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United Nations Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Capabilities

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**DPO/DOS Guidelines on
United Nations Generation of UAS Capabilities**

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A. PURPOSE

1. This document provides guidance on the considerations required for the generation and employment of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). The guidelines are intended to provide an overview for both the military and civilian aspects of United Nations Field Missions.
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B. SCOPE

2. These guidelines apply to United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ) staff, military commanders, staff officers and United Nations personnel in Field Missions. They are intended to provide an overview of the considerations when generating UAS capabilities to support UN missions. It defines the variety of UAS that may be tasked and the management of data generated by the UAS.
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C. RATIONALE

3. These guidelines have been prepared to give those personnel involved in the generation and operation of UAS a consolidated description of the UNHQ recognized terminology and an overview of the various factors that should be considered when introducing UAS to UN Field Missions. The generation of guidelines will result in other activities being required to bring a more coherent approach to UAS, to include the management, tasking and integration of UAS in missions.
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D. GUIDELINES

4. Background.

- 4.1. UAS have been employed on UN Peacekeeping Operations for 5 years and their use has grown considerably as they become increasingly important in supporting Field Missions in the implementation of mission mandates. A UAS can support all segments of the mission by enhancing situational awareness, supporting the protection of forces, reducing the personnel footprint in dangerous environments and verifying reports on vulnerable people.
- 4.2. The introduction of UAS into UN Field Missions must be generated on an operational requirement that a UAS capability can address, noting that it

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might not be the only solution to the requirement. The decision to support the mission with UAS will be based on a variety of factors to include the operational, technical, logistical, environmental, financial and political impacts of such a capability. The consideration of all these factors will result in the generation of a UAS. This activity is supported by the UAS Joint Cell, which is small team of experts from both DPO and DOS.

- 4.3. There are a wide variety of sensors and payloads available on UAS and in order to make the most of these capabilities, integration of the UAS into existing networks is essential. If these networks do not exist then the time and cost of introducing them must be factored into the deployment of UAS, both contract and through a Troop Contributing Country (TCC). Additional capability requirements such as command and control, communication methods and logistical support must also be considered as part of the force generation process. Finally, this document provides advice on the operational employment of UAS in Field Missions, which for peacekeeping employment should be read in parallel to the Policy on UN Peacekeeping Intelligence, the UN Peacekeeping Military Intelligence Handbook, the Information Acquisition Guidelines and the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) Field Handbook.
- 4.4. Based on the nature of the operational requirement, for peacekeeping operations UAS can be employed at the tactical, operational and strategic level and different types of UAS can be used to support these requirements. The direct command and control of the UAS will depend on the level at which it is employed, but the operational use of the UAS must be flexible enough to accommodate tasking from both higher and subordinate organisations within the mission. For broader Field Missions, command and control and tasking of the UAS must be considered at the earliest opportunity to ensure the most effective employment of the capability.

5. Definitions, Terminology and Regulations.

- 5.1. As UAS are widely employed across a variety of national and coalition operations, the terminology around the capabilities and the way in which they are described is relatively broad. It is important to document UAS terminology for the purpose of creating a clear, unambiguous UN picture of what is meant by the terms that are used when discussing the subject.

6. UAS Definitions.

- 6.1. There are a variety of terms used to describe UAS and for UN missions, the following are the recognized terms.

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- 6.2. **Unmanned aircraft (UA).** The overall term for all aircraft that do not carry a human operator and can be operated remotely using varying levels of automated functions.
 - 6.3. **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).** A UAV is an unmanned aircraft that is remotely controlled by a UAV operator who is tasked with the overall responsibility for operation and safety of the UAV but does not need to be trained and certified to the same standards as a regular pilot of a manned aircraft as per international civilian or military regulations. This is typically the case for small and tactical UAS operated for military purposes or for commercially available quad copters employed for main operating base security and surveillance (such as ScanEagle, Shadow 200, etc.).
 - 6.4. **Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS).** The overall term for a system whose components include one or more unmanned aircraft, the supporting network and all equipment and personnel necessary to control the unmanned aircraft.
 - 6.5. **Remotely piloted aircraft (RPA).** An unmanned aircraft that is controlled from a remote pilot station by a pilot, who is tasked with the overall responsibility for operation and safety of the RPA and who has been trained and certified to equivalent standards as a pilot of a manned aircraft as per civilian or military regulations. This is usually the case for all medium and high altitude long endurance (MALE/HALE) RPA.
 - 6.6. **Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS).** A UAS whose components include one or more RPA.
 - 6.7. **Aviation Safety.** In the context of aviation, safety is the state in which the possibility of harm to persons or of property damage is reduced to, and maintained at or below, an acceptable level through a continuing process of hazard identification and safety risk management.
7. **UAS Classifications.**
 - 7.1. UAS systems are categorized by a variety of means and these guidelines are aligned with the Aviation Manual (published 2018) and recognize the following classes of UAS in a military context.
 - 7.2. **Class I UAS.** Small, mini and micro UAS, only operated up to a limited altitude of not more than 1,000ft above ground level (AGL), normally with a weight of between 1 and 25kg, and within radio line of sight (LOS) of the operator, with a maximum range of up to 50km. The main purpose of these

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UAS is to support operations at a tactical unit level, normally platoon or company, up to a battalion level in case of the small UAS.

- 7.3. **Class II UAS/RPAS.** Tactical UAS/RPAS, normally with a maximum take-off weight between 150kg and 600kg, equipped with a LOS data link. Normally operated up to 18,000ft AGL, with a maximum range of 200km. Payload limitations and airworthiness restrictions may limit these systems to operations in restricted or special use airspace. Normally used at a brigade (sector) level.
- 7.4. **Class III UAS/RPAS.** Typically, MALE and HALE, normally weighing more than 600kg and operated up to 65,000ft AGL with unlimited range (beyond line of sight (BLOS)), equipped for limited or even unrestricted use of airspace with an equally less restrictive or even unrestricted airworthiness certificate. These systems are normally used at the level of command and control level for the area of responsibility.

UN PKO UAS/RPAS TABLE

Class	Category	Recommended employment	Normal approximate operating altitude AGL	Range	Recommended C2 level	Examples
Class III	HALE	Strategic/national	<65,000 ft	Unlimited (BLOS)	AOR/mission	Global hawk
	MALE	Operational/theatre	<45,000 ft	Unlimited (BLOS)	AOR/mission	Heron 1/ Hermes 900
Class II	Tactical	Tactical formation	<18,000 ft	<200 km (LOS)	Brigade	Hermes 450/ Falco Sperwer
Class I	Small	Tactical unit	<1,000 ft	<50 Km (LOS)	Battalion/ regiment, sector	Scaneagle/ Shadow 200/ Luna
	Mini (manual or hand launch)	Tactical sub-unit (manual or hand launch)	<1,000 ft	<25 Km (LOS)	Company, platoon, squad	Raven/Aladin/ Puma/ Skylark Heidrun V1
	Micro	Tactical sub-unit (manual or hand Launch, tethered)	<400 ft	<5km (LOS)	Platoon, squad, team	WASP III/MIKADO/ DJI Phantom 4, DJI Mavic Pro Hovermast-100

Table i: UAS/RPAS Classification

8. **Additional Terminology.**

- 8.1. There is additional terminology that requires clarification in the context of the UN’s use of UAS. When discussing the ability to control the aircraft the term line of sight (LOS) is often referred to.

- 8.2. Visual LOS is used to describe most Class I UAS as the aircraft pilot must be able to see the UAS at all times to safely control it and avoid collisions with other aircraft, people, buildings and terrain.
- 8.3. The term radio LOS refers to the means of communicating with larger UAS to provide directional input and to receive any feed from the sensors; it does not mean that the UAS must be within visual range.
- 8.4. When using the term beyond LOS (BLOS), this refers to the need to use satellite uplinks and downlinks to communicate with the UAS and is almost exclusively used to refer to Class III UAS.

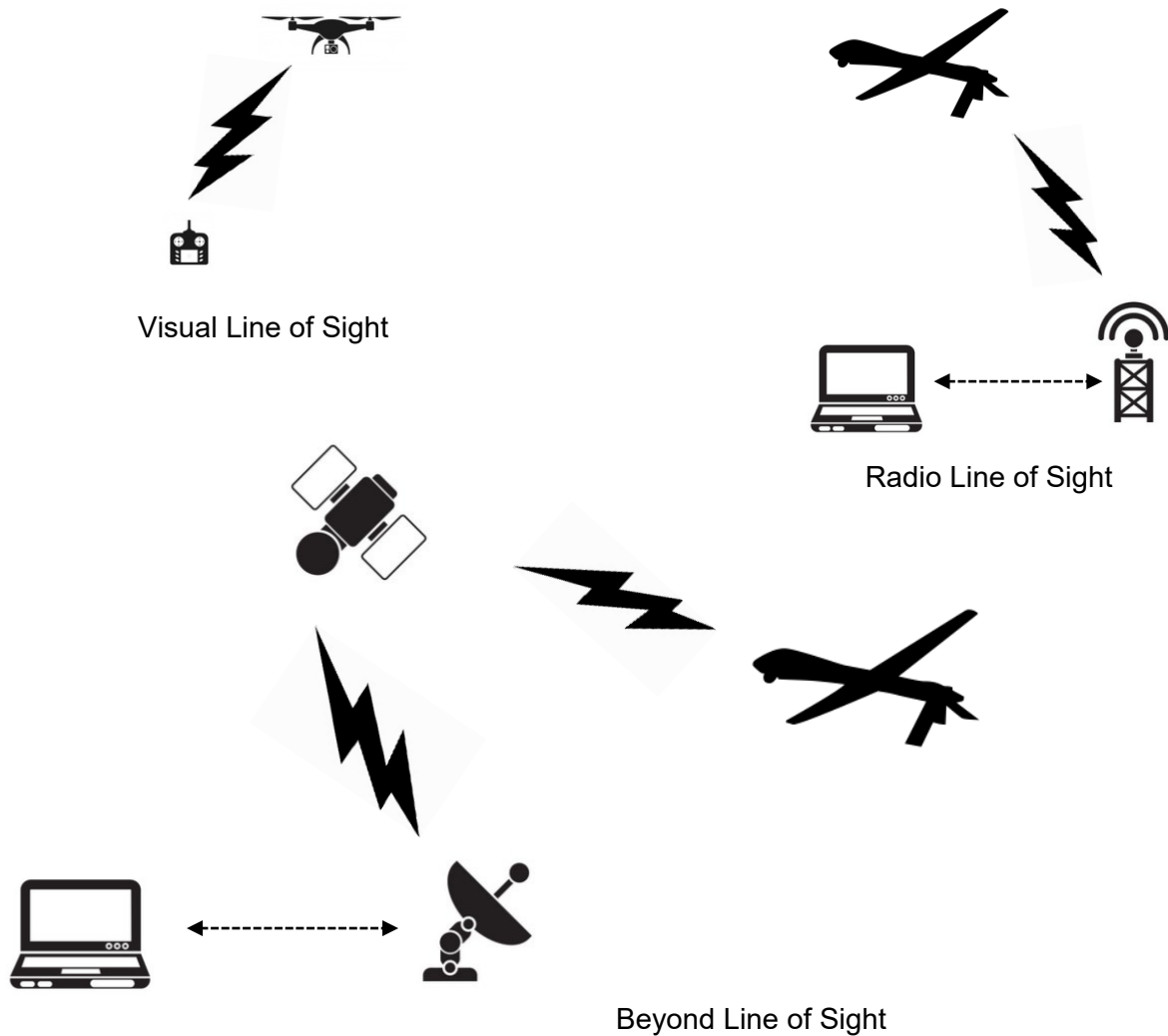


Figure i: UAS C2 Arrangements

9. UAS Regulations.

9.1. All UAS operated within UN missions must comply with the UN aviation regulatory framework, in addition to observing the safety aspects contained within the UN Aviation Manual and its UAS annex and the UN Aviation Safety Manual. All UAS scheduling must be captured in the Air Tasking Order (ATO), however, where this is not practical for tactical systems (typically Class I), a Restricted Operating Zone (ROZ) must be established around the area of UAS operations to limit the risk of collision between helicopters and UAS. The establishment of a ROZ for Class III UAS is not practical due to the operating height and the impact on other air traffic. Therefore, Class II and III UAS must be fitted with a Traffic Collision Avoidance System (TCAS), or a similar see and avoid system, to detect and avoid potential collisions with the civilian and military air traffic that share the airspace.

10. UAS Requirements.

10.1. The requirement for UAS can be generated from both the military and/or civilian perspectives but there must be a clear operational requirement against the UN mandate. In the case of contract provided UAS the requirement will be determined by the UN Field Mission in coordination with the UAS Joint Cell in the UNHQ in New York. In the instance of a TCC contribution, defining the Statement of Force Requirement is a Military Planning Service (MPS)/OMA responsibility, which will take into account the ceiling limit of deployed forces in the mission. For contract solutions it is important that missions share their operational requirements early in the planning process as it is possible that other capabilities could meet the mission's needs and this consideration must take place before it is determined that a UAS is the answer. Whilst UN missions have the ability to contract UAS services directly to the mission, as dictated by the current UN financial rules and regulations, it is advisable to include the UAS Joint Cell in the selection process to ensure lessons learned by other missions are incorporated into the process.

10.2. A UAS, either civilian or military, can be employed in a wide variety of circumstances. The most common use is for operational and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) tasking, however, the UN Field Missions should not bound themselves when considering how UAS could contribute. For example, UAS could be used to verify reports on IDP movements or employed on logistical tasks to transport medicine. Missions should not limit their perspectives by not considering how UAS could support them when seeking solutions to problems and should seek advice from the UAS Joint Cell in UNHQ.

- 10.3. In the military context, when addressing the operational requirements for a UAS, consideration should be given to the 'force multiplier' effect of a UAS in the ISR role rather than simply using a UAS for overwatch of a convoy or patrol. The ability to develop pattern-of-life to support understanding of a particular area or monitoring suspected trafficking routes can generate actionable peacekeeping intelligence to counter threats against UN personnel or civilians. Using the UAS in an ISR capacity can reduce the need to put individuals on the ground in harm's way to generate this understanding, demonstrating the benefits of using UAS. The Peacekeeping ISR Annex of the Information Acquisition Guidelines provides an overview of the management of ISR in UN Peacekeeping Operations.

11. Sensor Capabilities.

- 11.1. The overwhelming majority of UAS on offer, whether commercially provided or as part of a TCC commitment, have imaging sensors as a core capability. The most basic aspect will be Full Motion Video (FMV), which is an excellent means to conduct pattern of life on a surveillance mission. The ability to loiter over an area of interest with an FMV sensor allows the imagery analyst to gather valuable information to contribute to understanding the operational environment. The FMV sensor suite will likely have electro-optical (EO) for use during daylight and infra-red (IR) capabilities for day and night, which further enhances situational awareness as the IR sensors will highlight activity which is not visible to the human eye.¹ Both sensors will be affected by adverse weather such as cloud, dust and moisture, regardless of whether they are fitted to manned or unmanned platforms. The ability to operate a UAS with both EO and IR FMV is the most basic requirement of any capability offered to UN missions. However, it cannot be underestimated how important it is to have trained imagery analysts to interpret the FMV, making sense of what is not immediately obvious to the untrained eye.
- 11.2. Where operational requirements dictate, more complex sensors can assist in enhancing the intelligence picture. Due to the larger payload, Synthetic Aperture RADAR (SAR) sensors are only found on Class III UAS. The benefits of SAR include being all weather, day/night imaging and in its more basic employment can support disaster relief through covering large areas, detecting flooding and assisting in prioritising humanitarian relief. More advanced techniques can highlight changes not detectable by the human eye, for example, dirt displaced by feet or tyres, potential Improvised Explosive

¹ The warm engine of a recently used vehicle will be visible in IR, which will allow the analyst to determine that it has recently arrived at its location relative to other vehicles whose engines do not appear to be warm.

Device placements and changes in dispositions of forces. These techniques require careful planning by highly trained imagery analysts, working closely with the UAS team to deliver the results. A further SAR capability is Ground Moving Target Indicator (GMTI), which uses the SAR in a scanning mode to identify moving targets. The GMTI sensors are particularly useful at highlighting new and existing lines of communication through open areas and, when used in a surveillance mode over a period of time, can aid in detecting possible smuggling routes.

- 11.3. Further advanced capabilities include multi and hyper spectral imaging (MSI and HSI respectively) sensors, which can exploit data across the entire electromagnetic spectrum. These advanced sensors can be particularly useful in UN Peacekeeping missions by detecting chemical spills, gaseous effluent and revealing man-made camouflage and concealment. These more advanced sensors generate considerable volumes of data, which must be considered as part of the approach in acquiring these capabilities. Furthermore, in order to gain the maximum effect from these exquisite sensors, they are best employed as part of a layered approach and complemented with the more basic capabilities to allow for a more complete intelligence picture.² The ability to plan and execute such missions takes a fairly unique skillset, which has imagery analysis as a core qualification.

12. **Deployment considerations.**

- 12.1. A variety of factors can impact the ability to successfully employ a UAS to meet the operational requirements of the mission. The following should be considered when determining if the UAS is able to meet the needs of the mission.
- 12.2. **Operational Context.** The primary consideration should be the context in which the UAS is to be employed. An understanding of the UAS' primary function should be clear to all, although this should not limit the opportunity to use the UAS in a different scenario. The context is important as it lays the foundation for many of the following considerations; it is different to the operational requirement as this would have determined the specific asset that is to be acquired. For example, the Command and Control of a UAS employed in an ISR role will be different to that supporting an agency's logistical requirements. It is important that any arrangements are flexible to allow for the widest possible use of the UAS.

² For example, on identifying a new line of communication with GMTI, employing an EO sensor will allow better understanding on the type of traffic therefore allowing analysts to make more accurate assessments.

- 12.3. **Command and Control.** UAS operations are most effective when the control of the capability is delegated to the lowest possible level, however, the nature of operations will dictate this and for some class of UAS control can be adjusted, depending on the mission. C2 of all ISR systems is addressed in the ISR Annex of the Information Acquisition Guidelines, but in simple terms, Class I UAS will be controlled at the tactical level. The range, endurance and sensor suite will make mini and micro UAS unsuitable for operational and strategic level tasking. Class II and III UAS can be employed in support of tactical to strategic operations and therefore control must sit at the appropriate level. There is no reason why a Class III UAS cannot be employed in support of tactical, Company level operations and in these circumstances, control of the tasking and sensors must be delegated to the Battalion level to gain maximum benefit. The next day the same UAS could be providing surveillance for an operational requirement and control should not sit at the Battalion level. The Command and Control of UAS that may be acquired to support civilian missions should be considered early in the procurement process. Effective Command and Control will allow for the most efficient use of the resource but the same principle of command at the highest appropriate level and control at the most effective level depending on the task should be adhered to.
- 12.4. **Endurance.** Whilst not a specific rule, by definition the larger the UAS the longer the endurance or flight time. This is mostly related to the ability to provide power to the aircraft to allow it to remain in the air. The extreme ends of endurance of UAS range from periods of 30 minutes up to a number of weeks, however, typically in UN Field Missions Class II and III UAS will be limited to a maximum of approximately 24 hours endurance. For all UAS, the further the launch site from the area of operations, the less time the aircraft will have over the area of interest due to transit times.
- 12.5. **Range.** The ability of a UAS to cover an extended range will be largely influenced by the C2 means. A visual LOS C2 arrangement will limit the range of the UAS, which is why Class I UAS tend to be employed in a more tactical scenario. Radio LOS will allow operations typically out to a limit of 100km, however this distance can be affected by both weather and terrain. A BLOS capable UAS will operate at ranges in excess of 700km, provided there is a continuous satellite communications link.
- 12.6. **Launch and Recovery.** The method by which the UAS can be launched and recovered is essential when meeting the operational requirement. Whilst many of the small Class I UAS can be hand launched or operate using vertical take-off and landing techniques, larger UAS will need more space to the extent that Class III UAS will require a prepared runway. Class II UAS sit

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somewhere in the middle, with some simply requiring a catapult system, others can function from desert strips but the more advanced may still require a prepared runway. Recovery of Class I and II can use arrestor capabilities such as nets or parachutes but regardless of the methods, safety of flight must be a factor to ensure that other airspace users are clear of the area of potentially unusual UAS recovery operations.

- 12.7. **Communications.** The employment of tactical UAS will utilise a Remote Video Terminal for analysing the imagery, which uses L-Band frequency in the range of 0.5 to 1.5 GHz. For radio LOS operations, the uplink/downlink is generally run through C-Band transmitters, between 4000 MHz and 8000 MHz frequency range. The UAS operators will take these parameters into consideration, particularly when multiple UAS are being employed, however, it is essential that frequency deconfliction occurs with any other ground-based C-Band transmitters within the local area. The BLOS capable UAS will operate in the Ku frequency between 12 GHz and 18 GHz, which is provided by commercial companies or could be provided by TCCs. The data requirements for EO/IR UAS is approximately 200kbs for the command link and 3.2 Mbps for the return link. These requirements must be taken into consideration during the deployment process. All Class III and some Class II will have UHF/VHF radio communications, which are commonly fitted with encryption capabilities. The encryption requirements for both air and ground forces must be considered as part of the deployment process.
- 12.8. **Logistic Support.** As with other aspects, the class of UAS will tend to dictate the deployment footprint required to support the capability. Class I UAS could be organic to a TCC Company and therefore all logistical support will be embedded within the unit. However, a Class III UAS can attract up to 100 support personnel, potentially dispersed across a number of locations if the Ground Control Stations are in a separate location to the Launch and Recovery Element. Specific logistical aspects such as infrastructure, runway and taxiway requirements, storage containers, offices, customised buildings and security perimeters must be considered at the earliest opportunity. Whilst not specifically part of defining the operational requirements, limitations within the mission could mean some capabilities must be discounted. For example, if the operating airfield lacks any form of security and the UAS provider and the mission requires it, the cost of upgrading security facilities could preclude the deployment of the capability.
- 12.9. **Data Storage.** The information collected by UAS is very valuable and must be retained as it could have future intelligence value. This is a core concept of Peacekeeping Intelligence and good information management is essential in supporting this. Ideally, FMV data should be retained, stored and archived

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in such a way that it is possible to identify and retrieve the data at a future point in time. This will be aspirational in some missions, but over time secure networks will deliver the capability to realise better information management of intelligence data. An essential part of this ability is the need to ensure that all data outputs at common standards and formats. Any TCCs or commercial companies that seek to introduce proprietary standards that cannot be integrated should be rejected at the earliest opportunity.

- 12.10. **Airspace Considerations.** The national situation will dictate airspace considerations such as whether the UAS will mainly be operating in segregated or unsegregated airspace. The UAS Joint Cell can advise on these aspects and will require that the UAS meets the minimum aviation safety requirements relevant to the mission's airspace. This is irrespective of whether the UAS is provided by a TCC or through a commercial contract.

13. **Force Generation.**

- 13.1. The UN generation process for a commercial UAS is no different from the process of generating manned aircraft. There are essentially 3 methods of generating UAS for UN Field Missions: the individual mission enters into contract with a commercial provider, the UNHQ contracts UAS capability on behalf of the missions or TCCs offer UAS capabilities through the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, which is addressed at the UNHQ level. Within the UNHQ, contract management and acquisition of the system is the responsibility of DOS, with ATS tasked with overseeing all aspects including contracting, aircraft management, policy development, standardization and quality management. Additionally, ATS publishes the Aviation Manual covering all aspects of aviation, including the employment of UAS, for UN purposes.

14. **UAS Safety.**

- 14.1. To support the United Nations Aviation Safety's mission to provide the best possible aviation safety services to mitigate all safety risks, meeting aviation demands by promoting a positive and collaborative aviation safety culture is an important requirement. It follows that UAS service providers should have a Safety Management System (SMS) implemented to systematically integrate the management of safety risk into their business planning, operations, and decision making.
- 14.2. Oversight and surveillance activities on the part of United Nations Aviation Safety Section is required not as a quality control function as in the past, but rather the results of surveillance will be used as objective evidence with which

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to evaluate the effectiveness of service providers' safety management capability and performance.

14.3. UAS service providers shall have structured processes that obligates their organization to manage safety with the same level of priority that other core business processes are managed, as a formal, top-down, organization-wide approach to managing safety risk and assuring the effectiveness of safety risk controls. UAS service provider's SMS shall include as a minimum the following components:

1. Safety policy and objectives
 - 1.1 Management commitment and responsibility
 - 1.2 Safety accountabilities
 - 1.3 Appointment of key safety personnel
 - 1.4 Coordination of emergency response planning
 - 1.5 SMS documentation
2. Safety risk management
 - 2.1 Hazard identification
 - 2.2 Risk assessment and mitigation
3. Safety assurance
 - 3.1 Safety performance monitoring and measurement
 - 3.2 The management of change
 - 3.3 Continuous improvement of the SMS
4. Safety promotion
 - 4.1 Training and education
 - 4.2 Safety communication
5. Operational Procedures
 - 5.1 Loss Link Procedures
 - 5.2 Procedures for operations in unsegregated airspace
 - 5.3 Emergency Response Procedures

Literature:

ICAO Doc 9859 4th Edition, 2018, Safety Management Manual

United Nations Aviation Standards for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Air Transport Operations, 2012

Aviation Safety Manual, 2012

E. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

15. Within DPO, once a mandate is established through a UN Security Council Resolution, the OMA through MPS is responsible for developing a new mission concept,

establishing a CONOPs for the military elements and opens informal discussions with potential TCCs. The Force Generation Service supports MPS during the initial phase of activity, finalizes the force generation process and invites units from TCCs based on the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System for future missions, as well as replacing units in established UN Peacekeeping Operations. The Current Military Operations Service tracks and manages daily issues relating to active UN Peacekeeping Operations, receives and distributes reports and maintains awareness of current issues in all missions. The Assessment Team supports all phases of the procurement process for UAS by providing expert advice on the employment of UAS, including risk assessment of deployed locations.

16. DOS is responsible for the contracting element of commercial UAS and military units' Letter of Assist. In addition, DOS is also involved in enabling and outreach to potential UAS providers, the registering of UAS vendors and evaluating or assessing TCCs and commercial UAS providers. ATS and Aviation Safety develops the regulations and directives and advises the UNHQ and mission leadership on all aviation related issues. ATS is also responsible for the long-term strategic planning and OMA supports current aviation related issues, while aviation safety continually bring in safeguards to mitigate potential risk and organizational liabilities. The organisation also provides cost estimates and budget reviews for aviation assets and personnel, assures quality and aviation trends analysis, participates in contract management for aviation and oversees and conducts screening and training of aviation related personnel.

17. The Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) provides communications and information technology support for all UN Field Missions. The division also provides strategic policy and guidance concerning the application of technology, whilst also ensuring the availability of sufficient data and communications links. Specifically relating to UAS, OICT will ensure that the contractor will be responsible for system internal communications and support the delivery of satellite communications, where required.

18. Throughout the generation and operation process, the UAS Joint Cell in the UNHQ in New York will act as the focal point and will advise and assist to ensure the appropriate capabilities match the UN Field Mission's operational requirements. It will continue to support the missions by holding contractors to account and assist with contract renewal or replacement.

F. REFERENCES

Superior References

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- A. United Nations Peacekeeping: Principles and Guidelines, DPKO-DFS (2008) (“Capstone Doctrine”)

Related Policies, Procedures or Guidelines

- A. United Nations Force Headquarters Handbook, November 2014
- B. United Nations Aviation Manual, October 2018
- C. United Nations Aviation Safety Manual 2012
- D. United Nations Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy, 2017
- E. Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) Field Handbook, 2018
- F. Information Acquisition Guidelines, 2019
- G. United Nations Peacekeeping Military Intelligence Handbook, 2019

G. CONTACT

19. The point of contact for these guidelines is the UAS Joint Cell in the UNHQ New York, through the OMA Assessment Team.

H. HISTORY

20. These guidelines are the first produced on UAS and therefore the initial review will be in one year from the date of approval.

DATE OF APPROVAL:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES:



Jean-Pierre Lacroix
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8 Feb 2019



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8 Feb 2019