



# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR NGOS

**AT**  
**CND**

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)**

at the UN Commission for Narcotic Drugs (CND)

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## Introduction

Civil society engagement at the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and related meetings has improved dramatically over the past decade – including in terms of the numbers attending, the opportunities to interact and participate, and the levels of experience and professionalism of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) themselves.

However, the heightened presence of civil society brings greater scrutiny and expectations of our conduct, and a continuing need to justify and demonstrate the role that NGOs can and should play in the response to the world drug situation.

This document has been designed to support the effective and productive engagement of NGOs at the CND and other related meetings. It is intended to provide guidance, rather than attempt to censor NGO representatives.

## Security Rules for the Vienna International Centre (VIC)

The full 'Rules regarding Security at the VIC' are attached as Annex 1 to this document, and must be adhered to by all participants at the CND, including those from civil society. The Rules are only available on the UN intranet, hence their reproduction here for the benefit of NGOs.

The Rules place full authority into the hands of the VIC Security Service, including the ability to detain, search or expel individuals, and to seize property. The Rules also leave it to the VIC Security Service to determine what represents a "disturbance" or "disorderly conduct". However, it is widely accepted that protests, demonstrations, displays or 'flash mobs' are not permitted within the VIC, unless specific and detailed clearance and authorisation have been explicitly secured in writing by the Security Service themselves. In the past, the definition of 'protest' has also extended to group photos with banners and political messages on display – so extreme caution is advised, and authorisation should be sought for any such plans during the CND and related meetings.

Crucially, the Rules also outline some of the responsibilities of individual participants themselves, including the need to display a valid access badge at all times, informing the Security Service of any risks or emergencies, and cooperating fully with the Security Service when requested to do so.

## Principles for effective NGO conduct

### Respect

NGOs that engage at the Commission come from a broad range of viewpoints, beliefs and perspectives. The VNGOC considers this to be a strength of our sector, and something to embrace alongside the aspects that unite us. But it also presents challenges. The Commission is an opportunity to liaise with others, discuss views in a professional manner, and learn about the work that others are doing. Disrespectful behaviour between NGOs only serves to undermine civil society engagement and credibility at large. The examples below are illustrative rather than exhaustive, and the intention is not to stifle debates but to ensure that discussions remain courteous and effective:

#### Please Do ...

- ✓ Attend other NGOs' side events, and invite other NGOs to attend yours.
- ✓ Listen to other NGOs' statements and positions, including in the CND Plenary.
- ✓ Treat everyone with respect and courtesy throughout the Commission meeting – even if their views run counter to your own.

#### Please Do Not ...

- ✗ Attempt to undermine, overload or derail another NGOs' side event. If you have serious concerns about the content of any side event, please liaise with the VNGOC.
- ✗ Make background noises or other actions designed to distract or undermine the speaker.
- ✗ Engage in verbal or physical confrontations, or use abusive language, during the CND meetings.

### Professionalism

CND is the workplace for the diplomats serving their governments during negotiations, and NGOs – as observers to the meeting – must respect their work and recognise that negotiations require compromises and diplomacy, especially as the CND operates on a consensus-based decision-making model. Positions taken by government delegations may be dictated by authorities in the capital or may reflect broader geopolitical concerns and contexts beyond the drug policy debates. NGOs have a great deal to offer to the discussions in

Vienna, but must remain polite and professional in all interactions with all governments. The same applies for all UN representatives, security staff and other officials. Please also make it clear in all interactions that you are representing an NGO: only saying that you are from a certain country may be misconstrued as meaning that you are part of that government's delegation.

### Carefully consider whether to 'name and shame'

NGOs help to bridge the gap between international and national debates, and this often entails discussing the challenges and realities from the ground and critiquing policies at the local level. This is entirely appropriate, and part of the unique added value that civil society brings.

However, it is always important to be diplomatic in the messages that we deliver at a multilateral setting such as the CND. Many government delegations reflect negatively on interventions which 'name and shame' themselves, other governments or agencies, or which are off-topic for the CND. For the NGO in question, this can often mean that their intervention is less impactful than if the same message had been delivered in a more nuanced or measured way. If you are in doubt, the VNGOC is happy to support and review any civil society interventions.

#### Please Do ...

- ✓ Use diplomatic devices in statements, such as referring to "some countries in my region" or "selected countries".
- ✓ Cite established, credible and peer-reviewed data and research in your interventions.

#### Please Do Not ...

- ✗ Make defamatory statements about a specific country or agency.
- ✗ Make unsubstantiated claims, cite data that is not peer-reviewed or has been discredited, or cite data out of context.

Please note that **"Member States cannot be made the thematic focus of an event without their engagement"**, according to the side event guidelines issued by the Secretariat to the Governing Bodies.<sup>7</sup>

### Disseminating Materials

Every year, the VNGOC seeks the largest exhibition tables possible for NGOs to display their materials, reports and flyers in a neutral space. Nonetheless, the available room for documents and materials is always limited. With around 100 NGOs attending the CND every year, you are asked to be mindful of the space available and the high demand for this space. Please be selective and pragmatic when deciding which publications to bring, and how many copies – especially for bulkier documents. Please do not rely on the NGO spaces (such as the 'NGO Lounge') for storage of your materials, as these spaces are always limited and have to be available to everyone.

#### Please Do ...

- ✓ Bring a reasonable amount of publications, and use any space on the NGO tables provided.
- ✓ Read other NGOs' materials, and share your own.
- ✓ Ensure that any claims and statements being made about drug policies, especially those at the local level, are backed by reputable and credible evidence.
- ✓ Carefully consider the impact, strategic pros and cons, and potential ramifications of bringing materials which explicitly single out individual governments, agencies or UN entities for criticism.

#### Please Do Not ...

- ✗ Move or remove other NGO materials from the communal spaces within the CND, or fill up the NGO Lounge with boxes of reports.
- ✗ Disseminate your materials at another NGO's side event without their prior approval.
- ✗ Disseminate materials which include unsubstantiated claims or derogatory references to other NGOs.
- ✗ Disseminate materials which include unsubstantiated claims about governments, agencies or UN entities.

If you have serious concerns about the content of any materials, please liaise with the VNGOC. Please also note that all materials should be picked up before the end of the meeting – any documents left on exhibition tables and in the NGO spaces will be recycled.

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND\\_CCPCJ\\_joint/Side\\_Events/2019/Guidelines\\_Side\\_Events\\_2019.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND_CCPCJ_joint/Side_Events/2019/Guidelines_Side_Events_2019.pdf)

## **Finally – use your VNGOC!**

The purpose of the Vienna NGO Committee is to support your participation, and as such we want to help resolve any problems that arise during the CND or related meetings. As such, we encourage all NGOs – whether members of the VNGOC or not – to maintain open communication with the VNGOC, and to ask for advice or information whenever needed. The VNGOC can help to work with UNODC and government delegations to resolve any difficulties that arise. We can be reached at [info@vngoc.org](mailto:info@vngoc.org), or you can speak to any of the elected [VNGOC Officers](#).

**Thank you for your consideration of the guidance and principles above, and the VNGOC looks forward to seeing you all in Vienna.**

## **Annex 1: Rules regarding Security at the VIC**

The Rules below have been copied in full on 18th March 2019, from [https://www.unodc.org/intranet\\_sss/en/faq/additional-rules-regarding-security.html](https://www.unodc.org/intranet_sss/en/faq/additional-rules-regarding-security.html)

Under the respective Headquarters Agreements of the International Organizations (the "Organizations") located at the VIC, their premises at the Centre area recognised as extraterritorial by the Government of Austria and are under the control and authority of the Organizations. Although Austrian laws, and in particular fire protection and security regulations, apply generally within the VIC, except as otherwise provided in the Headquarters Agreements, Austrian officials or persons exercising public authority in Austria are precluded from entering the Centre, except with the consent of the Executive Head of the Organization concerned. Consequently, the maintenance of security within the VIC, including the maintenance of public order, the protection of life and property, the control of access and the provision of fire protection services, is the responsibility of the Organizations, though they may call on the appropriate Austrian authorities for assistance and shall cooperate with these authorities in carrying out security functions.

The present Security Rules, which are hereby promulgated by the Executive Heads of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), are designed to assist the Organizations in carrying out their responsibilities for the security of the VIC.

### **Article I: Authority**

#### **Rule 1.01**

The Responsibility for managing and operating the security and safety services within the VIC is assigned to the United Nations. (Paragraph 6(a) of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning the allocation of Common Services at the Donaupark Centre in Vienna, concluded on 31 March 1977 between Executive Heads of the United Nations, IAEA and UNIDO).

#### **Rule 1.02**

The United Nations discharges this responsibility through the Security and Safety Section for the VIC (the "Security Service") under the

supervision of the Director General of UNOV.

### **Rule 1.03**

The Chief of the Security Service reports to the Director-General of UNOV and, when circumstances so warrant, also directly to the Executive Heads of the other Organizations. All references to the Chief shall be understood as also including the officer of the Security Service in charge at the VIC in the absence of the Chief.

### **Rule 1.04**

The Chief of the Security Service is hereby authorised to issue, with the approval of the Director-General of UNOV, orders and instructions and to take security measures that may be required by and be appropriate for particular circumstances.

### **Rule 1.05**

The Executive Head of each Organization is empowered to request the appropriate Austrian authorities to provide police assistance for the preservation of law and order within the respective headquarters seat; within the common area this power is delegated to the Director-General of UNOV, but may also be exercised, if necessary, by any other Executive Head concerned. Under normal circumstances this power is to be exercised exclusively by each Executive Head himself or, in his absence, by the official acting for him. In the event of extreme urgency or the non-availability of both the Executive Head concerned and the official acting for him, the Chief of the Security Service is authorised to invite the Austrian police into the headquarters area concerned; in such case, the Chief of the Security Service shall inform the Executive Head concerned as soon as possible of the action he has taken and the reasons therefore. In all cases, the request to the Austrian police shall be made through the Chief of the Security Service.

### **Rule 1.06**

The provisions of Rule 1.05 shall also apply to Austrian fire, medical or other officials who may be needed to assist within the VIC.

### **Rule 1.07**

The Executive Head of any of the Organizations may designate areas within the VIC as especially sensitive and arrange for the Security Service to apply special control procedures within or to limit access to such areas. In respect of any common area, such arrangements shall be taken in consultation with the Executive Heads of the other Organizations.

### **Rule 1.08**

The Executive Head of each Organization may, except as otherwise specified herein, delegate any of his functions under these Rules to any official(s) of his Organization. The Executive Heads of the Organizations and the Chief of the Security Service should be informed of any standing delegations.

## **Article II: Responsibilities of Persons Within the VIC**

### **Rule 2.01**

Officials of the Organizations, as well as all other persons within the VIC, are required to comply with these Rules and with any security orders and instructions issued pursuant to Rule 1.04. They are similarly required to obey the orders of security officers, in particular in the circumstances referred to in the present Article.

### **Rule 2.02**

The Security Service is responsible for controlling access to the VIC and for this purpose shall issue an appropriate VIC access card to every person entitled to enter the VIC. Security officers shall refuse to admit persons without such an access card and shall ensure that persons admitted with an restricted access card comply with the indicated restrictions. Persons at the entries to and within the VIC shall display their VIC access card to security officers when requested to do so.

### **Rule 2.03**

The Security Service is responsible for the admission of all vehicles to the VIC in accordance with established rules and regulations (it should be noted that Austrian traffic laws and regulations apply within the VIC) and for controlling the traffic and parking of such vehicles within the VIC.

### **Rule 2.04**

The Security Service is responsible for taking appropriate action in respect of actual and threatened emergencies within the VIC, such as fires, accidents, illnesses, crimes or disturbances. Persons within the VIC who are aware of such an occurrence or threat shall immediately inform the Security Service (if the emergency involves any injury or illness, the Medical Service should also be informed) by the most appropriate means available and shall cooperate fully with all security officers.

### **Rule 2.05**

The Security Service shall investigate occurrences within the VIC, such as those referred to in Rule 2.04 and any others that might result in legal

proceedings. A report on any such investigation shall be presented to the Executive Head(s) of the Organization(s) concerned. The transmission of such a report to any other person or to any Austrian authority shall require the approval of the Executive Head of any Organization concerned, who shall first consult with the Executive Head of any other such Organization.

#### **Rule 2.06**

Persons within the VIC who observe or have any information concerning any occurrence within the jurisdiction of the Security Service shall cooperate with the Service in appropriately recording or otherwise preserving such information. In particular, if requested by a security officer, they shall remain at the scene of the occurrence or identify themselves before they leave.

#### **Rule 2.07**

Security officers are authorised to detain (For the purpose of these Rules "detain" means: (a) To restrain a person by the use or threat of force from taking a given action; or (b) To keep a person in temporary custody for investigations, for transfer to the custody of another authority or for expulsion from the VIC.) a person who injures or threatens to injure any person or property, private or public, who disturbs public order or who has entered the VIC without authorisation. Transfer of custody to another authority or expulsion from the VIC shall require the express authorisation of the Director-General of UNOV, who shall, in respect of a staff member or any other person within the VIC under the auspices of another Organization, secure the consent of its Executive Head.

#### **Rule 2.08**

Security officers are authorized to search persons and to seize personal property if they have reason to believe that any person is carrying an unauthorised weapon, explosives or other dangerous substances, narcotics or stolen goods. (This rule does not preclude the use of metal detectors).

#### **Rule 2.09**

Security officers shall call the attention of persons concerned to any conditions that violate applicable safety rules or that are otherwise unsafe. Persons so reminded shall take appropriate measures to remedy the condition.

#### **Rule 2.10**

Persons finding any apparently lost or misplaced personal property within the VIC shall turn it over to the Security Service, if possible by

bringing it to the Security Duty Room, and in any event shall report to the Service all available details about the find.

#### **Rule 2.11**

Security officers shall report instances of disorderly conduct within the VIC to the Chief of the Security Service. In serious cases, and in the case of repetition, the Security Service shall present a report on the matter to the Executive Head of the Organization concerned.

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