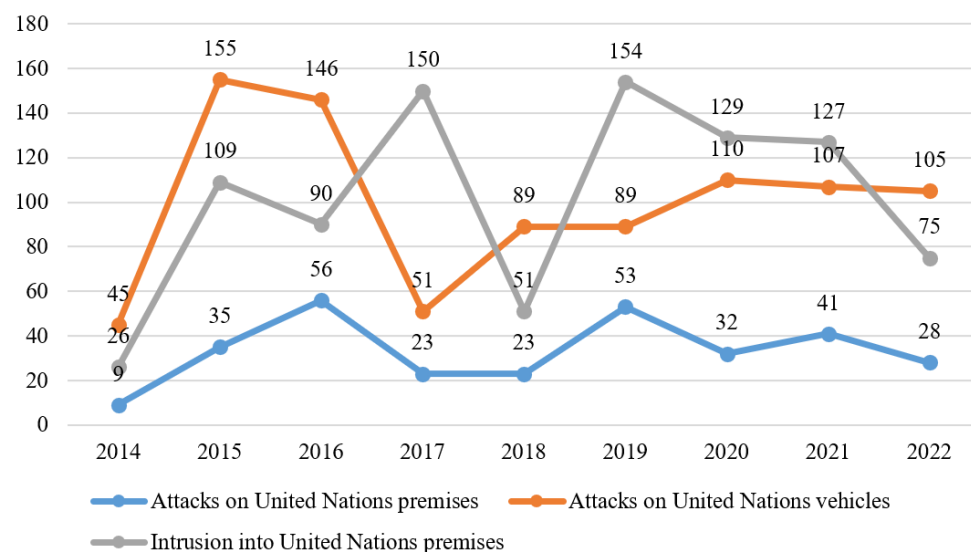
Crime

30. Of the 1,614 United Nations personnel affected by safety and security incidents in 2022, 817 were affected by crimes, which included robberies, residence break-ins, burglaries, aggravated assault and sexual assault, which is a small decrease compared with 882 incidents in 2021 (see figure VI). Of the United Nations personnel affected by crime in 2022, 501 were locally recruited.

Figure VI
United Nations personnel affected by crime, by category
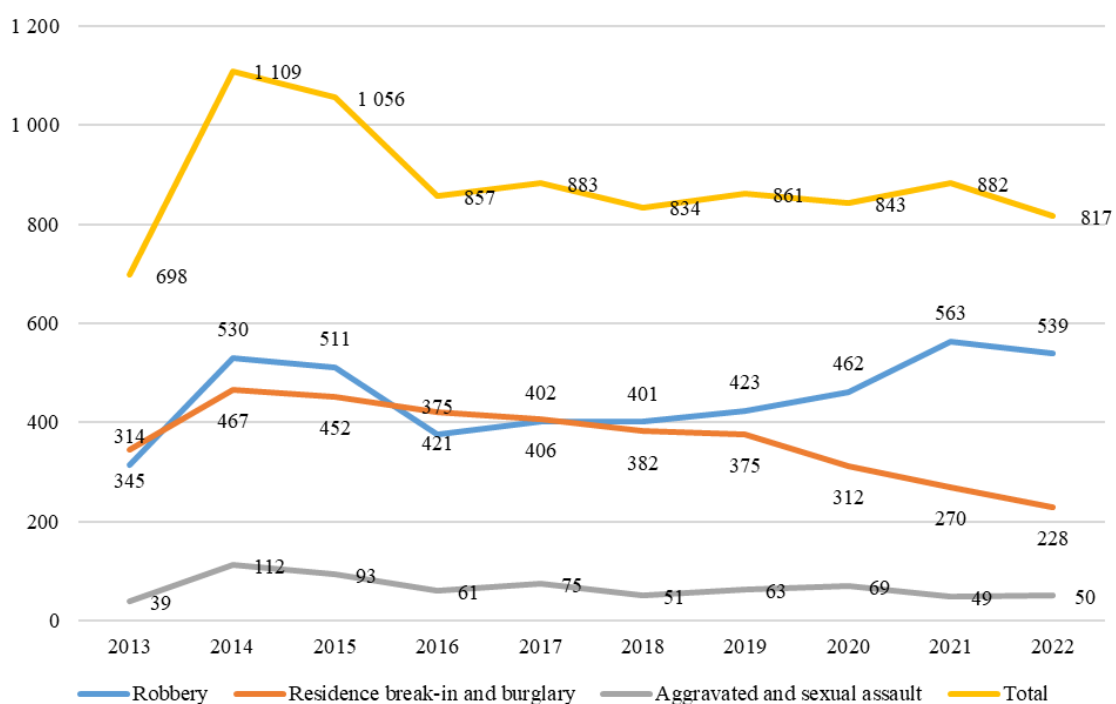
Terrorism

31.   During the reporting period, three United Nations personnel were killed and six were injured as a result of terrorism. In September 2022, a roadside improvised explosive device exploded outside of Beledweyne in Somalia and killed a local United Nations personnel. In October 2022, two vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices detonated near host Government premises, killing over 100 persons, including a local United Nations personnel. In June 2023, a local United Nations personnel was killed in an attack involving two person-borne improvised explosive devices and active shooters in a hotel in Mogadishu. In these instances, the personnel were off duty. Indiscriminate terrorist attacks on public spaces continued to be a threat to United Nations personnel in Somalia, even if they are not direct targets.

Abductions

32.   Twenty-four United Nations personnel were abducted in 2022, a significant increase from nine abducted in 2021 (see figure VII and annex I). Of the 24 abductions, 16 evolved into hostage situations when the hostage-takers demanded ransom, compared with five in 2021. In the first half of 2023, eight United Nations personnel were abducted; one incident evolved into a hostage situation.

33.   In Yemen, the Department of Safety and Security, with the support of Member States, secured the release of all five United Nations personnel abducted. In Haiti, hostage-taking continues to be a threat affecting United Nations personnel and their families. In the Central African Republic and Mali, the Department established hostage incident management cells in response to incidents affecting three United Nations personnel, resulting in their release. The personnel were not targeted because of their connection to the United Nations. Hostage-taking, for ransom or political purposes, continued to be an issue affecting United Nations personnel, dependants, and operations in Mali during the reporting period.

Figure VII
Abductions of United Nations personnel
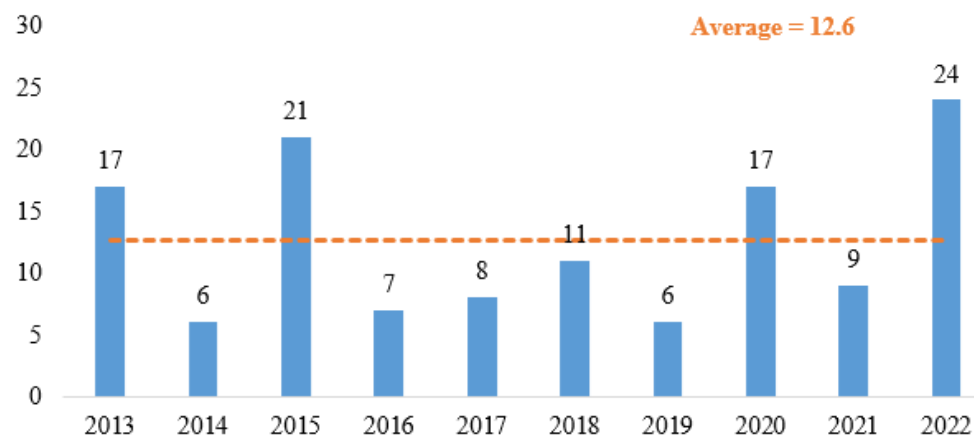
Safety-related incidents, including road traffic crashes

34.   In 2022, 15 United Nations personnel lost their lives as a result of safety-related incidents, compared with 11 personnel in 2021 (see annex I), including six United Nations personnel who died as a result of road traffic crashes (see figure VIII), five deaths occurred while using private motor vehicles or public transportation. In 2022, 165 personnel were injured as a result of safety-related incidents, which represents a significant increase compared with 98 in 2021. Most safety-related incidents resulting

in injuries were owing to road traffic crashes. As restrictions resulting from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic eased in 2022, injuries resulting from road traffic crashes increased.
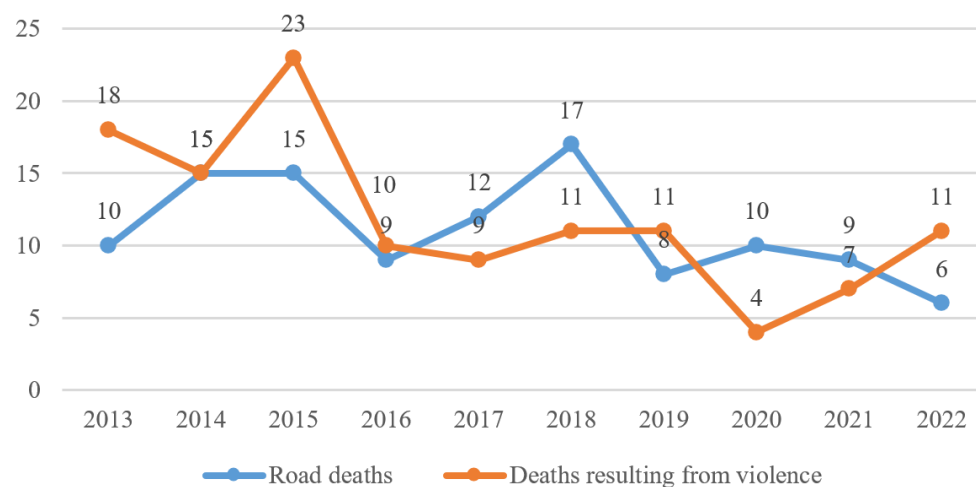
35.   In the first half of 2023, 10 United Nations personnel lost their lives, and 71 were injured as a result of safety-related incidents. The fatalities included six United Nations personnel who died owing to road traffic crashes, five deaths occurred while using private motor vehicles or public transportation. The fatalities also include four personnel who died as a result of the earthquake in Türkiye in February 2023.

36.   During the reporting period, 25 non-United Nations personnel died and 126 were injured as a result of road traffic crashes involving United Nations vehicles. There were 16 civilian casualties involving United Nations vehicles. The fatalities occurred in Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Lebanon, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

37.   As part of the United Nations system's initiative Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, the Department of Safety and Security and the United Nations security management system organizations conducted awareness-raising activities to assist in reaching the initiative's target of reducing road traffic fatalities by 50 per cent by providing United Nations and associated personnel comprehensive guidelines and standards on road safety.

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

Sexual assaults

38.   The number of reported sexual assaults on United Nations personnel in 2022 increased to 16 cases from two cases in 2021. In the first six months of 2023, two sexual assaults were reported. All the United Nations personnel who reported being sexually assaulted during the reporting period were women. Gender-based security incidents, including sexual assaults, continue to be significantly underreported across the United Nations security management system.

Intimidation and harassment

39.   There were 351 reported incidents of intimidation and harassment of United Nations personnel by external threat actors in 2022, a decrease from 386 incidents reported in 2021. The majority of cases occurred in South Sudan.

Arrests and detention of United Nations personnel

40.   In 2022, 107 United Nations personnel were arrested or detained by national authorities, compared with 177 in 2021. Most arrests took place in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and South Sudan. In the first half of 2023, 44 United Nations personnel were arrested or detained by national authorities. As at June 2023, two United Nations personnel remained in detention.

2.   **Security of locally recruited personnel**

41.   Locally recruited personnel continued to be more affected in absolute numbers (1,079 out of 1,614, about 67 per cent) than internationally recruited personnel (535 out of 1,614) by security incidents resulting in fatalities and injuries, abduction, robbery, residence break-ins and burglaries, aggravated assault, intimidation and harassment, and arrest and detention (see figure IX and annex III). International personnel were more affected, in absolute numbers, by reported instances of sexual assault.

42.   In 2022, locally recruited personnel accounted for seven out of 11 personnel killed as a result of violent acts, with incidents occurring in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Haiti, Myanmar, Somalia and South Sudan. Twenty of the personnel abducted in 2022 were locally recruited.

Figure IX
Incidents affecting locally recruited personnel, 2022
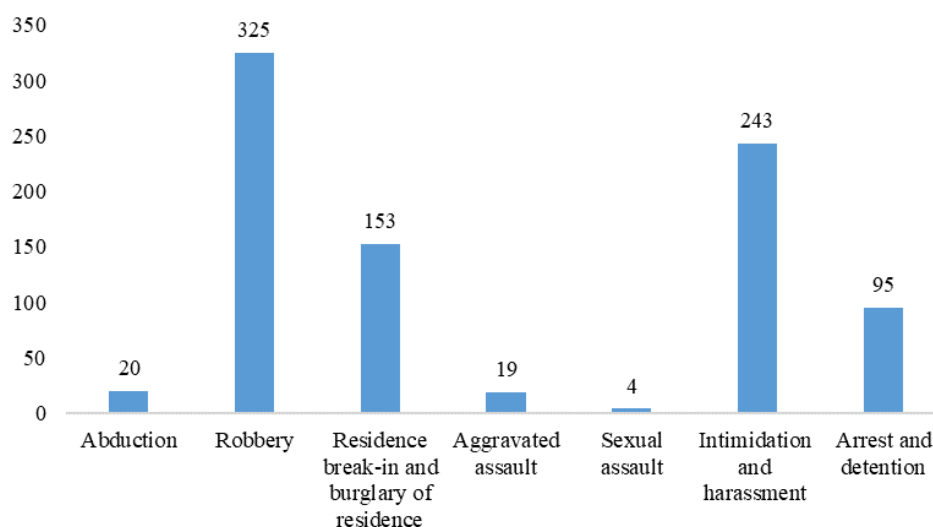
B.   **Security incidents affecting humanitarian personnel of non-governmental organizations and other personnel**

1.   **Impact of security threats on humanitarian personnel of non-governmental organizations**

43.   Critical incidents affecting humanitarian personnel of United Nations implementing partners increased from 664 in 2021 to 812 in 2022 (see annex IV). In 2022, 56 NGO humanitarian personnel working in close cooperation with the United Nations were killed, 95 were injured as a result of acts of violence and 154 were abducted, compared with 65 killed, 109 injured and 153 abducted in 2021 (see figure X). There were 44 armed attacks on premises, 153 intrusions into premises and

310 armed attacks on vehicles. Most of these incidents occurred in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

44. 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 data should be seen as a minimum and not a fully accurate reporting of incidents. In addition, the data cannot be verified or compared with other existing databases based on different methodologies.

Figure X
Security incidents affecting personnel of non-governmental implementing partners, as reported to the Department of Safety and Security
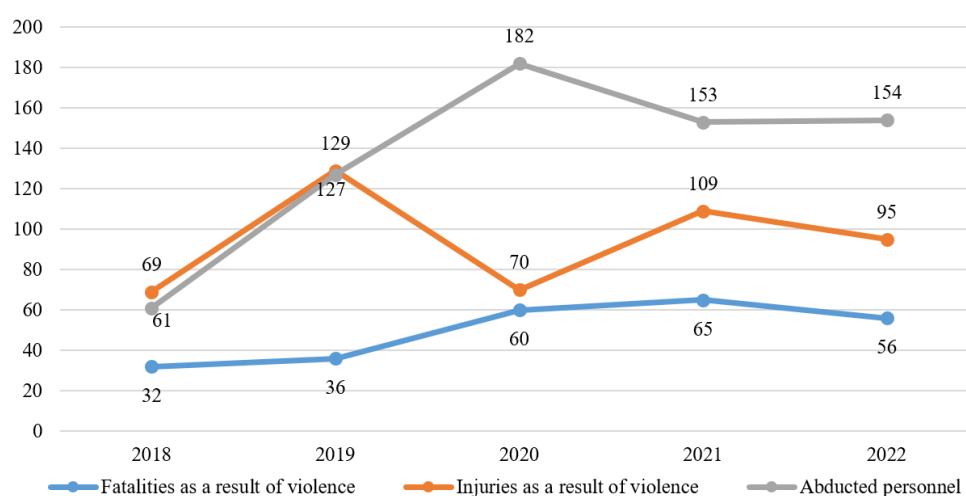
2. Security incidents affecting the area personnel of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East[9]

45. Employing some 32,000 personnel, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) delivers humanitarian assistance to approximately 5.9 million Palestine refugees.[10] In 2022, 29 area personnel were injured in security and safety-related incidents, 22 as a result of an act of violence, and 7 in safety-related incidents; 30 area personnel suffered assaults while carrying out their duties and 96 suffered intimidation, threats of violence, and harassment. In the first half of 2023, 13 area personnel were injured, as a result of violence, and 12 area personnel were assaulted (see annex V).

46. During the reporting period, there were no abductions of area personnel, and no reported sexual assault or sexual harassment. A total of 195 area personnel were affected by security and safety-related incidents in 2022, compared with 193 in 2021. In the first half of 2023, 86 area personnel were affected by security and safety-related incidents. During the reporting period, there were five attacks against premises and 14 intrusions into premises.

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[9] 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.

[10] The UNRWA data are based on security incidents reported to and recorded in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East area security information management system.

IV. Strengthening the United Nations security management system

47. The United Nations security management system, led and coordinated by the Department of Safety and Security, continually adapts to the challenges of operating in highly complex and volatile security environments. The collaborative efforts made to enable the United Nations to conduct its mandated programmes and activities safely and efficiently are described below.

A. Enhancing security risk management preparedness and response capacities

1. Updating the framework of safety and security policies

48. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network continued to lead the development of system-wide security policies at the United Nations. To ensure that its guidance is effective and up to date, the Network oversaw substantial revisions to several security management policies, including policies on the applicability of the United Nations security management system, risk avoidance, hostage risk management, residential security measures and armed private security companies. In addition, the Network developed guidance on diverse security-related issues, including guidelines on physical security for United Nations premises, road safety and the electronic travel advisory application.

49. Through the Inter-Agency Security Management Network Working Group on Gender and Inclusivity, the Department of Safety and Security, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) continued to review security policies, security training and security risk management processes to ensure adequate incorporation of people-centred approaches.

2. Security training

50. During the reporting period, the Department of Safety and Security trained 194 participants from United Nations security management system organizations in security analysis processes and practices and provided seven online security threat information trainings with 180 participants to strengthen the skills of United Nations security personnel on security threat information analysis.

51. The Department of Safety and Security and the United Nations security management system continued their review of security training modules, processes and systems, including the security risk management process and the security and safety incident reporting system to better identify people-centred security risks, support personnel who experience gender-based security incidents and strengthen the United Nations' ability to design and implement people-centred security risk management. The United Nations security management system also collaborated on identifying and sharing effective practices in the recruitment and retention of women personnel in the security workforce, including in high-risk contexts.

52. In collaboration with the United Nations security management system organizations, most of the training events planned in 2022 were executed with targets exceeded in some cases (see figure XI).

Figure XI
Security training

(Number of trained personnel)
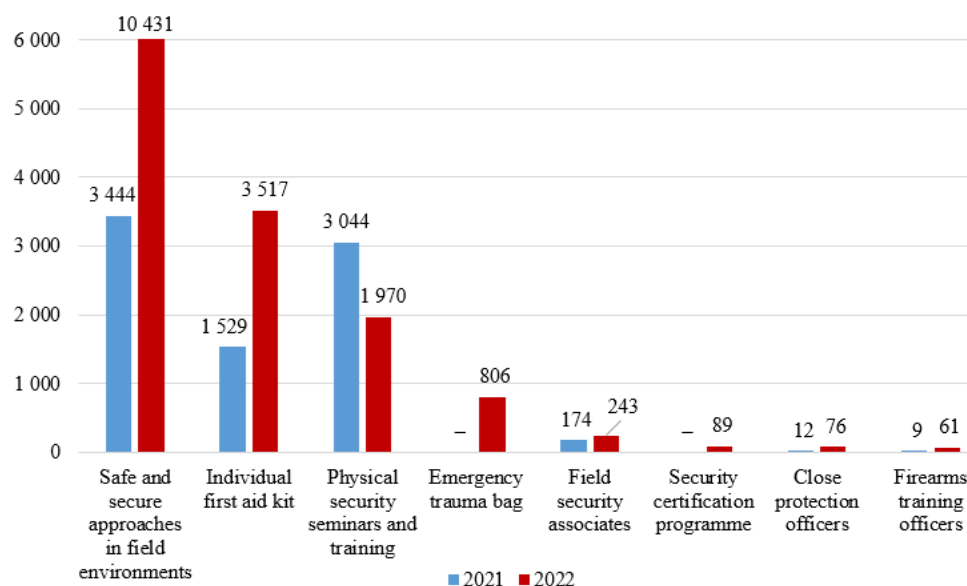
53.	In 2022, the Department of Safety and Security, in collaboration with the United Nations security management system, delivered 850 security management team training courses, compared with 787 in 2021, and 154 designated official training courses to decision makers, compared with 169 in 2021. During the reporting period, the Department completed six crisis management training courses for 122 designated officials to increase their knowledge on security plans and security risk management and prepare them for possible crisis incidents with greater confidence.

54.	The Department of Safety and Security provided guidance to strengthen physical security knowledge of United Nations security professionals managing security risks at United Nations premises. The Department supported specific in-country activities by providing 18 assessments of buildings for 13 United Nations organizations in 20 countries, including areas of high risk such as Afghanistan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen. The Department conducted 51 technical assessments that provided advice on specific components of physical security, produced seven information bulletins and trained 425 personnel in the use of the physical security assessment tool.

## 3.	Digital transformation

55.	In its efforts to adopt an agile approach to digital transformation and to promote digital innovation, in line with the Secretary-General's Data Strategy for Action by Everyone, Everywhere, the Department of Safety and Security has been ensuring continuous improvements in its security risk management and the safety and security incident recording system processes and tools. In December 2022, the Department established a team to implement recommendations proposed by the Inter-Agency Security Management Network working group for security risk management and safety and security incident recording system. During the first half of 2023, the team implemented improvements to the security risk management e-tool in collaboration with the Office of Information and Communications Technology. The priority is on revitalizing training of security personnel on data entry of safety and security incidents impacting the United Nations and in supporting improvements in data

visualization by developing an interactive dashboard displaying global trends of safety and security incidents impacting the United Nations.

56. To enhance the visibility of the United Nations security management system and improve the security awareness of United Nations personnel, the Department of Safety and Security developed a series of activities in partnership with the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, including the United Nations security management system website, a platform designed to provide comprehensive and accessible information about all security matters covering security clearance, travel advisories, tools, training and resources. The Department also planned a security week, an event dedicated to fostering a security-conscious culture within the United Nations.

4. Strengthening evaluation and best practices

57. During the reporting period, the Department of Safety and Security continued to strengthen its evaluation function as a critical dimension of security risk management preparedness, institutional accountability and learning for greater performance and results. In March 2023, the Department rolled out a new internal evaluation policy which describes the principles and framework of the evaluation function and outlines how evaluations are to be planned, conducted and used.

58. The Department of Safety and Security concluded an evaluation of the Strategy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2015–2021) highlighting progress made in the Department's gender parity goals and in advancing gender focused security responses and setting out the areas in which the Department must strive to do better. The Department also initiated evaluations of the Emergency Trauma Bag training and the Department's psychosocial well-being strategy, and revamped its lessons learned and best practices collection process, which will be articulated in new lessons learned guidelines.

5. Psychosocial response to critical incidents

59. In 2022, the Department of Safety and Security led a United Nations system-wide initiative and developed a field manual on psychosocial support in crisis situations for United Nations staff counsellors and stress counsellors. The Department also developed the first compilation of technical guidelines for the use of information technologies in psychosocial support services in the United Nations.

60. In 2022, regular technical supervision was provided to 105 United Nations field counsellors. Stress management and resilience-building sessions were provided to 26,919 personnel. The resilience of security managers was enhanced by training on stress prevention and management to 165 principal security advisers, chief security advisers and security advisers.

61. In 2022, the Department of Safety and Security coordinated the United Nations psychosocial support response in major emergencies, such as those in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti and Ukraine, and supported hostage incident management activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Nigeria and Yemen. The Department supervised field counsellors providing emotional first aid and stress counselling to 16,446 personnel and delivered 1,405 managerial consultations to support managers dealing with critical incidents affecting their teams.

62. A comprehensive psychosocial well-being strategy for the Department of Safety and Security and the integrated security workforce personnel was launched in February 2022 as a departmental strategic priority. This incorporates psychosocial well-being considerations into departmental decision-making, building resilience of the workforce, destigmatizing psychosocial support, and setting up prioritized

counselling services for the integrated security workforce in hazardous locations. By harnessing the state-of-the-art psychosocial information and data management platform, the Department collected and analysed comprehensive global data on psychosocial needs of United Nations personnel and dependants. Data-driven insights are being used to identify emerging psychosocial needs, ongoing resource gaps and strengthen critical incident stress preparedness and management.

63.   During the first half of 2023, the Department of Safety and Security enhanced the preparedness of United Nations personnel by delivering stress management and resilience-building sessions to 10,268 personnel in field locations, including 140 security managers. The Department supervised field counsellors providing emotional first aid and stress counselling support to 6,100 personnel following reported critical incidents and conducted 638 managerial consultations to support United Nations managers dealing with critical incidents affecting their teams.

6.   Foresight and resilience building

64.   To continue providing trusted and reliable security services that enable United Nations operations worldwide, the Department of Safety and Security engaged more systematically with United Nations planning processes at the country level, including the common country assessment and the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Using existing resources, the Department also established the Operational Resilience Unit to work with regional desks and assist country operations to better plan their support to the United Nations system, based on foresight analysis and quality assurance of planning products. The intent is to align the Department's services with planned development and humanitarian results, and to ensure that the Department is always prepared to support United Nations operations even if and when security situations deteriorate.

65.   In addition, an emergency response unit is being established to provide extra capacity, remotely and in-country, as needed, in contexts of emergency. The Unit has developed partnerships with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to ensure joint operational planning and the Department of Operational Support for access to their rosters of specialized expertise and to expedite deployments.

7.   Aligning security with United Nations priorities

66.   During the reporting period, the Department of Safety and Security accelerated the adoption and mainstreaming of various components of the United Nations reform and the initiatives of the Secretary-General within its operations.

67.   The Department of Safety and Security implemented measures to counter any form of racism. A senior advocate was appointed, and a comprehensive action plan was disseminated to all staff, with progress regularly monitored at the highest level.

68.   In collaboration with the Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse, the Department of Safety and Security organized an awareness-raising briefing to its workforce during a town hall meeting, followed up with a comprehensive communication campaign and developed specific training material.

69.   In collaboration with the Department of Peace Operations, which launched a project related to misinformation and disinformation in peacekeeping contexts, the Department of Safety and Security organized a series of workshops aimed at equipping its staff with the necessary skills to identify, analyse and counter misleading information.

70.   The United Nations security management system continued to play a critical role in enabling the delivery of programmes and initiatives aimed at achieving the

Sustainable Development Goals. For example, in response to the devastating earthquake in the Philippines, the United Nations security management system worked closely with the country team to develop comprehensive safety protocols for climate-related risks. This collaboration ensured the uninterrupted delivery of United Nations services, helping the country preserve its path towards affordable and clean energy (Goal 7) and climate action (Goal 13).

71. The focus on Sustainable Development Goals was also applied in conflict and post-conflict contexts. In Ukraine, the United Nations security management system implemented robust security measures to allow the United Nations presence in its efforts to deliver humanitarian aid and preserve sustainable development gains. This proactive security management allowed the United Nations country team to focus on its mission, leading to significant progress in improving access to quality education (Goal 4) and promoting gender equality (Goal 5).

B. Enhancing security collaboration

1. Strengthening engagement with host Governments

72. Host Governments have primary responsibility for the protection of United Nations personnel, premises and assets. Effective collaboration and engagement with host Governments remain key components of United Nations security management. The Department of Safety and Security continued to facilitate collaboration with host Governments in responding to crises and to address restrictions faced while acquiring the necessary capacities to mitigate identified risks and to strengthen support for United Nations personnel and operations. The Department also continued to collaborate with host Governments to remove barriers facing United Nations international security personnel to support security risk management on the ground owing to non-issuance of visas.

73. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security regularly met with authorities of host Governments to ensure close collaboration through a common understanding and sharing of situational awareness, threat and risk analysis, the coordination of prevention and risk mitigation measures, and the management of security crises. The Under-Secretary-General met with host Governments during field visits where security needs and concerns were discussed and sought to enhance understanding of the Department of Safety and Security through, for example, briefing sessions with Member States in New York.

2. Strengthening partnerships with non-governmental organizations

74. The Department of Safety and Security continued its efforts to strengthen collaboration with NGOs under the Saving Lives Together framework, focusing on systematic collaboration with NGO security platforms in high-risk areas, improving information sharing and crisis preparedness. This helped to effectively manage the response to security incidents and crises, most notably during the response to the crisis in the Sudan in April-May 2023, where the well-established Saving Lives Together collaboration was instrumental in effectively supporting NGOs and ensuring that their personnel could join United Nations relocation operations out of Khartoum and other duty stations affected by the conflict. International NGO security managers further participated in the Department's hostage incident management courses and crisis management training courses for designated officials.

75. The Department of Safety and Security, with United Nations security management system partners, continued to promote strategic partnerships and organized the third international security symposium in May 2023 as a forum for the United Nations, regional organizations and other stakeholders to enhance collaboration on security

issues. The symposium, co-hosted by the Islamic Development Bank Group, brought together over 90 participants. The next symposium, co-hosted by the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank, is planned for 2024.

3.   Addressing impunity and promoting respect for the human rights, privileges and immunities of United Nations and associated personnel

76.   The United Nations collaborates closely with host Governments, which have primary responsibility for protecting United Nations personnel deployed in their territory and for ensuring respect for the privileges and immunities of those personnel. The Organization encourages Member States to abide by relevant international instruments. To date, only 95 States are parties to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel of 1994, and only 33 States are parties to the Optional Protocol thereto of 2005.

V.   Moving forward: strategic focus and opportunities for strengthening security support to humanitarian personnel

77.   The Department of Safety and Security will increase efforts to further embed results-based planning notably through dedicated support and capacity-building to country offices and the development of country programmes that articulate the Department's support to United Nations mandates, priorities and results.

78.   Prioritizing the agility and resilience of the United Nations security system, the Department of Safety and Security will continuously monitor its preparedness and ability to respond to sudden deteriorations of the security environment.

79.   Adequate preparedness will not be possible without addressing critical gaps that have been identified by partners and decision makers in relation to the approach of the Department of Safety and Security to analysis. The coming year will see changes that strengthen the Department's analysis for foresight and planning, and re-orient analytical products that support security advice and decision-making around United Nations programmes in insecure environments.

80.   This commitment and effort will be sustained through multiple tracks: partnerships on planning with the United Nations system, especially with the resident coordinator system, with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Operational Support, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations on emergency response and support, and with multiple partners on analysis, human-resource development for a diverse and capable workforce, innovation and adaptation, including on digital transformation to support collaboration, rapid decision-making and efficiency, gender and inclusion to make our operations more effective, more accepted, and more representative of needs, and resource mobilization to equip the Department of Safety and Security with the right capabilities, at the right level, at the right time.

VI.   Observations and recommendations

81.   **The international community continues to call upon the United Nations to respond to complex and unpredictable crises often in volatile security environments in which our personnel can be vulnerable to myriad threats. Agile, coordinated and information-based security risk management approaches are fundamental for the United Nations to deliver on its mandates bestowed by its Member States and continue to fulfil its Charter obligations even in very high-risk settings.**

82.   **United Nations and humanitarian personnel continued to risk their lives to bring aid and hope to those in despair. Any death or injury to United Nations or humanitarian personnel is unacceptable. In 2022, 11 United Nations personnel, the majority of which were locally recruited personnel, and, reportedly, 56 NGO humanitarian personnel have lost their lives as a result of violence. In the first half of 2023, nine United Nations personnel have died. I am deeply saddened by these deaths and express my sincere condolences to the families. I condemn, in the strongest terms, all forms of violence against United Nations and humanitarian personnel. The legacies of these brave personnel live on in the commitment of the United Nations to continue to work to create a better world.**

83.   **I am deeply concerned by the sharp rise in the number of abductions of United Nations personnel, which has almost tripled, with 24 incidents in 2022, and the considerable increase in the reported number of sexual assaults affecting United Nations personnel. I remain also deeply concerned by the systemic disregard for international humanitarian law and human rights law and urge Governments to investigate allegations of violations promptly, thoroughly and effectively through independent and impartial bodies and bring perpetrators of such violations to justice. I welcome the efforts of Governments to address impunity for serious crimes against United Nations and humanitarian personnel.**

84.   **I remain concerned that NGOs, including United Nations implementing partners, bear a significant burden of insecurity. The localization of humanitarian aid should not translate into more lives at risk. The United Nations security management system will explore how to strengthen the Saving Lives Together framework. I call for all Member States in a position to do so to provide additional extrabudgetary resources to support these efforts. The United Nations has an obligation, through a shared aspiration of more effective and localized implementation, to support NGO partners in managing security risks.**

85.   **In this challenging environment, I underscore the importance of partnerships between the United Nations, the United Nations security management system, regional organizations and other international partners and welcome the continued collaboration and cooperation of Member States and host Governments with the United Nations on the safety and security of United Nations and humanitarian personnel. Strategic partnerships that enable coordinated responses are an imperative in addressing multidimensional security threats effectively and efficiently.**

86.   **Another priority is to ensure adequate and predictable resources for security. To better anticipate and respond to emergency situations, security costs must be an integral part of programme planning and mandate consideration.**

87.   **I call upon Member States to provide additional support through voluntary contributions to meet the continuing growing needs for security support to enable United Nations operations.**

88.   **Such support is essential for maintaining a collective security management system that provides the most effective and efficient approach to ensuring the safety and security of United Nations operations and personnel. The efforts of the Department of Safety and Security to reorient its tasks and resources towards results and operational resilience is central to the strength of this collective system, and I call on all external partners to continue to work closely with the Department to ensure the system's sustainability and effectiveness.**

89.   **I recommend that the General Assembly remain engaged on the safety and security of United Nations personnel and continue to provide full support to the United Nations security management system.**

Annex I

United Nations personnel affected by safety and security incidents

Category of safety or security incident	Number of personnel affected						
	2017	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*	*2023 (Jan.–June)*
Fatalities resulting from acts of violence	9	11	11	4	7	11	9
Fatalities resulting from safety-related incidents	13	20	33	14	11	15	10
Injuries resulting from acts of violence	70	67	92	100	82	124	59
Injuries resulting from safety-related incidents	111	114	100	89	98	165	71
Abduction	8	11	6	17	9	24	8
Robbery	402	401	423	462	563	539	269
Residence break-in and burglary of residence	406	382	375	312	270	228	131
Aggravated assault	47	41	51	62	47	34	20
Sexual assault	28	10	12	7	2	16	2
Intimidation and harassment	316	391	327	307	386	351	151
Arrest and detention	63	85	86	84	177	107	44
Total	**1 473**	**1 533**	**1 516**	**1 458**	**1 652**	**1 614**	**774**

Annex II

Attacks on United Nations premises and official vehicles

Category of security incident	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*	*2023 (Jan.–June)*
Attacks on United Nations premises	23	23	53	32	41	28	39
Attacks on United Nations vehicles	51	89	89	110	107	105	78
Intrusion into United Nations premises	150	51	154	129	127	75	94
Total	**224**	**163**	**296**	**271**	**275**	**208**	**211**

Annex III

United Nations civilian personnel affected by security incidents, 2022

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	11	4	7	10	1	10	Armed conflict (3); Crime (6); Terrorism (2)
Fatalities resulting from safety-related incidents	15	5	10	9	6	13	Road traffic crashes (6); other safety-related incidents (9)
Injuries resulting from acts of violence	124	35	89	80	44	47	Armed conflict (1); Civil unrest (5); Crime (115); Terrorism (3)
Injuries resulting from safety-related incidents	165	51	114	103	62	55	Vehicular accident (135); other safety related incidents (30)
Abduction[a]	24	4	20	20	4	7	All personnel were released as of August 2023
Robbery[b]	539	214	325	269	270	92	
Residence break-in[c] and burglary of residence[d]	228	75	153	124	104	68	
Aggravated assault[e]	34	15	19	16	18	19	
Sexual assault	16	12	4	–	16	9	
Intimidation[f] and harassment[g]	351	108	243	193	158	68	
Arrest and detention[h]	107	12	95	90	17	35	2 remain in detention
Total	**1 614**	**535**	**1 079**	**914**	**700**		

[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 United Nations Department of Safety and Security

	Number of personnel affected						
Category of security incident	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*	*2023 (Jan.–June)*
Personnel who lost their lives as a result of acts of violence	42	32	36	60	65	56	8
Personnel injured as a result of acts of violence	62	69	129	70	109	95	21
Abducted personnel	84	61	127	182	153	154	10
Armed attacks on premises	11	21	11	27	36	44	4
Intrusion into premises	68	59	105	73	89	153	29
Armed attacks on vehicles	114	72	159	166	212	310	25
Total	**381**	**314**	**567**	**578**	**664**	**812**	**97**

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 (Jan.–June)*
Fatalities resulting from acts of violence	–	1	–	1	–	–	–
Fatalities resulting from safety-related incidents	–	2	–	–	–	–	–
Injuries resulting from acts of violence	5	6	18	28	29	22	13
Injuries resulting from safety-related incidents	3	4	5	14	8	7	–
Abduction	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Robbery	10	9	1	2	1	4	2
Residence break-in and burglary of residence	–	1	–	1	2	–	–
Assault	56	49	12	43	47	30	12
Sexual assault	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Intimidation and harassment	109	128	57	49	87	96	42
Arrest and detention	21	3	7	11	19	36	17
Total	**204**	**203**	**101**	**149**	**193**	**195**	**86**

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