

Office for the Coordination  
of Humanitarian Affairs

**UNITED NATIONS  
DISASTER  
ASSESSMENT AND  
COORDINATION**

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**UNDAC  
Handbook**



**United  
Nations**

8th Edition – June 2024  
Version 2

# PREFACE

## Foreword

This is the 8th (extensive) edition of the UNDAC Handbook published online in 2024. For a more comprehensive short version/guide of the UNDAC Handbook 2024, refer to the UNDAC Website.

The UNDAC system was originally established in 1993 by the United Nations (UN) and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) to ensure effective coordination between national disaster management agencies and incoming search and rescue teams in sudden-onset, large-scale emergencies. It is managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to provide support to Member States and the UN system in-country.

Over the past three decades, UNDAC has evolved and adapted to the changing requirements of the international humanitarian response system. Today, UNDAC teams are not only deployed in sudden-onset disasters, but also provide valuable support in protracted crises, technological and other types of emergencies, and are playing an increasing role as a tool and service of the UN in supporting Governments in disaster response preparedness activities. UNDAC deploys globally to ensure effective collaboration between national and local disaster management systems, international humanitarian response actors, bilateral responders including the military, national non-government organisations, civil society and the private sector, to name but a few.

Core to UNDAC practices is systematic post-mission evaluation to enable best practices and lessons learned to feed into the continuous development of the UNDAC methodology captured in this updated Handbook. This is, therefore, a living document and, as a reader and user, you should consider yourself a co-creator. Comments or suggestions for further development of the Handbook should be addressed to the Response Support Branch / Emergency Response Section (ERS) in OCHA Geneva.

## Introduction to the Handbook

The UNDAC Handbook is intended as an easily accessible reference guide for members of an UNDAC team before and during a mission to a disaster or emergency. The Handbook is not an authoritative instruction, but rather represents an accumulation of institutional memory related to processes and procedures for coordination as seen in the scope of the UNDAC Standard Terms of Reference. Its focus is on both the what and the how of international emergency response and is grounded in the mandate of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) which manages the UNDAC system.

The Handbook is divided into nine main themes that are broadly aligned with the functions of an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC). Each theme is divided into chapters that are written as stand-alone documents, referencing material across all themes.

## References

The UNDAC Handbook has been developed by OCHA ERS with support from members of the UNDAC system and partners. Information is drawn from a wide variety of sources:

- UNDAC best practices as captured in mission reports and training materials.
- Various OCHA, UN and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines, e.g., Handbook for Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators, INSARAG Guidelines, UN-CMCoord Guidelines, and numerous others.
- World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Guidelines
- Publications by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).
- Publications, technical briefs and training material from the Assessment Capacities Project

(ACAPS) and the Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB)

- Various Disaster Management research from Lund University (Sweden), the University of Copenhagen (Denmark), and the University of Florence (Italy).
- Scientific publications, data, analyses and inputs from the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), e.g., Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS), the DRMKC (Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre), DRM Taxonomy and Copernicus Emergency Management Service (CEMS); the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and its WMO Coordination Mechanism (WCM); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the International Science Council (ISC), e.g., the Hazard Information Profiles (HIPs); the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology, Italy (INGV); and the UK Health Security Agency.

## How to contact OCHA

In emergencies when an UNDAC team is mobilised by OCHA Geneva, OCHA ERS' emergency number during a mobilisation is as follows. This number is normally manned 24/7 by the Duty Officer of OCHA ERS and will be transferred to the OCHA ERS Mission Focal Point in case of a mobilisation.

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## Version control disclaimer

The UNDAC Handbook is regularly reviewed and updated to enhance its graphics, fix typographical errors, and improve the overall layout. These updates may result in changes to the version number of the Handbook. However, please note that the substantive content and guidelines remain consistent across versions. We encourage readers to refer to the latest version for the most visually optimized and error-free experience.

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## Acknowledgments

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# Acronyms

The following table lists some of the most commonly used acronyms associated with UNDAC missions.

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>3W</b>	Who is doing What and Where (information product)
<b>A&amp;A</b>	Assessment and Analysis
<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to Affected People
<b>AAR</b>	After Action Review
<b>ACAPS</b>	Assessment Capacities Project
<b>AHA</b>	ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance
<b>ASC</b>	Area Security Coordinator (UNDSS)
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>ASG</b>	Assistant Secretary-General
<b>ASR</b>	Assessment, Search and Rescue (Levels)
<b>AST</b>	Americas Support Team
<b>AWG</b>	Assessment Working Group
<b>BoO</b>	Base of Operations
<b>CADRI</b>	Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative
<b>CAP</b>	Consolidated Appeals Process
<b>CARICOM</b>	Caribbean Community
<b>CBi</b>	Connecting Business initiative
<b>CBPFs</b>	Country-Based Pooled Funds
<b>CCCM</b>	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
<b>CDEMA</b>	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
<b>CERF</b>	Central Emergency Response Fund
<b>CHAP</b>	Common Humanitarian Action Plan

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>CHS</b>	Core Humanitarian Standards on Quality and Accountability
<b>CLA</b>	Cluster Lead Agency
<b>CMCoord</b>	Civil Military Coordination
<b>CMOC</b>	Civil-Military Operations Centre
<b>CODs</b>	Common Operational Datasets
<b>Covid-19</b>	Coronavirus disease
<b>CSA/SA</b>	Chief Security Advisor/Security Advisor (UNDSS)
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organisations
<b>CTP</b>	Cash Transfer Programmes/Programming
<b>DACC</b>	Damage Assessment and Coordination Centre
<b>DART</b>	Disaster Assistance Response Team (USA)
<b>DEMA</b>	Danish Emergency Management Agency (Denmark)
<b>DHN</b>	Digital Humanitarian Network
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and Health Surveys
<b>DO</b>	Designated Official (for United Nations security in-country)
<b>DSA</b>	Daily Subsistence Allowance
<b>DSB</b>	Directorate for Civil Protection (Norway)
<b>DSRSG</b>	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General
<b>DVI</b>	Disaster Victim Identification
<b>DWM</b>	Disaster Waste Management
<b>ECCAS</b>	Economic Community of Central African States
<b>ECHO</b>	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EE</b>	Environmental Emergencies

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>EER</b>	(UN Environment/OCHA) Environmental Emergencies Roster
<b>EMT/I-EMT</b>	Emergency Medical Team/International Emergency Medical Team
<b>EoC</b>	Emergency Operations Centre
<b>ERAT</b>	(ASEAN) Emergency Response and Assessment Team
<b>ERC</b>	United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator
<b>ERCC</b>	Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ECHO)
<b>ERP</b>	Emergency Response Preparedness
<b>ERS</b>	Emergency Response Section (OCHA)
<b>ERU</b>	Emergency Response Unit (IFRC)
<b>ETC</b>	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUCPT</b>	European Union Civil Protection Team (ECHO)
<b>EWS</b>	Early Warning System
<b>FA</b>	Flash Appeal
<b>FACT</b>	Field Assessment and Coordination Team (IFRC)
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organisation (UN)
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (United Kingdom)
<b>FEAT</b>	Flash Environmental Assessment Tool
<b>FIS</b>	(OCHA) Field Information Services (Section)
<b>FMA</b>	Foreign Military Assets
<b>FRF</b>	Fuel Relief Fund
<b>FSC</b>	Food Security Cluster
<b>FSCO</b>	Field Security Coordination Officer (UNDSS)
<b>GA</b>	United Nations General Assembly

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GCER</b>	Global Cluster for Early Recovery
<b>GCLA</b>	Global Logistics Cluster Lead Agency
<b>GDACS</b>	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
<b>GIS</b>	Geospatial Information Services
<b>GLC</b>	Global Logistics Cluster
<b>GPS</b>	Global Positioning System
<b>HAT</b>	Humanitarian Advisory Team
<b>HAZMAT</b>	Hazardous materials
<b>HC</b>	Humanitarian Coordinator
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Team
<b>HDX</b>	Humanitarian Data Exchange
<b>HEAT</b>	Hostile Environment Awareness Training
<b>HEOC</b>	Health Emergency Operations Centre
<b>HI</b>	Humanity & Inclusion (previously Handicap International)
<b>HNO</b>	Humanitarian Needs Overview
<b>HNPW</b>	Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks
<b>HNRP</b>	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
<b>HoO</b>	Head of Office
<b>HPC</b>	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
<b>HR.info</b>	<a href="http://www.humanitarianresponse.info">www.humanitarianresponse.info</a>
<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>HuMOCC</b>	Humanitarian-Military Operational Coordination Concept
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee



<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>ICC(G)</b>	Inter-Cluster Coordination (Group)
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>ICVA</b>	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IEC/IER</b>	INSARAG External Classification/Reclassification
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>IHL</b>	International Humanitarian Law
<b>IHP</b>	International Humanitarian Partnership
<b>IHRL</b>	International Human Rights Law
<b>IM</b>	Information Management
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IMO</b>	(OCHA) Information Management Officer
<b>IMWG</b>	Information Management Working Group
<b>INSARAG</b>	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ISCG</b>	Inter-Sector Coordination Group
<b>JEU</b>	UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit
<b>L/NAs</b>	Local and national actors
<b>LCA</b>	Logistics Capacity Assessment (Logistics Cluster)
<b>LEMA</b>	Local Emergency Management Authority
<b>LGBTI+</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
<b>LO</b>	Liaison Officer
<b>LOG</b>	Logistics Operational Guide (Logistics Cluster)

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>LRT</b>	(WFP) Logistics Response Team
<b>MCDA</b>	Military Civil Defence Assets
<b>MDS</b>	EMT Minimum Dataset
<b>MICS</b>	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
<b>MIRA</b>	Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MPC</b>	Multi-purpose cash
<b>MSB</b>	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
<b>MSF</b>	Médecins Sans Frontières
<b>NARAS</b>	(OCHA) Needs and Response Analysis Section
<b>NDMA</b>	National Disaster Management Authority
<b>NEMA</b>	National Emergency Management Authority
<b>NFI</b>	Non-food items
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OFDA</b>	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USA)
<b>OHCHR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OISS</b>	OSOCC Information Support Staff
<b>OPD</b>	Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPD)
<b>OSOCC</b>	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
<b>P-codes</b>	Place-codes
<b>PHT</b>	Pacific Humanitarian Team
<b>PIO</b>	(OCHA) Public Information Officer

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>PoA</b>	Plan of Action
<b>PSEA</b>	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>PSEAH</b>	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment
<b>RC</b>	United Nations Resident Coordinator
<b>RCO</b>	Resident Coordinator's Office
<b>RDC</b>	Reception & Departure Centre
<b>REDLAC</b>	Risk, Emergency and Disaster Network for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>RFA</b>	Request for Assistance (CMCoord)
<b>ROAP</b>	(OCHA) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
<b>ROLAC</b>	(OCHA) Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean
<b>ROMENA</b>	Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa
<b>ROSEA</b>	Regional Office for Southern and Eastern Africa
<b>ROWCA</b>	Regional Office for West and Central Africa
<b>RSB</b>	Response Support Branch (OCHA)
<b>SA</b>	see CSA
<b>SAARC</b>	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
<b>SADC</b>	South African Development Community
<b>SADD</b>	Sex-, Age- and Disability-disaggregated Data
<b>SCC</b>	Sector Coordination Cell
<b>SDR</b>	Secondary Data Review
<b>SEA</b>	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>SMCS</b>	(GDACS) Satellite Mapping and Coordination System
<b>SMT</b>	Security Management Team (United Nations in-country)
<b>SOGIESC</b>	People who have diverse "sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics."

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>SRSG</b>	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
<b>SSAFE</b>	Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environment (training course)
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>TSF</b>	Télécoms Sans Frontières
<b>UCC</b>	USAR Coordination Cell
<b>UCPM</b>	European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (ECHO)
<b>UMS</b>	UNDAC Mission Software
<b>UN SPM</b>	(UN) Security Policy Manual (UNDSS)
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDAC</b>	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (OCHA)
<b>UNDMT</b>	United Nations Disaster Management Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDS</b>	United Nations Development System
<b>UNDSS</b>	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHAS</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
<b>UNHCR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNITAR</b>	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
<b>UNOG</b>	United Nations Office in Geneva
<b>UNOSAT</b>	UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications Programme
<b>UNSDCF</b>	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>FULL NAME</b>
<b>UNSM</b>	UN Security Management System
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USAR</b>	Urban Search and Rescue
<b>USG</b>	Under Secretary General
<b>VOSOCC</b>	Virtual OSOCC
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WHS</b>	World Humanitarian Summit
<b>WLO</b>	Women-led organisation
<b>WRO</b>	Women's rights organisation

Note that acronyms which are specific to a particular organization (e.g., regional organizations) or field (e.g., first aid, telecommunications) and which appear only once or twice in the same section are not included in the acronym list and/or are spelled out in full each time in the text.