

# Humanitarian Notification System (HNS) Standard Operation Procedure



March 2021

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## 1. Introduction

In April 2015, at the request of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Yemen, UNOCHA established a voluntary notification mechanism with the Saudi-led Coalition (SLC) aimed at facilitating its obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) to ensure safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access.<sup>1</sup>

Humanitarian notification informs parties to the armed conflict of the location of a select category of facilities and movements that are entitled to protection under international humanitarian law (IHL): civilian objects that fulfill a humanitarian function, movements of humanitarian staff and supplies, and critical civilian infrastructure.

Independent of any humanitarian notification system, all parties to the armed conflict are obliged under IHL not to direct attacks against civilians and civilian objects, including humanitarian staff, facilities and assets, as well as civilian infrastructure that is indispensable for the survival of the civilian population.<sup>2</sup>

Humanitarian notification is not a prerequisite for protection under IHL. Conversely, the absence of notification or the removal from the notification list of any given object or movement does not change its status as to its protection under IHL.

Under IHL, protection against direct attack or incidental harm depends on the specific circumstances, including how an object is being used and the presence of any military object in its vicinity.<sup>3</sup> The onus always remains on the parties to the conflict to verify targets and take precautions to avoid and minimize civilian harm.<sup>4</sup>

OCHA serves as the conduit between humanitarian organisations and the Evacuation and Humanitarian Operations Committee (EHOC) as the designated focal point of the SLC. OCHA has established and overseen the growth and efficient operation of a system to facilitate this engagement, with clear procedures and roles and responsibilities. In response to increased demand among humanitarian

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<sup>1</sup> *IHL Customary Rule 56*: The parties to the conflict must ensure the freedom of movement of authorized humanitarian relief personnel essential to the exercise of their functions. Only in case of imperative military necessity may their movements be temporarily restricted.

<sup>2</sup> *IHL Customary Rule 31*: Humanitarian relief personnel must be respected and protected. Rule 32. Objects used for humanitarian relief operations must be respected and protected.

<sup>3</sup> *IHL Customary Rule 8*: In so far as objects are concerned, military objectives are limited to those objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose partial or total destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage.

<sup>4</sup> *IHL Customary Rule 15*: In the conduct of military operations, constant care must be taken to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects. All feasible precautions must be taken to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects. *IHL Customary Rule 14*: Launching an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated, is prohibited. *IHL Customary Rule 15*: In the conduct of military operations, constant care must be taken to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects. All feasible precautions must be taken to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects. *IHL Customary Rule 16*: Each party to the conflict must do everything feasible to verify that targets are military objectives.

organizations, UNOCHA launched an online platform in January 2019 to assist humanitarian partners in submitting notifications.

**The notification mechanism does not constitute a legally binding agreement between any of the involved parties. It does not guarantee the safety of humanitarian premises, personnel, equipment and activities.**

### *Scope*

The scope of the notification mechanism is limited to:

- Notification of overland humanitarian movements;
- Notification of venues used for the implementation of humanitarian activities, humanitarian premises, personnel and equipment;
- Permanent notification of humanitarian premises, also known as the “Permanent Notified Sites List” (e.g. offices, warehouses, and guest houses.);
- Sea and air movements of humanitarian personnel and cargo.

The notification mechanism does not constitute a legally binding agreement between any of the involved parties. It does not guarantee the safety of humanitarian premises, personnel, equipment and activities.

**This document covers:** Overland movement; Oversea movement; Air movement; Notification of venues; Humanitarian notification for permanent sites (Permanent Notified Sites List); Emergency notifications.

#### **Important note:**

UNOCHA does not verify the data/information provided via the notification mechanisms. All notifications should be submitted to the NLT via the online platform. Notifications submitted outside the platform will not be processed and returned to the organization.

**There is no IHL requirement for a humanitarian organization to obtain the parties’ approval for each individual humanitarian facility, activity or movement. Humanitarian notification is not a mechanism for parties to the armed conflict to approve or deny specific humanitarian operations.**

## 2. Notifications

### 2.1 Overland movement

Humanitarian movements may include, inter alia, logistics convoys, transportation of staff, assessment, monitoring or evaluation missions as well as civilian ambulances. Information sent to the Notification Liaison Team (NLT) is treated confidentially and only shared with EHO and OCHA senior management team if required.

#### *Land Movement*

An overland movement is any movement of UN/INGOs/NGOs vehicles and trucks whether staff movement or transport of humanitarian assistance/ goods.

#### *Submission*

1. All notifications should be submitted via the online Notification platform only. Notifications submitted via email will not be accepted.  
<https://decon.ochayemen.org/login>
2. Notifications should be submitted at least 50 hours in advance, except for emergencies.
3. It is the submitting organizations responsibility to provide accurate data and information
4. GPS coordinates need to be provided in the following format: Decimal Degrees Longitude and Latitude.

#### *Amendments*

5. Changes to already submitted and/or acknowledged movements should be submitted through the platform using the Admin/Amendments track 48 hrs in advance and 24 hrs in advance in case of an emergency. The amendment document should reference the submitted Note Verbal (NV) number.
6. Changes to a notification which has not been processed yet, should be communicated to the NLT to allow the user to edit the notification by email.
7. Any Notification request with incomplete information including inaccurate GPS coordinates will be sent back to the user for amendments.
8. Amendments submitted to EHO and/or acknowledged overland movements should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification referencing the NV number and mentioning the changes (routes, manifest, aircraft type, call sign and dates).
9. Cancellation of submitted and/or acknowledged overland movements should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification, referencing the Note Verbal number and mentioning the reason of cancellation.

#### *Requirements*

10. All vehicles should be clearly identified with pictures of the vehicle, plate number and roof-marking.
11. Official letters need to be submitted in both English and Arabic.
12. Detailed route for the movement, including accurate GPS of the movement's start point, end point and way points every 20 Km along the route.
13. Upload details of cargo (type, weight or any other details).

14. EHOc requires NGOs and INGOs, which are using the Notification mechanism for the first time to submit an organization summary in (English and Arabic) to be submitted two weeks in advance of their first notification. The submission needs to include a copy of the Who, Does, What, Where (3W). The summary should include the mission, vision, objectives and areas of operation in Yemen of the organization.  
→ Please contact the OCHA NLT prior to the submission.
15. The Saudi MoFA requires the form to be filled in Arabic when submitting the notification.
16. In urgent cases and in case the requesting organisation is not able to submit a request online, the formats and templates for Notification requests can be found at:  
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/yemen/deconfliction> - offline notifications will only be processed in emergency situations. Please contact the NLT team for more information.

## 2.2 Clearance of oversea movement

An oversea movement is any movement of UN/INGOs/NGOs ships and vessels whether it is movement of staff or humanitarian assistance/cargo, as well as empty ships or vessels.

### Submission

1. All requests should be submitted via the online platform only. Requests submitted via email will not be accepted. <https://decon.ochayemen.org/login>
2. Requests should be submitted at least 50 hours in advance.
3. It is the submitting organizations responsibility to provide accurate data.

### Amendments

4. Changes to already submitted and/or acknowledged movements should be submitted through the platform using the Admin/Amendments track 48 hrs in advance and 24 hrs in advance in case of an emergency. The amendment document should reference the submitted NV number.
5. Changes to a notification that has not yet been processed should be communicated to the NLT to allow the user to edit the notification by email.
6. Amendments submitted to EHOc and/or acknowledged oversea movements should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification, referencing the NV number and indicating the changes (routes, manifest, aircraft type, call sign and dates).
7. Cancellation of submitted to EHOc and/or acknowledged oversea movements should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification referencing the NV number and indicating the reason of cancellation.

### Requirements

8. Complete vessel trip itinerary must be added to the Saudi MoFA form.
9. Upload full details of cargo: requirements that are listed on the platform:
  - Pax manifest
  - Crew list
  - Pax passports
  - Crew passports

- Cargo details
  - Last 10 ports call
  - Copies of Visas
10. Personnel: upload passenger list, including copies of passports and IDs. Information is to be uploaded in one document.
  11. Submission of visa copies is required for ports in IRG and de facto controlled areas.
  12. Visa copies of the crew are not required.

### 2.3 Humanitarian air movement

Air movements including humanitarian personnel or cargo.

#### Submission

1. All requests should be submitted via the online platform only. Requests submitted via email will not be accepted. <https://decon.ochayemen.org/login>
2. Requests should be submitted at least 50 hours in advance.
3. Requests for flights to Aden airport should be submitted 72 hours in advance.
4. It is the submitting organizations responsibility to provide accurate data.

#### Amendments

5. Cancellation of submitted and/or acknowledged air movements should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification referencing the NV number as well as providing a justification for the cancellation.
6. Amendments to already submitted and/or acknowledged air movements should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification referencing the NV number and mentioning the changes (routes, manifest, aircraft type, call sign and dates).
7. Window Time Extension of acknowledged air movements should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification referencing the NV number as well as providing a justification for the extension and the number of hours requested.
8. Passenger additions for already submitted and/or acknowledged air movements should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification referencing the NV number as well as providing a justification for the extension and the number of hours requested.

#### Requirements

9. Upload the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) form (available on the OCHA NLT webpage <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/node/149591>) indicating the flight route; include the aircraft details, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) route and the Air Traffic Control (ATC) route with the estimated departure and arrival times.
10. EHOc will consider the suggested window time (WT). An alternative WT will be provided by EHOc if the suggested WT is not feasible.
11. Upload full details of cargo:
  - a. Packing list;
  - b. Items;
  - c. Weight;
  - d. Cost;
  - e. Passengers list;

- f. Passports;
- g. Visa/Residency copies where applicable. Please note that all passports and visas must be submitted in one document. **Annex A Documents Air movement which can also be found online:** <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/yemen/deconfliction>

## 2.4 Notification of temporary venues

Any venue that is an anticipated location of UN or I/NGOs staff and/or beneficiaries' presence, activities.

### Submission

1. All notifications should be submitted via the online platform. Notifications submitted via email will not be accepted. <https://decon.ochayemen.org/login>
2. Notifications should be submitted at least 50 hours in advance.
3. It is the submitting organizations responsibility to provide accurate data.

### Amendments

4. Cancellation of already submitted to EHOC and/or acknowledged venue notification should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification, referencing the NV number and mentioning the reason of cancellation.
5. Amendments submitted to EHOC and/or acknowledged venue notification should be submitted through the platform as an "Admin" notification referencing the NV number and indicating the changes (routes, manifest, aircraft type, call sign and dates).

### Requirements

6. Provide details of the venue, location, purpose, humanitarian activity.
7. Specify the date and time of the humanitarian activity.
8. Pin/upload accurate GPS of the venue(s) using the correct coordinate format, GPS of the venue should be provided as a polygon.
9. Upload an excel sheet of all the sites to be deconflicted.
10. When submitting a large number of venues, please submit to OCHA NLT at least 72 hours in advance.

## 2.5 Humanitarian notification for permanent sites

The Permanent Notified Sites List (PNS) is an index of permanently deconflicted humanitarian sites in Yemen managed by OCHA and acknowledged by EHOC. Civilian infrastructure and objects can be added to the PNS upon submission to the NLT.

### Please note:

- The protection owed to any given civilian object does not depend on its inclusion in a notification mechanism.
- Parties to armed conflict have the obligation under IHL to respect civilian objects and take steps to spare them from incidental harm, independently of any notification mechanism.

→ For further advise, please contact NLT.

#### Requirements:

1. Regular Permanent Notified Sites notifications should be submitted through the platform. It remains the responsibility of the submitting humanitarian organisation to ensure the accuracy and the civilian nature of any data/information prior to submission to OCHA.
2. Please provide the following static location details GPS Coordinates in Degrees/Minutes/Seconds (DMS) vs Decimal Degrees (DD) formats, venue name “English/Arabic”, location, purpose, name of focal point as per the PNS Form.
3. A revised regular Permanent Notified Sites List is shared with EHOC once every 2 weeks, while clean-up exercises take place approximately every 6 months.
4. To add a new site/s, partners must visit the web page below, download the Permanent Notified Sites List excel list and fill in the required details. Subsequently the document needs to be uploaded using the PNS track on the platform.  
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/yemen/deconfliction>, (see annex B)
5. To remove a site that is no longer used for humanitarian purposes, partners should submit a “ PNS Removal” notification through the platform, by choosing permanent notified site – removal from the PNS track and uploading the PNS excel sheet with sites to be removed highlighted in red.
6. Notifications for additions to the PNS should be separate from notifications for removals.
7. Every second Wednesday, the NLT compiles all the new sites submitted by partners and updates the master PNS.
8. Submission to EHOC will then take place on Thursdays or Fridays every two weeks. Once acknowledged by EHOC, NLT will update the status of the notifications and upload the response via the platform.
9. Once or twice a year an overall clean-up of the permanent sites will be conducted.

#### 2.6 Emergency notifications

1. In emergency cases a notification should be submitted at least **26** hours in advance.
2. Emergency cases include but are not limited to accidents, life threatening injuries or illness, medical evacuation, critical life-saving missions.
3. Partners should submit emergency notification requests via the platform and provide a clear justification for the urgency of the request.
4. A duty officer is available 24/7 to receive emergency submissions via the platform. In addition to the submission the partner will need to also call NLT members to ensure the recipient of the emergency request.
5. Clear justification of the emergency should be added in Arabic in the MoFA form.
6. Exception agreed on emergency notifications for specific locations/circumstances.

### 3. Confidentiality and Liability

- All information sent to the Notification Liaison Team (NLT) is treated with confidentiality.
- The notification mechanism does not constitute a legally binding agreement between any of the involved parties. It does not guarantee the safety of humanitarian premises, personnel, equipment and activities.

### 4. Contact information and working hours

**OCHA NLT** serves as the primary focal point for organizations present in Yemen to provide guidance to partners:

- Jochen Riegg: Head of Field Coordination, Access and Notification Unit ([riegg@un.org](mailto:riegg@un.org)). Tel: +967712222852.
- Karl Yanagisawa: Humanitarian Affairs Officer ([Yanagisawa@un.org](mailto:Yanagisawa@un.org)). Tel: +967712222890

**OCHA NLT Riyadh** serves as a liaison with EHOC and processes humanitarian notification submissions:

Inquiries about the platform or pending notifications can be directed to the NLT:

- Amani Abdul Ghani: Associate Humanitarian Affairs Officer ([abdulghani@un.org](mailto:abdulghani@un.org)) Tel: +966 556 292 466
- Aya Hijazi: Programme Associate ([hijazia@un.org](mailto:hijazia@un.org)) Tel: +966 556 297 716

#### **NLT Working Hours:**

- The NLT official working hours are Sunday to Thursday from (09:00 to 17:00) KSA
- Friday and Saturday working hours (09:00 to 13:00) KSA.
- The NLT needs a minimum of one hour to process notifications before submission to EHOC.

#### **Duty Officer:**

A Duty Officer will be assigned to support after working hours, including to follow-up about pending notifications and assist with emergency cases.