



# **UNV Administrative Guidelines for the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak**

## **Operational Measures for Management of UN Volunteers**

**Volunteer Solutions Section  
Version 4.0**

**30 December 2020**

## **Purpose**

These Guidelines are intended for the UN Volunteer recruitment/management practitioners, including but not limited to UNV Regional Offices, Field Units, Volunteer Service Centre, and for reference by UN Host Entities and UNV Funding Partners during the COVID-19 operational response.

These Guidelines are informed by the applicable Conditions of Service for both [national](#) and [international](#) UN Volunteers, which are the main legal instrument governing the management of UN Volunteers.

As such, these Guidelines should be viewed as an extension of the applicable Conditions of Service for UN Volunteers and are intended to provide clarity on the operational measures for the management of UN Volunteers during the COVID-19 crisis.

All volunteer management practitioners are expected to implement the provisions of these Guidelines.<sup>1</sup> UNV's guiding principle for aspects not covered in this guidance should be informed by the principle of equity that UN Volunteers are treated at least to the same minimum duty of care standard as UN staff.

These Guidelines will be reviewed periodically, as necessary, by the UNV Volunteer Solutions Section and amended accordingly.

## **Applicability**

These Guidelines are applicable to all UN Volunteers and recognized dependants globally as of the date indicated on the cover page of the document until notice is provided revoking or amending their applicability.

These Guidelines may be updated, as determined by UNV, in response to COVID-19.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines and provisions of similarly situated UN staff that differ from UN Volunteer guidance will be carefully reviewed and interpreted flexibly to the interest of UNV to minimize difficulties and disruption at a time of crisis.

## Guidelines for COVID-19 affected UN Volunteer Assignments

Topic	Administrative Guidance
<p><b>1. Deployment of UN Volunteer candidates within the United Nations System Criticality Framework</b></p>	<p>As per current UN security policy a key principle is programme/mission criticality. Every ongoing deployment and new request for deployment needs to be assessed in light of this criterion, and when appropriate, in consultation with the UN Host Entity, UNV and the Designated Official of the country of assignment.</p> <p>Non-essential deployment/travel will not be allowed (no security clearance will be granted) when the DO has established that is an unacceptable level of health risk attaches to the UN Volunteer per the UN criticality framework.</p> <p>New deployment requests (including replacements) should take into consideration the criticality guidance established by the Designated Official of the country of assignment.</p> <p>Prior to travel, security clearance must be requested through the UNDSS TRIP system (<a href="https://trip.dss.un.org/">https://trip.dss.un.org/</a>). All security clearance requests will be reviewed by UN DSS officials in the destination/assignment country.</p> <p><b>a) Alternative Offer to Candidate:</b> For UN Volunteer selected candidates whose completion of the conditions set forth in the Offer is negatively impacted by COVID-19, alternative solutions will be actively pursued on a case-by-case basis, e.g. submission of candidature elsewhere or telecommuting arrangements.</p> <p>Alternative solutions should be treated as a material change, and a new Offer issued so that it is explicitly accepted by the selected candidate.</p> <p>As a last resort, the Offer may be withdrawn by UNV, in consultation with UN Host Entity, and payment of compensation that may be due under the applicable Conditions of Service will be paid.</p>



	<p><b>b) Offer withdrawn by UNV<sup>2</sup> after all recruitment formalities completed by selected candidate:</b> In cases where the Offer is withdrawn by UNV after all the recruitment formalities have been completed, the Conditions of Service (COS) provides that an amount of compensation will be due as follows:</p> <p>One month of Monthly Living Allowance (MLA) of the proposed country of assignment, which is equivalent to the notice period for termination.</p> <p><b>c) Offer withdrawn by UNV before recruitment formalities completed by selected candidate:</b> As a last resort, if the Offer is withdrawn by UNV before all of the recruitment formalities have been completed then compensation only of expenditures incurred (e.g. government and medical clearances) will be reimbursed, minus any funds that may have been advanced to the selected candidate.</p> <p><b>d) Selected candidate revokes Offer:</b> Selected candidates who have accepted an Offer are responsible for assessing their own personal situations and taking decisions accordingly.</p> <p>If a selected candidate declines to take up the assignment after signing and accepting the Offer, she/he will be required to refund to UNV any amounts that have already been disbursed.</p> <p>If a selected candidate does not refund to UNV the sums disbursed, she/he will be excluded from future UN Volunteer opportunities and appropriate legal steps will be taken to recover outstanding dues.</p>
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<sup>2</sup> At the request of UN Host Entity. For purposes throughout this document when involving a fully-funded UN Volunteer the UNV Funding Partner will be consulted when referencing UN Host Entity partner, as appropriate.

	<p><b>e) Impossibility of Offer:</b> When it is foreseen that due to the COVID-19 pandemic the conditions set out in the Offer will not be possible for the candidate to fulfil in a 30-day period, the Offer will be treated as a withdrawal of the Offer by UNV. For fully funded assignments the agreement with the specific partner will determine the timeframe.</p> <p>Depending of the circumstances, Section 1. (b) or (c) above will apply unless the selected candidate has accepted in writing postponement of the Commencement of Service beyond the 30-day period.</p>
<p><b>2. Consideration of candidates for international UN Volunteer assignments from countries in lockdown</b></p>	<p>International UN Volunteer selected candidates from countries barred to travel to the country of assignment will be removed from the submissions, in consultation with the UN Host Entity and the Field Unit/Regional Office covering the country of assignment.</p> <p>In such cases alternative arrangements may be sought that are acceptable to all parties.</p> <p>Likewise, no candidates from countries currently under quarantine / lockdown and/or with a prohibition on travel outside the country, will be submitted for new assignments.</p>
<p><b>3. COVID-19-related disruptions to authorized travel</b></p>	<p>a) <b>Disruption to non-initiated travel:</b> In the event that the itinerary for authorized travel must be changed due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, airline cancellation, or other related reasons, the selected candidate should immediately inform the UN Host Entity and explore alternative options.</p> <p>If alternative travel options are found, then the travel monetization process is initiated per current UNV practice and the UN Host Agency is charged for any rebooked tickets.</p> <p>If no alternative travel options are found, please refer to the possible outcomes set out under Section 1 above.</p> <p>b) <b>Initiated travel disrupted - stopover:</b> If during authorized travel, local authorities, UN guidelines, or airlines create an unavoidable stopover for a UN Volunteer, then any DSA payments<sup>3</sup> to be made will follow applicable UN Host Entity</p>

<sup>3</sup> The costs associated with DSA payments or any other costs associated with provision referred to or triggered as a result of these Guidelines will be borne by the UN Host Entity. In cases of fully-funded UN Volunteers costs that would be borne by the UN Entity partner will be absorbed by the UNV donor funding partner.



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	<p>rules and remain payable in the stopover location until new departure travel is authorized and until the first available flight to the authorized final destination.</p> <p>c) <b>Initiated travel disrupted – cancelled:</b> If during authorized travel, local authorities, UN guidelines, or airlines prevent completion of the journey, then any DSA payments to be made will follow UN Host Entity rules and remain payable in the transit location up until the first available flight either to the originating location, or in exigent circumstances, a third location is confirmed and travel authorized.</p>
<p><b>4. Disrupted return to official duties following discretionary leave</b></p>	<p>UN Volunteers who are authorized to travel outside the Duty Station on discretionary leave (Annual Leave, Family Leave, Learning &amp; Training Leave, Home Visit, Special Leave, and when applicable Rest &amp; Recuperation), must be aware that, re-entry into the Duty Station or departure from the countries to which they travel may not be possible.</p> <p>In these cases, the UN Volunteers’ supervisor is the primary authority in assessing and mitigating this risk to the UN Volunteer before taking discretionary leave noting that discretionary leave approval may not be forthcoming based on their risk assessment and good judgment.</p> <p>UN Volunteers who are unable to return from approved discretionary leave to the Duty Station should explore telecommuting options with the UN Host Entity, if feasible. When UN Volunteers cannot return to take up their official duties and when telecommuting is not feasible or approved by the UN Host Entity, separation may result after exhausting all authorized leave.</p> <p>The UN Volunteer bears the financial risk associated with travel arrangements and rebooking in all cases of discretionary travel.</p> <p>Any DSA payments that may be payable will follow the same rules for similarly situated UN Host Entity staff, however such payments are generally not provided.</p>
<p><b>5. Special Leave with VLA</b></p>	<p>UN Volunteers will continue to receive their Volunteer Living Allowance when they are in situations where similarly situated UN staff would receive Special Leave With Full Pay (SLWFP) due to COVID-19 as per the Administrative Guidelines for Offices on the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak by the HR Network or any supplementary UN Host Entity specific guidance.</p>

<p><b>6. Well-Being Differential (WBD) deductions</b></p>	<p>UN Volunteers serving in Duty Stations designated as being eligible for Well-Being Differential will be paid based on the eligibility criteria of the Duty Station to which the UN Volunteer is officially assigned.</p> <p>No deductions of WBD will be made for absences due to approved leaves regardless of length.</p>
<p><b>7. Quarantine</b></p>	<p>a) Countries may put in place protective/preventive measures and screening procedures for any suspicious signs of infection in individuals arriving to locations within their jurisdiction. Depending on the circumstances, a UN Volunteer arriving in the country of assignment may be quarantined.</p> <p>Deployment of candidates to such countries may continue, but candidates need to be aware of the increasingly stringent special measures they may be subject to during transits and also upon arrival in the country of assignment.</p>
	<p>b) For UN Volunteers and authorized dependants quarantined while on authorized entitlement travel (Assignment, Home Visit, Repatriation) payment of DSA will be applicable by UN Host Entity. However, if hospitalized or placed in a quarantine facility with full board, DSA will be reduced to one third.</p>
	<p>c) UN Volunteers and authorized dependants placed under involuntary quarantine for any other circumstance not covered in this Section will be subject to UN Host Entity rules for similarly situated UN staff (ie international or national).</p>
<p><b>8. COVID-19 PCR Test</b></p>	<p>Medical insurance provider will provide coverage of COVID-19 PCR tests when prescribed by a medical practitioner. When it is impossible to obtain a prescription from a medical practitioner the costs of a COVID-19 PCR test will be the responsibility of the UN Host Entity under the following circumstances only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorized entitlement travel (Assignment, Home Visit, Repatriation)</li> <li>• Authorized dependant entitlement travel</li> <li>• Authorized assignment related travel (medical evacuation, security evacuation)</li> <li>• Authorized mission travel</li> <li>• Authorized R&amp;R</li> <li>• When authorized by the UN Host Entity</li> </ul>

	Unprescribed COVID-19 PCR tests that are not included in the above list will be borne by the UN Volunteer.
<b>9. Management of UN Volunteers serving during the COVID-19 pandemic</b>	<p>The overriding principle is that UN Volunteer assignments will continue to be managed as per the UNV COS and the specific recommendations of the UN Host Entity/UN Country Team (UNCT)/ Designated Official for Security (DO) in the respective countries (e.g. in terms of the applicable working regime, in-country rotation policy, MOSS, etc.).</p>
	<p>a) In the event specific UN Host Entities and/or UNV Funding Partners request exceptions from the UNV COS or applicable administrative guidance, the UNV Regional Managers in line with relevant delegation of authority s may exercise discretionary approval of waivers/deviations.</p>
	<p>b) When possible, there should be a UNV representative in UNCT, Security Management Team (SMT) or other UN meetings at UN country level where the COVID-19 crisis is being discussed.</p>
	<p>c) There is an increased need to exercise extra care with regards to monitoring the whereabouts of serving UN Volunteers.</p> <p>For instance, all travel needs to be closely monitored and recorded in TRIP module, and any UN Host Entity specific system. UN Volunteers should report every travel to TRIP.</p>
	<p>d) UN Volunteer data must be fully-up to date at any point in time and be available upon request. Beneficiary and inventory forms in applicable Volunteer Management System in particular must be regularly kept up to date.</p>
	<p>e) The increased psychological pressure and morale issues amongst serving UN Volunteers is a duty of care concern. UNV Administrating Offices should promptly and proactively address specific questions. Escalation may be channelled through <a href="mailto:volunteer.support@unv.org">volunteer.support@unv.org</a>.</p>
	<p>f) In the event that a UN Volunteer requires reasonable accommodation to fulfil their assignment in the context of COVID-19 or otherwise they should channel that request to their UN Host Entity and inform UNV.</p>
<b>10. Management of UN Volunteer dependents for COVID-19 duty</b>	<p>The overriding principle is that UN Volunteers' dependants will continue to be managed as per the UNV COS and the specific recommendations of the UNCT in the respective countries, including the requirement that the UNDP CO confirms that the nature of the assignment, living conditions and other factors, such</p>



<p><b>of care / security system</b></p>	<p>as availability of proper medical facilities, are suitable for dependants to reside at the Duty Station.</p> <p>a) All serving UN Volunteers with dependants, <i>regardless of whether they are recognized by UNV HQ or whether they are in a family or non-family Duty Station</i>, must be reported to and registered with UNDSS, when required.</p> <p>Such registration is solely meant for safety and security purposes and does not imply formal recognition or give rise to dependant-related entitlements.</p> <p>Dependant data must be fully-up to date at any point in time and available upon request.</p>
<p><b>11. Repatriation disruptions</b></p>	<p>a) <b>Extension of appointment in country.</b> In cases where repatriation travel is not possible due to COVID-19, and depending on the circumstances, an assignment of a UN Volunteer holding a permit/visa in the Duty Station and who is not requesting residency status in the country of assignment, will be extended in consultation with the UN Host Entity until departure/entry is possible and up until the first travel opportunity or flight is available to the UN Volunteer.</p>
	<p>b) <b>Extension of appointment in third country/reassignment.</b> Due to COVID-19 related repatriation disruptions it may be the case that the UN Volunteer will no longer hold a permit/visa in the Duty Station, it will not be renewed in time, or other reasons prohibiting their remaining in the Duty Station/country of assignment. In these cases where repatriation to the home country is not possible, the appointment of the UN Volunteer will be extended temporarily in consultation with the UN Host Entity and travel should be facilitated to a third-country location as a reassignment until the first travel opportunity or flight is available to the UN Volunteer to be repatriated.</p>
<p><b>12. Telecommuting</b></p>	<p>Work arrangements, including flexible working arrangements are determined by the UN Host Entity regulations.</p> <p>Alternate work arrangements, which are different from flexible working arrangements, may also involve working from a different location, within or outside the Duty Station, including from a UN Volunteer’s home or home country. Alternate work arrangements</p>



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	<p>are at the request of the UN Host Entity and as such are not considered flexible working arrangements.</p> <p>The authority to implement alternate work arrangements rests with UN Host Entities. In circumstances where the UN Host Entity has implemented alternate work arrangements, the applicable rules for similarly situated UN staff members will apply to UN Volunteers.</p> <p>The UN Host Entity is authorized to exercise discretionary approval of remote working arrangements for UN Volunteers outside of the Duty Station to allow flexibility arising from COVID-19 related disruptions.</p> <p>All costs<sup>4</sup> associated with authorized telecommuting arrangements are absorbed by the UN Entity<sup>5</sup>.</p> <p>In cases of authorized remote working arrangements by the UN Host Entity, the UN Volunteer should confirm in writing their agreement to the UN Host Entity the terms of such arrangements.</p> <p>In cases where the UN Host Entity has authorized the UN Volunteer to perform their assignment remotely, the Post Adjustment Multiplier (PAM) and related entitlements to be paid will be determined by the UN Host Entity and the official duty station may be adjusted to the duty station from where the UN Volunteer is physically situated.</p> <p>UN Volunteers availing themselves of any alternative working arrangements in locations other than their designated Duty Station should duly inform UNDSS of their location for United Nations Security Management System accuracy.</p>
<p><b>13. COVID-19 related Well-Being Differential (WBD) increment</b></p>	<p>UN Volunteers meeting the eligibility criteria may receive a COVID-19 related Well-Being Differential increment, when designated by their UN Host Entity, who will apply the same criteria and methodology for similarly situated UN personnel for COVID-19 Danger Pay, subject to confirmation of funds by the UN Host Entity.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Authorized costs include all incurred costs as well as UNV proforma elements that are not utilized due to the authorized telecommuting arrangement.

<sup>5</sup> In cases of fully-funded UN Volunteers all costs will be borne by the UNV donor funding partner.

<p><b>14. Entitlement Leave Adjustments</b></p>	<p><i>a)</i> <b>Uncertified Sick Leave:</b> Until 30.06.2021 all UN Volunteers may use up to 14 days Uncertified Sick Leave (USL) for COVID-19 related absences of self-isolation.</p> <p>For use of extended USL for purposes of self-isolation a note from a medical practitioner is not required, however extended USL requests must be accompanied by the recommendation of UN medical services or per documented guidance of local authorities.</p> <p><i>b)</i> <b>Annual Leave:</b> Until 30.06.2021 all UN Volunteers can accrue Annual Leave beyond the current maximum Annual Leave threshold of thirty (30) days.</p> <p><i>c)</i> <b>Home Visit:</b> All UN Volunteers who have accrued qualifying Home Visit points may avail of Home Visit leave within 3 months before their contract expiry date.</p>
<p><b>15. Leave Monetization</b></p>	<p><i>a)</i> <b>Annual Leave:</b> Until 30.06.2021 for UN Volunteers who are completing their assignment and who have an Annual Leave balance due to confirmed exigence of circumstances by UN Host Entities may have their leave monetized and paid in their last payroll upon requests from UN Host Entities.</p> <p><i>b)</i> <b>Home Visit:</b> Until 30.06.2021 for all UN Volunteers who are ending their assignments and who could not avail of Home Visit due to COVID-19 within 3 months before contract expiry date will, upon completion of assignment, be provided a monetized benefit based on current UNV travel monetization methodology as per requests from UN Host Entities.</p>
<p><b>16. Analogous guidance</b></p>	<p>On issues where the applicable UN Volunteer Conditions of Service or this Guidance document are silent, relevant UN staff regulations, rules and policies, including Administrative Guidelines for Offices on the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak by the HR Network, may be applied by analogy, subject to agreement between UN Host Entity and UNV, but without conferring staff status or creating new entitlements.</p> <p>A guiding principle for all analogous guidance is that to the extent possible UN Volunteer are treated equally to similarly situated UN staff members (ie international or national).</p>



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<p><b>17. Critical incident and case management</b></p>	<p>Critical incidents (i.e. Medevac) and special cases where health, safety and security are at imminent risk must be brought to the immediate attention of the UN Volunteer’s direct supervisor/UN Host Entity, as well as the UNV Volunteer Services Centre, cc Regional Offices/Field Units.</p> <p>Designated COVID-19 Focal Point must also be informed in case of COVID-positive test results.</p>
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