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# Standard Administrative and Operating Procedures (SAOP) PART 1

**UNHAS SYRIA**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Aviation plays an important role in humanitarian operations around the world, especially in countries where overland transport is difficult or impossible due to insecurity, damaged or inadequate infrastructure, and challenging climatic conditions. Aviation allows the transport of humanitarian aid workers and humanitarian cargo to communities in some of the world's most inaccessible places.

During the Fifth Session of the United Nations High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) held in New York from 12-13 June 2003, the World Food Programme (WFP) accepted the request of the Committee to take the responsibility for administering air transport services for UN agencies and NGOs involved in humanitarian and "other" activities not directly or specifically for peacekeeping. Thus, effective January 2004, WFP became the managing body of newly established United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS).

The operation of aircraft of any kind is a costly and potentially dangerous undertaking, and it is essential that it is conducted in a safe and cost-effective manner. UNHAS bases its rules and procedures, staff qualification criteria and aircraft chartering procedures on the United Nations Aviation Standards for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Air Operations (UNAVSTADS). The UNAVSTADS have been developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)/Department of Field Support (DFS) and the World Food Programme (WFP) with the assistance of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Operating in accordance with these standards does not diminish UNHAS ability to flexibly respond: in challenging and changing contexts, like conflict or disaster, the operational requirements and priorities invariably change over time and the operational response must adapt accordingly. Resultantly, air operations are inherently flexible and can be quickly adapted to meet these new situations and requirements. The operational structure and these procedures must also remain flexible and responsive to new and/or changed needs. To this end, these procedures will remain under constant review and subject to amendment as required.

UNHAS receives permanent support from the WFP Aviation Service in the areas of staff recruitment, funds management, aircraft contracting and fleet management, internal quality assurance evaluations, safety related guidance and aviation training.

## 1.2 UNHAS SYRIA CONCEPT OF OPERATION

UNHAS Syria provides essential air transport services to the humanitarian aid community to connect Damascus with other parts of the country, where access to the beneficiaries is only

possible by air due to vast distances and insecurity. Despite availability of local commercial airlines in Syria, many aid organisations are not authorised to use them.

UNHAS commenced operations in July 2020, upon request from the humanitarian community in Syria, with regular scheduled flights between Damascus and Qamishli. Aleppo was added to the schedule from 18 January 2021. UNHAS is seeking approval from the Government of Syria to expand services to Der Ezzor in order to improve humanitarian access in this area. The objective of UNHAS Syria is to ensure safe, reliable and sustainable air access to beneficiaries for the humanitarian community. UNHAS as well provides the required capacity for medical and security evacuation of humanitarian workers.

## 1.3 ADMINISTRATION OF SAOP

This SAOP has been produced by UNHAS Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) using WFP Aviation approved template. UNHAS CATO is responsible for the contents and update of the SAOP.

Electronic copies of this document will be shared with the relevant UNHAS staff, with the operators' Project Manager, with the WFP Country Director (CD) and with WFP Aviation.

Electronic copy of the sections of the SAOP that are relevant for the customers, will be shared with the User Organizations registered with UNHAS.

The contents of the SAOP is mandatory and applicable to all UNHAS staff, contracted operators and UNHAS passengers.

## 2. GOVERNANCE

### 2.1 GENERAL

UNHAS is managed by WFP on behalf of humanitarian community as a whole. The interests of the humanitarian community are represented by a Steering Committee (SC) and a User Group Committee (UGC). UNHAS is responsible for all aspects of the operation of the aircraft, and keeps the SC and UGC advised of technical, legal, and contractual limitations. It is vital that the UGC, SC and UNHAS work seamlessly together, whilst remaining strictly within the boundaries of their own competence. In short, the SC and UGC decides on the requirements, and UNHAS decides the 'how, who and the when'.

### 2.2 STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee (SC) serves as the UNHAS governing body, providing overall strategic and policy guidance on the following areas:

- UNHAS operational strategies, administrative policies, and administrative directives detailing eligibility to access the common service;
- Use of air transport resources and priority of locations, frequency vis-à-vis utilization;
- Review of host government air transport policies vis-à-vis humanitarian air transport requirements and activities;
- Funding modalities and advocacy for fundraising for the common service.

The Steering Committee is chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and co-chaired by the WFP Country Director.

Members of the SC include three representatives each from UN agencies, NGOs, and donors. Each Member is represented by the Head or Deputy of respective Organization. The Chairperson may invite other stakeholders as deemed necessary.

As per the established SC Terms of Reference (TOR), the minimum number of members required to constitute a quorum comprises two UN members, two NGO members, two donor representatives, the Chair, and one member of the Secretariat (UNHAS).

The SC meets on a quarterly basis in Damascus, however the requirement and frequency of meeting may vary based on actual needs and criticality. Nevertheless, considering the importance of SC for UNHAS governance, not less than two SC meetings will be held in one calendar year.

### 2.3 USER GROUP COMMITTEE

The User Group Committee (UGC) is the body representing the registered User Organizations of UNHAS. The UGC serves as the main forum for the User Organizations to promote their interests, indicate their needs and priorities for air movement, seek clarification on operational activities, etc.

Concretely, the duties of the UGC are specified in the below Terms of Reference (TOR) and are limited to administrative and scheduling decisions:

- Deciding on the destinations to be served;
- Ensuring compliance with established procedures for the safe and efficient handling of passengers and cargo;
- Ensuring the timely settlement of dues to WFP;
- Matters relating to the quality of service;
- Projected caseload in order to assist WFP to ensure the timely contracting/release of the appropriate aircraft;
- Assist UNHAS with fundraising efforts.

The User Group Committee is chaired by UNHAS CATO or his/her delegated person. Members of the UGC include representatives from UN agencies, NGOs, and donors

User Group Committee meets monthly or as operationally required.

# 3. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

## 3.1 ELIGIBILITY

UNHAS service is available only to humanitarian agencies or organizations engaged in humanitarian and/or development activities. Based on SC's decision, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) would use the due diligence exercise on partner, to determine the eligibility of the agency to use UNHAS.

The initial list of humanitarian organisations registered as partners for Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) will be registered with UNHAS. Any other organisations, who may wish to use UNHAS will undergo the same due diligence by OCHA .

The following documents should be submitted to UNHAS by organisations:

- Introductory letter from OCHA verifying type of Organization's activities and eligibility.
- Standard Terms and Conditions of Service for the provision of United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (Annex 1);
- UNHAS Financial Conditions for the Provision of Air Transport Service (Annex 2);
- UNHAS Focal Point Assignment Form (Annex 3).

The eligibility of passengers to travel on UNHAS flights will be exclusive responsibility of each User Organization submitting a request for travel. UNHAS will consider any request for travel submitted by the designated User Organization's focal point (s) as a valid request from this User Organization. Nevertheless, UNHAS will verify each individual passenger's eligibility to access UNHAS and relevance to the User Organization which authorized the request.

As stated in the Standard Terms and Conditions of Service for the provision of United Nations Humanitarian Air Services, UNHAS may be requested by eligible User Organizations to extend the right to use UNHAS services to non-staff members engaged in project's implementation. The User Organization shall be responsible for the eligibility of such passengers and for the cost of their transportation. Sponsorship shall be approved in line with humanitarian operating principals. Transportation of Governmental personnel, involved in implementation of humanitarian projects, on UNHAS flights to be approved by HC on case by case basis, after the concerned agency justifies the importance of the activity/trip in writing to HC.

## 3.2 OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

UNHAS seeks to accommodate all passengers and light humanitarian cargo requests, however, an established priority system is in place in order to support emergency services and priority needs. As such, the priority system is as follows:

First priority for the use of the air service is always given to cases of

**medical evacuation and security relocation** along with cargo and personnel required for aircraft safety and operation.

Second, as a result of the need to support critical **Inter-Agency Missions**.

UNHAS third priority is for **all regular passenger and light humanitarian cargo** transport on a "first come, first served basis." Passengers have priority over cargo, unless cargo is deemed to be of life-saving nature, such as urgently needed medical supplies. Cargo priorities vary depending on the changing humanitarian needs in affected area and are determined by UNHAS and the User Group.

Fourth priority is for **special flights**. Special flights refer to flights that occur outside of the regular schedule and are requested on behalf of User Organizations to be used at their discretion. Examples include charters, high-level missions, donor visits, etc. Special flights are performed on a full cost recovery and are subject to the availability of an aircraft.

## 3.3 PROVISIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULE

UNHAS establishes a provisional flight schedule on the basis of the requirements communicated and expressed during the UGC and SC meetings. This flight schedule has an established validity period, adaptable and dependent on humanitarian activities on the ground and the prevailing security situation. The schedule is shared with the User Organizations on a regular basis.

## 3.4 FIELD FOCAL POINTS

In some locations, UNHAS staff are not always present. In such cases, UNHAS in close coordination with the UGC appoints a Field Focal Point and an alternate Field Focal Points, typically representatives of the main user of the flights to the location.

The Field Focal Point is responsible for facilitating UNHAS flight operations, according to an established Terms of Reference (TOR) shared by UNHAS. The Field Focal Point plays a critical role in facilitating UNHAS operations while maintaining an acceptable level of safety and security. Proper measures must be taken in order to perform safe and secure flights.

According to UNHAS regulations, the presence of a Field Focal Point is compulsory. If **no contact on the ground is obtained to confirm safety and security, there can be no flight to the destination**.

## 3.5 CUSTOMER SERVICE

UNHAS is dedicated to delivering a quality service by professional and friendly staff for all its users and implementing partners. By continuously striving to meet customer expectations and requirements, UNHAS has designated staff in charge of customer service to ensure a high-level of customer care is maintained and procedures related to users' rights and responsibilities are aligned

to the UNHAS SAOP.

Users are encouraged to contact [unhas.syria@wfp.org](mailto:unhas.syria@wfp.org) should they have concerns, complaints, suggestions, or compliments. Moreover, participation in UNHAS surveys and passenger feedback supports UNHAS in improving and raising the standards for increased customer satisfaction.

### 3.6 COST RECOVERY

The service is funded through donors and other internal funding mechanisms. In the initial stage of an Emergency, it is generally free of charge for entitled humanitarian users, but should funding subsequently fail to meet the need, it might become necessary to establish a system of partial or full cost recovery.

The Steering Committee (SC) agreed to implement free UNHAS services in Syria for the first three months or until the decision on cost recovery is revisited by the SC.

Upon implementation of the cost recovery, Each User Organization will accept (online) the Financial Conditions for UNHAS Services at the moment of registering for the services, in expression of their agreement with the cost recovery principle, and should make advance payment based on their expected utilization rate of the preceding three months. Additionally, the Standard Terms and Conditions of Service will also be accepted (online every time a booking is processed) by the respective User Organization.

The User Group will work closely with UNHAS in relation to establishment and revision of cost recovery rates, stabilisation of funding situation, and will support UNHAS fundraising efforts. UNHAS will share periodical operational and financial reports with the User Group and other concerned parties.

Special (unscheduled) flights will be performed for the User Organizations on a full cost recovery basis, based on aircraft availability. Emergency evacuations and relocation of staff requested through the office of the Humanitarian Coordinator will be financed through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and medical evacuations flights will be covered by the requesting User Organization on a full cost recovery basis.

The UNHAS office in Damascus is responsible for invoicing and monitoring of the financial situation of the service.

### 3.7 FINANCE PROCEDURES

Once User Organization's registration process has been completed, UNHAS in Damascus will create Organization's customer account, which takes between three to five working days.

UNHAS Finance Office is responsible for issuing of monthly statements and monitoring of the financial situation of the service. Monthly statements are distributed by the 15th day of the following month.

- Monthly payments shall be conducted in accordance with 'UNHAS Financial Conditions for the provision of Air Transport Service' (Annex 2), payment shall be made by USD wire transfer.

# 4. PASSENGER SERVICE

## 4.1 GENERAL

UNHAS *Syria* supports passenger and light humanitarian cargo air transport services between Damascus and Qamishli, as well as other locations in Syria if operationally required and approved by the government (Der Ezzor, Lattakia, Aleppo) and in the region.

A weekly provisional flight schedule is in place and shared on a regular basis to UNHAS users as described in Section 3.3. UNHAS operates flights strictly on a "point to point" basis. UNHAS therefore does not offer and cannot facilitate transfer of passengers or their baggage to other flights, outside the UNHAS system. UNHAS assumes no responsibility for making connections and therefore will not be liable for any losses or expenses arising out of any failure to achieve a planned connection.

As per the eligibility requirements (Section 3.1), UNHAS only transports passengers directly involved in humanitarian activities. Notwithstanding from above, UNHAS may be requested by eligible User Organizations to extend the right to use UNHAS services to non-staff members (including government officials and implementing partners) engaged in project's implementation.

UNHAS is not permitted to carry passengers who do not fulfil the eligibility requirements, e.g. family members and/or dependents of humanitarian staff, uniformed personnel or individuals wearing camouflage of military uniforms. Lastly, no live animals or pets are accepted on board.

A passenger is only authorized to travel when her/his name is on the passenger manifest. In accordance with ICAO and aviation industry regulations, no passenger will be authorized nor allowed to board a UNHAS aircraft without being properly manifested.

## 4.2 USER ORGANIZATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

User Organizations are requested to ensure that passengers booked and authorized to travel on UNHAS have appropriate travel clearances. All required travel documents such as permits/visa and/or security clearances, MoFA clearances, etc., are the sole responsibility of the traveller. Any fines, penalties, payments or expenditures incurred as a result of breach of this requirement shall be paid by the passenger or charged to the respective passenger's User Organization.

User Organizations are responsible to ensure that their staff members (passengers) meet UNHAS eligibility criteria: only staff members (passengers) in possession of the user's identification card or an introduction letter (Annex 4) are allowed to travel on UNHAS aircraft.

Each passenger is required to provide proof of identity at the check-in counter and before boarding the aircraft. Proof of identity includes a UNLP or agency photo identification card. The service

may be extended, upon request of the user, to non-staff passengers whose travel is relevant to humanitarian operations. Acceptance of such passengers is subject to the provision of an introduction letter signed by the Head of User Organization sponsoring the passenger and subject to seat availability. The requesting User Organization is responsible for such passengers and their staff members.

The user and the traveling staff member or sponsored individual are responsible for compliance with UNHAS procedures. Examples of non-compliance include: attempting to book an ineligible passenger, impersonating a booked passenger, attempting to bring firearms onto a UNHAS flight, refusing to follow the standard check-in and passenger screening procedures, failing to show a valid agency identification card and/or appropriately signed introduction letter. In cases where procedures have been disregarded or not complied with, the UNHAS compliance control system will be applied.

## 4.3 USER ORGANIZATIONS FOCAL POINTS

Each User Organization is required to have a designated Focal Point, an authorized person who makes booking requests or cancellations on behalf of the organization. Each User Organization is required to complete and submit the Focal Point Assignment Form (Annex 3) with no more than three (3) Focal Points. The Focal Point(s) must provide UNHAS with full names, titles, specimen signatures, e-mail addresses, and other contact details for record keeping.

## 4.4 PASSENGER BOOKING, CONFIRMATION AND CANCELLATION PROCEDURE

Each passenger booking request must be submitted online or using Passenger Booking Request Form (Booking Form) (Annex 5). Booking Forms must be completed in full, signed and stamped by one of the three pre-notified authorised signatories per agency. Booking Forms shall be submitted to UNHAS by email to unhas.syria@wfp.org at least 48 hours before the flight but not earlier than one month in advance. Booking requests must include: the full name of the passenger as per her/his agency identification document. This should include middle names where applicable.

Passenger booking requests for non-staff members shall be accompanied with duly signed and approved introduction letter.

Please note that telephone bookings are not accepted.

A maximum of five (5) bookings per flight may be submitted by the same User Organization, seats are limited to maximum per User Organization. Any additional seats are booked on stand-by basis and allocated subject to space availability. The User Organizations will be advised accordingly for passengers/cargo put on waiting list. Should there be a special need for additional seats above five per agency, a request in writing with justification shall be submitted to UNHAS at the time of booking. Final decision on additional seats provision is subject to UNHAS CATO decision and seats availability.



The focal point will automatically receive the confirmation of booking submission. However, UNHAS confirms the flight one day prior to departure by issuing and sending the E-Tickets to the emails provided in the focal point form, booking form and during online booking. Tickets are valid only for named person and must not be exchanged or traded. It is the responsibility of passengers or agency to confirm passengers are manifested.

Passenger cancellations are possible no later than 24 hours prior to the departure (10:00 on the last working day preceding the date of booked flight). This may be done online or communicated in writing to the UNHAS Customer Service by the Focal Point unhas.syria@wfp.org. Late passenger cancellations, as well as no-shows are charged according to full cost recovery rate.

It is the responsibility of the user to provide UNHAS with details of all passengers requiring special assistance, for example, passengers using a wheelchair, visually impaired, etc.

#### 4.5 CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

It is essential that passengers strictly comply with the below check-in procedures in order to maintain punctuality, maximize aircraft utilization, and ultimately ensure safe and secure operations. UNHAS requests all users and passengers to follow the instructions from UNHAS staff, agents, and aircraft crew. The following applies:

- Passengers must carry a valid photo identification card from their user agency, their physical ticket, and an introduction letter (if applicable);
- Under the responsibility of the user, passengers are required to check-in at airports served by UNHAS no later than one (1) hour prior to the manifested departure time. UNHAS staff have strict instructions not to check-in any passengers arriving after that time;
- “Standby” passengers will be allocated seats pending availability of space and according to their order of priority on the standby list;
- At the check-in counter, UNHAS staff will undertake a 100% identity check. Thus, last minute substitutions or passenger swaps are not permissible;
- In case of discrepancies with passenger manifests held at the airfield where no WFP/UNHAS staff or their representatives are present, the manifest presented by the Pilot-in-Command (PIC) will be considered as the valid manifest;
- Passengers, baggage and cargo are subject to mandatory security screening at the airport of departure. At airports without proper security screening facilities, passenger screening may be conducted using metal detectors and/or a

physical search. Baggage/cargo may be inspected manually by UNHAS staff or representatives. UNHAS staff or representatives reserve the right to open and inspect any item or piece of luggage and to accept or reject it for carriage. Passengers who do not comply with these procedures will be denied access to the flight.

- In locations where convoys are used to reach the aircraft, passengers are required to liaise with the UNHAS Focal Point for information and guidance regarding established convoy procedures.

Entry visa fees, security charges etc. where applicable are to be paid by the individual passenger/ agency unless agreed otherwise.

#### 4.6 PASSENGER LUGGAGE AND CARRY-ON BAGGAGE

Due to aircraft configuration and performance, the maximum allowance for passenger luggage is twenty (20) kg, including up to five (5) kg for cabin baggage per passenger.

In addition, users may book excess baggage up to 50 kg, irrespective of destination.

Excess luggage must be booked within the same deadlines as passenger bookings using the Excess Weight and Cargo Form (Annex 10) and must be items for personal use only. In the event that the volume or weight of cargo limits carriage of pre-booked cargo, users are required to make their own arrangements for transportation on the next

available flight to be determined by UNHAS. UNHAS does not provide storage, handling, or transportation services.

UNHAS does not accept any liability for luggage loss or damage and no responsibility for unsuitably packed, perishable, damaged or fragile luggage or for minor damage to exterior of luggage (scratches, stains, dents etc.). In case of luggage misrouting, UNHAS will take all possible efforts to identify luggage location and return it to the passenger as soon as possible free of charge.

#### 4.7 SPECIAL PASSENGERS

UNHAS staff will provide assistance to passengers with special needs. It is essential that the User Organization’s focal point notifies UNHAS of any prospective passenger with special needs at the time of reservation. Discussing, noting, and communicating these requirements to departure and arrival teams will enhance UNHAS ability to offer services that best meet the passenger’s needs. It is important that the booking requests for these categories of passengers report in the “remark” the type of special passengers.

##### 4.7.1 PREGNANT PASSENGERS

Usually, pregnant passengers can travel by air until 36 weeks of pregnancy. However, specific conditions to transport pregnant

passengers will be in accordance with individual air carrier's Operations Manual (OM). It is important that all pregnant passengers show proof of medical clearance to travel by air.

#### **4.7.2 INFANTS**

Infant's identity shall be verified at the check-in counter by means of Birth Certificate (or ID card if available).

Adults accompanying infants shall show proof that they are authorized guardians for the travel. The infant will not be allocated a seat; however, all infant travelers should be captured on the passenger manifest. Cost recovery will be waived for infants, and specific details for handling infants shall be as stipulated by air carriers' OM.

#### **4.7.3 VIPs**

Passengers categorized as Very Important Persons (VIPs) include: royal family members, presidents, ministers of state, ambassadors, diplomats and senior representatives of UN agencies/international NGOs.

It is important for VIP's organization to coordinate with UNHAS staff regarding specific requirements for travel (e.g. VIP lounge). The PIC and crew will be notified when VIPs are travelling on the aircraft. VIPs should be boarded last and assigned reserved seats.

# 5. CARGO SERVICE

## 5.1 GENERAL

UNHAS Syria offers the cargo movement services between all locations included in the provisional flight schedule. A service intended for limited quantities of high priority or high value light cargo, bearing in mind that due to capacity limitations, priority is given to passenger movement.

## 5.2 CRITERIA FOR MOVEMENT OF CARGO

Cargo priorities

1. Medical related cargo identified as urgent;
2. Aircraft safety and aircraft operating related cargo;
3. Other cargo categories as prioritized by the User Group:  
*Shelter, WASH equipment/stores, Health equipment/supplies, General cargo.*

All cargo is to be manifested and entered on a Cargo Manifest. Only cargo meeting the following conditions will be accepted:

- Cargo is for the sole use of the registered User Organization;
- Only cargo booked via a Cargo Movement Request (CMR) (Annex 6) and accompanied with the Packing List will be accepted. Cargo not conforming to the description, weight, and volumetric dimensions detailed on the CMR/Packing List will not be accepted;
- Poorly packed or poorly labelled cargo will not be transported. The proper packing and labelling of cargo is the responsibility of the User Organization;
- Unless cargo cannot be broken down, single packages shall not exceed 30 kg;
- All cargo is subject to inspection by UNHAS to ensure compliance with ICAO standards governing safe transport of dangerous goods by air;
- The transportation of hazardous materials is standardized by the ICAO "Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air" (Section 5.5). Further information is available on demand from the UNHAS Office. Users are liable for any death, injury, or damage caused by such cargo;
- UNHAS requires detailed information on any medical supplies presented for transportation;
- Rotten or smelly goods are not allowed on UNHAS flight. Examples include rotten fish or food items that may upset passengers on board.

Notwithstanding from the fact that UNHAS will arrange maximum possible security for cargo storage and apply safety measures for cargo handling and transportation, neither WFP nor its agents are

liable for any loss or damage to cargo or baggage during storage, loading or transportation;

## 5.3 CARGO BOOKING, CONFIRMATION AND COLLECTION PROCEDURE

According to UNHAS prioritization (Section 3.2), priority is given to passenger and priority cargo movement. As such, UNHAS may transport duly requested cargo within two to five working days from the date of submission unless cargo is deemed to be of life-saving nature, such as urgently needed medical supplies.

The following applies:

- All requests to airlift cargo must be made to UNHAS two (2) working days in advance via a CMR and accompanied by the Packing List;
- The CMR must be completed, signed, and stamped by the Focal Point of the requesting User Organization. The CMR can be sent in person to UNHAS Office through e-mail to [unhas.syria@wfp.org](mailto:unhas.syria@wfp.org);
- Booking confirmation for cargo can be obtained from the UNHAS Booking Office one (1) working day prior to the flight day;
- Cargo booking E-Ticket will be distributed by UNHAS to the focal points one day before the flight takes place to ensure that users are able to meet the UNHAS aircraft and collect their cargo;
- All confirmed cargo must be delivered to the airport of departure, no later than two (2) hours before the manifested departure time;
- All incoming cargo shall be collected from UNHAS immediately upon arrival.

## 5.4 POUCH SERVICE

As an addition to the cargo movement service, UNHAS Syria offers a pouch service to its users. Similar to a diplomatic pouch, the pouch is a light canvas bag that contains items addressed to specific individuals/users. Items are typically official documents and light-weight items, not exceeding three (3) kilograms, and is not intended for valuables, like money. Anything in excess of three (3) kg should be sent as cargo, using the CMR procedure but will be subject to space availability and weight limitations for the particular flight.

The User Organization must ensure that the item is properly packed, sealed, and well-marked, indicating both the sender and receiver (including phone number). The item must be accompanied by a CMR from the requesting User Organization.

For incoming pouches, the User Organization representative must collect their pouch from the UNHAS Office or agent at the receiving end and sign for it. No currency, restricted items and dangerous cargo/solid items/ornaments/etc. are to be placed in the pouches. The User Organizations are not authorized to submit any pouch or correspondence directly to crew members.

## 5.5 TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Dangerous goods are articles or substances capable of posing significant risk to health, safety, or property when transported by air. UNHAS rules, regulations, and procedures are based firmly on the regulations and guidelines issued by ICAO.

In the interest of passenger and crew safety and to prevent damage to the aircraft and/or other cargo, awareness of the risks associated with the transportation of hazardous goods is vital. The information contained in this section is extracted from the ICAO "Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air." The final decision regarding transport of goods remains with the aircraft crew and ultimately, the PIC.

User Organizations wishing to move Dangerous Goods by air using UNHAS must take the following steps before submitting the CMR:

- Submit the Shipper's Declaration (Annex 7) specifying the type of dangerous goods, plus any available additional information as attachments to the CMR.
- Identify any dangerous articles or substances in accordance with ICAO regulations.
- Limit the quantity contained in each package to the maximum allowable.
- Use the correct type of packaging.
- Mark and label each package in accordance with the regulations.
- Provide full details of the Dangerous Cargo to the UNHAS booking office.
- Inspect each package for damage and/or leakage.
- The following is an abbreviated list of some of the more commonly encountered Dangerous Goods. UNHAS may assist and consult the User Organizations upon request.
- Fuel is not authorised to be transported as cargo together with passengers
- Cylinders of compressed gas may not be transported by air unless as part of a life-saving oxygen breathing apparatus in certain limited medical circumstances, and then only under the supervision of aero-medical staff.
- Camping type stove, heaters and lamps containing flammable gas and/or liquids, and non-safety matches are prohibited.

- Any pressurized cylinder, full or empty. This includes cooking gas cylinders (propane, butane etc.).
- Various medical supplies, which may contain dangerous chemicals. Conditions apply.
- Pharmaceuticals which may contain dangerous chemicals, such as acids. Conditions apply.
- Photographic chemicals (i.e. darkroom chemicals).
- Refrigerators of the type containing toxic gases or dangerous liquids. Conditions apply.
- Repair kits containing dangerous materials (e.g. cellulose paints, organic peroxides etc.) Conditions apply.
- Some medical items for scientific research (e.g. unknown samples for testing may contain dangerous substances (Prohibited unless identified).
- Toolboxes: may contain explosives, compressed flammable gases (e.g. butane cylinders). Conditions apply.
- Motor vehicle or generator batteries. Only dry batteries can be accepted. Conditions apply.
- Any heat producing devices (e.g. certain battery operated equipment such as underwater torches and soldering equipment can produce intense heat if accidentally activated).

The procedures and regulations for the movement of dangerous goods must be strictly adhered to by all personnel involved in shipping dangerous goods and booking it on a UNHAS aircraft. Failure to abide by these restrictions will result in the user to be banned from UNHAS.

## 5.6 TRANSPORTATION OF HUMAN SPECIMEN

Human Specimen of less than 5 kg weight, may be transported on UNHAS flights free of charge. No advance booking is required. Specimen boxes over 5kg are considered as cargo, hence regular cargo transportation procedure applies. Limitations and special packaging provisions shall apply:

- UN 2814: Category A Infectious Substance. Infectious substances in a form that, when exposure to it occurs, is capable of causing permanent disability, life-threatening or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans or animals. For example a blood sample known or reasonably suspected to contain Ebola Virus.
- UN 3373: Biological Substance, Category B. The Infectious Substances that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in Category A. For example a blood sample taken from a patient known or suspected to have category B pathogen, such as Hepatitis B or HIV.
- Exempt Patient Specimens. Patient specimens for which

- there is minimal likelihood that pathogens are present. In determining whether a patient specimen has a minimal likelihood that pathogens are present, an element of professional judgment is required. For example a specimens other than those known or reasonably suspected to contain a category A infectious substance e.g. those sent for testing for Cholesterol (blood), diabetes (urine), bowel cancer (faecal), subject to professional judgment is made.
- Instances not subject to Dangerous Goods regulations. Substances, which do not contain infectious substances, or substances, which are unlikely to cause disease in humans; substances containing micro-organisms, which are non-pathogenic to humans; substances in a form that any present pathogens have been neutralized or inactivated such that they no longer pose a health risk; dried blood spots, collected by applying a drop of blood onto absorbent material, or faecal occult blood screening tests.

For UNHAS such professional judgment is acceptable and sufficient confirmation when done in the form of signed statement by WHO/MoH Authority. If such statement is done, a specimen is considered falling under category 3 (exempt patient specimens), which require minimum special packaging and no additional DG paperwork for crew.

Further guidance on the classification of infectious substances and packaging instructions can be obtained from the national health authority and UNHAS Office.

## 5.7 TRANSPORTATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

Human Remains may be transported by UNHAS upon request from the User Organization. In the context of this SAOP, transportation of human remains means transportation by air of human remains from the location included into UNHAS provisional flight schedule to the destination determined by the User Organization for further repatriation or hand-over of the body.

The consignee of the coffin and personal belongings of diseased person is the User Organization that has to arrange on its own onward body repatriation or hand over to the relatives.

Considering sensitivity of the situation for next-of-kin, human remains transportation shall be done as promptly as possible. According to ICAO local authorities of the State of departure shall extend all necessary assistance in the repatriation of human remains to their countries of origin.

UNDSS provides guidance and all required support/coordination to the concerned User Organization.

Human remains may be transported on dedicated flight only. Considering composition of the aircraft used by UNHAS, it is not allowed to transport human remains on one flight with any other passengers except those declared by the concerned User Organization as accompanying the body.

- The human remains should be placed in a coffin which complies with the following IATA standards for transportation of

human remains by air:

- The remains must be packed in a hermetically sealed inner containment which may be constructed of a flexible material (body bag) or may be a rigid coffin of lead or zinc to prevent the escape of offensive odours or fluids;
- The inner containment must then be packed inside a metal or wooden coffin;
- The wooden or metal coffin may be protected from damage by an outer packing and covered by canvas or tarpaulin so that the nature of its content is not apparent;
- Un-embalmed remains must be placed inside two sealed body bags;
- All shipping containers must be new and cannot be reused;
- All human remains shipments must appropriately display the label "head" on the outer container to assist handlers in aircraft loading and offloading operations.
- Original Embalming Certificate (if applicable);
- Original copy of "Laissez-Passer for human remains";
- List of personal effects (and official possessions if any).

The certificates listed above have to be issued/certified by appropriate local public authorities. The copies of all above listed documents should be e-mailed to UNHAS as early as possible.

The User Organization shall deliver the coffin to the aircraft. Airport ramp access for the special vehicles/people have to be coordinated by UNDSS with support of UNHAS coordinator.

The User Organization submitting above mentioned documents, confirms that the coffin only contains the remains of the person named in the relevant documents (and such personal effects as are to be buried or cremated with the human remains).

The User Organization with the assistance of UNHAS will have to liaise with airport immigration/custom authorities for required clearing procedures at the origin point to make sure respective papers and passport have been stamped before flight departure.

Human remains transportation is undertaken in accordance with the applicable conditions set forth in Carriers' regulations for human remains transportation and the final decision will remain on Pilot-in-Command.

Upon aircraft arrival, full set of the original documents accompanying the cargo has to be handed over to the consignee- concerned User Organization.

## 5.8 TRANSPORTATION OF FIREARMS AND WEAPON

Transportation of firearms and weapons is generally not permitted on UNHAS flights. Some exceptions may be made for the transportation of VIP, who require to be accompanied by armoured close protection team, subject to HC's approval.

# 6. EVACUATIONS BY AIR

## 6.1 GENERAL PROCEDURES

Two forms of evacuations exist in the context of UNHAS Syria operation:

- Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC);
- Security Relocation.
- Some general rules apply to both types of evacuation:
- Duly requested medical evacuation and security relocation have priority over UNHAS regular schedule;
- Requests for medical evacuation and security relocation must be addressed to [nelli.jensen@wfp.org](mailto:nelli.jensen@wfp.org), [unhas.syria@wfp.org](mailto:unhas.syria@wfp.org) and [syriaradio@undp.org](mailto:syriaradio@undp.org). In addition, the UNHAS CATO or his/her Deputy can be reached 24 hrs. /day, 7 days/week through phone: +963 965 077 848
- Evacuations and relocations can only be undertaken according to flight rules and restrictions as applicable (i.e. VFR conditions, between sunrise and sunset, etc.). However, this regulation should not prevent any individual or agency to request for an evacuation or relocation should the need arise;
- This procedure is strictly for evacuation or relocation by air. All other means of evacuation or relocation by land and water are outside the scope of this procedure.

## 6.2 MEDICAL EVACUATION (NON COVID19 RELATED)

Medical evacuations (MEDEVAC) refer to the evacuation of an individual on medical grounds from the field to the closest health centre or main operating base. Such an individual is considered to be under medical care, however, she/he is not in danger of losing life, limb, or eyesight but does require further medical treatment that is not available at the field location.

UNHAS aircraft do not carry special equipment to suit medical evacuations, nor are the aircraft crews trained or available to assist with the medical care of a patient during flight. The aircraft is not equipped as an air ambulance. Nevertheless, the aircraft can be configured with a stretcher.

Should the patient need to be transported together with any form of emergency medical life-saving equipment, all the rules of flight safety and the carriage of dangerous goods shall be observed. Irrespective of the emergency, normal safety standards must be followed and cannot be compromised.

The User Organizations may request for a medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) of their staff by submitting a Medical Evacuation Request Form (Annex 8) which includes properly filled and signed 'fit to fly' and 'free of contagious disease' statement that is mandatory for UNHAS to accept the MEDEVAC request. The requesting user is fully responsible for the accuracy of statements made about the

patient's conditions. The user is also fully responsible for the patient's transportation to the aircraft at the airport/airfield of departure and from the aircraft upon arrival.

All medical evacuations on UNHAS regular flights are free, or if cost recovery is applicable, charged the nominal booking fee, whereas medical evacuations requested by an agency and requiring the deployment of an air asset are charged at full cost recovery.

UNHAS does not perform medical evacuation outside of the country of operation.

## 6.3 SECURITY RELOCATION

Security relocations by air will only be approved following consultation at the WFP Country Director level and WFP Security. Any such flights will be coordinated by UNHAS in direct collaboration with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) or the NGO Security Forum. The security relocation flight must have a Security Officer on board except for locations where a Security Officer is on the ground or where the security situation has been assessed as acceptable. Such flights have priority over all flights with the exception of medical evacuations.

In all cases, a specific security assessment is performed to assess the level of risk associated with the requested flights. Where there is no Security Risk Assessment (SRA), UNDSS will make a decision based on information obtained from WFP or NGO Security Officers.

All area security relocations sanctioned and requested through UNDSS (NGO Forum Security Officer in coordination with UNDSS) will be either free or if cost recovery applies, charged at the nominal fee per passenger. Security relocation requests by an individual organization will be charged at full cost recovery.

# 7. INTER-AGENCY MISSIONS AND SPECIAL FLIGHTS

## 7.1 INTER-AGENCY MISSIONS

Flights for inter-agency missions refer to requested flights in support of the following:

- Humanitarian Needs assessment
- Delivery of assistance

Specifically, these missions are defined as missions prioritized by the HC.

Inter-agency mission requests shall be coordinated through OCHA and submitted by the agencies at least 72 hours before the date of flight. Once mission request has been endorsed by the HC, each agency will have to submit booking requests accordingly with respective reference to the mission. UNDSS will be responsible for coordination of security and administrative arrangements at destination.

## 7.2 SPECIAL FLIGHTS

Should the User Organization require a special flight dedicated to the needs of specific organization, an official request in writing shall be submitted to UNHAS booking office. UNHAS will provide the User Organization with the feedback containing the operational information about the flight (possible dates, max passenger number and baggage allowance etc.) and financial quotation. Once all details have been agreed upon, the User Organization shall submit dully signed and stamped Special Flight Request Form (Annex 9).

## 8. ACRONYMS

<b>DO</b>	Designated Official
<b>CASEVAC</b>	Security Evacuation/ Relocation
<b>CATO</b>	Chief Air Transport Officer
<b>CMR</b>	Cargo Movement Request
<b>HCLM</b>	High Level Committee on Management
<b>ICAO</b>	International Civil Aviation Organization
<b>MEDEVAC</b>	Medical Evacuation
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>PMT</b>	Performance Management Tool
<b>PIC</b>	Pilot-in-Command
<b>SAOP</b>	Standard Administrative and Operating Procedures
<b>SARP</b>	ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices
<b>SC</b>	Steering Committee
<b>UGC</b>	User Group Committee
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAVSTADS</b>	United Nations Aviation Standards for peacekeeping and humanitarian air transport operations
<b>UNDSS</b>	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
<b>UNHAS</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
<b>UNLP</b>	United Nations Laissez-Passer
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>VFR</b>	Visual Flight Rules
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

### **UNHAS contacts**

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