

UNITED NATIONS
Mission in Liberia




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**Conduct and Discipline Unit
(UNMIL)**

Date: 25 April 2006

INFORMATION CIRCULAR NO. 2006/076

To: ALL UNMIL PERSONNEL

From: Ronnie Stokes 
Director of Administration

Subject: United Nations Code of Conduct

Please find attached Information Circular on the above subject for your attention. Kindly ensure circulation to all UN Personnel.

Thanks.



**LETTER TO ALL UNITED NATIONS STAFF IN LIBERIA,
CIVILIAN INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL STAFF, UN
POLICE AND MILITARY PERSONNEL**

UNITED NATIONS CODE OF CONDUCT

24 April 2006

Dear Colleagues,

As you are all aware, since my arrival as Special Representative of the Secretary General in Liberia, I have placed particular emphasis on the need for all of us to carry out our duty of care and responsibility in a manner that is above reproach. This requires that we conduct ourselves in an exemplary way, that we respect every aspect of the United Nations Code of Conduct and that we interact with our hosts with mutual respect and dignity. As the people of Liberia move forward in consolidating their hard-won peace, it is important for us to remember that we are here to support this process and not to detract from it. We have an exceptional mission to perform and this requires that we demonstrate impeccable standards and dedication.

I am pleased to note that this dedication is widely shared. I would like to believe that our devotion to duty and responsibility to care are sentiments which characterize our mission. Although the vast majority of UNMIL personnel respect these principles there are lapses and failures **in respecting** the rules and regulations of our Organization, and indeed, of the Host Country.

The standards of conduct expected from all categories of United Nations personnel are contained in our official Code of Conduct (see attached). I recommend that you all read it carefully and display it in a prominent position in your office or place of work. Heads of Agency and UNMIL Civilian Section Chiefs are requested to discuss this Code of Conduct during their staff meetings. Managers will be held accountable for ensuring that national and international staff members are aware of their responsibilities. Military and Police commanders are asked to disseminate the Code of Conduct through their regular channels and ensure that all men and women of the military and Police are fully briefed on its content. Commanders will be held personally accountable for breaches of the Code by their contingent or unit members.

Regrettably, despite firm instructions to the contrary, I continue to receive reports of staff members who persistently indulge in unacceptable and potentially illegal behaviour. As a result, I shall be issuing strict new measures identifying clear sanctions for serious misconduct. For example, any infringement of local laws in respect of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, involvement in prohibited behaviour including relations with prostitutes or minors and violating UNMIL curfew rules are actions which are liable to sanction including, as appropriate, dismissal from the UN.

Stricter policing by security officers and military police will be evident including through the stopping of UN vehicles by Military Police and security personnel, requirement to display ID cards, the conduct of breathalyzer tests and checks on the identity of passengers. The movement and use of UN vehicles will be subject to electronic control. Certain establishments will be placed out of bounds, and curfews, whether military or civilian, will be strictly enforced.

I fully expect that we will retain access to places of entertainment and relaxation by civilian staff and military personnel outside working hours. We work hard and need to relax but such relaxation must conform to the high expectations of us as emissaries of the United Nations who carry the blue flag wherever we go. Let us all join together to ensure that all who serve in the United Nations in Liberia leave behind a legacy of friendship, support and respect.

I count on the cooperation of all of you, international and national civilian staff members and men and women of the military and police in helping me to ensure that we live up to the standards expected of us.



Alan Doss
Special Representative of the Secretary General
and Co-ordinator of United Nations Operations in Liberia

United Nations in Liberia



Code of Conduct

ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

All United Nations civilians, UN Police and Military personnel must uphold the highest standards of professional and personal conduct. At all times UNMIL staff and contractual workers must treat the local population with respect and dignity. Our mandate includes the protection of civilians, in particular, women and children.

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are acts of unacceptable behavior and prohibited conduct for all UN staff. SEA damages the image and integrity of the United Nations in Liberia and erodes confidence and trust in the organization.

It is strictly prohibited for all UNMIL personnel to engage in:

➤ Any act of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, or other form of sexually humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior;
➤ Any type of sexual activities with children (persons under the age of 18 years); Mistaken belief in the age of a person is not a defence;
➤ Use of children or adults to procure sexual services for others; exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex with prostitutes or others;
➤ Any sexual favour in exchange of assistance provided to the beneficiaries of such assistance, such as food or other items provided to refugees;
➤ Visits to brothels or places which are declared off-limits.

All UNMIL staff must contribute to an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse. Managers and commanders have a particular responsibility to ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct. UNMIL personnel are obligated to report any concerns regarding sexual exploitation and abuse by fellow workers through the established reporting mechanisms.

Any violation of the Code of Conduct will be considered as a serious misconduct. SEA activities will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary measures, including suspension, immediate repatriation or summary dismissal. Immunity, when it exists, will be waived by the Secretary General should this immunity impede the course of justice.

- 1. Sexual Exploitation: means any actual or attempted abuse of a position vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially or politically. Sexual abuse means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal coercive conditions.*
- 2. This does not apply to UNMIL staff involved in bon fide relationship in respect of Liberian national law and custom.*
- 3. Consensual sexual relationships between UN staff and beneficiaries of assistance are strongly discouraged as they are based on an inherently unequal power balance.*



United Nations Mission in Liberia

UNMIL

Code of Conduct

Information on conduct in the Republic of Liberia regarding the prohibition of sexual abuse and/or exploitation by all members of the Civilian and Military components of UNMIL

1. All UN personnel serving in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) must respect and abide by the established rules and regulations of the Organization, including the UN Charter, Staff Rules and Regulations, Ten Rules (Code of Conduct for Blue Helmets), Status, Basic Rights and Duties of UN members and their basic duties and obligations as set forth, *inter alia*, in Administrative Circular no. 2001/15.

The purpose of this circular is to provide guidance for the particular conditions and sensitivities in UNMIL's area of operations, and to remind all UNMIL personnel of their obligations as UN personnel to act with the highest standards of integrity and conduct, both in the performance of their official duties and their private lives. In particular, all UNMIL personnel must be sensitive to local customs, traditions, and cultures and demonstrate respect for the local population and communities, in particular vulnerable groups such as children. Consequently, any act of sexual abuse and/or exploitation by members of the Civilian and Military components of UNMIL is strictly prohibited and constitutes an act of serious misconduct.

2. For the purpose of this memorandum, an act of sexual abuse and/or exploitation is defined as follows:

a) Any exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. The public solicitation of any such act shall be considered as an aggravating circumstance.

b) Any sexual activity with a person under the age of 18. The mistaken belief in the age of the person cannot be considered as a defence. This provision shall not apply to national staff of UNMIL involved in a bona fide relationship in respect of Liberian national law and customs; and/or

c) Any other sexual misconduct that has a detrimental effect on the image, credibility, impartiality or integrity of the United Nations.

3. The presence of UNMIL personnel in bars, nightclubs or other places where services of prostitutes are available or acts of sexual abuse and/or exploitation take place as the sole activity is prohibited. In Monrovia, on the recommendation of the Chief of Security, the Director of Administration in consultation with the Force Commander shall designate, if needed, such establishments as out of bounds. For locations outside Monrovia, on the recommendation of the local security supervisor, the Head of Office in consultation with the Sector or Contingent Commander shall designate, if needed, such establishments as out of bounds.

4. Any violation of the provisions of this memorandum may lead to disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal and repatriation if applicable, following the standard applicable administrative procedures of the United Nations.

5. All members of the civilian and military components of UNMIL are reminded that the Secretary General has the right and duty to waive the immunity- if it exists- which is provided under the relevant convention, and the host country agreement, in those cases where this immunity would impede the course of justice.

United Nations in Liberia



CODE OF CONDUCT

ALL UNMIL UN STAFF, AGENCIES, (INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL, CIVILIAN, UN POLICE & MILITARY)

Immunity

1. Privileges and immunities accorded to UN staff pertain only to the discharge of their official duties. Functional immunity does not exempt UN personnel from prosecution for criminal offences, violations of host country laws or any other acts of misconduct which may be contrary to the spirit of the UN Charter and/or the mandate of the Mission.

Behavioural Standards

2. Treat everyone with respect, courtesy and consideration. Be sensitive to the local culture, traditions and religions, observing strict gender-sensitive behaviour.
3. Conduct yourself in a professional and disciplined manner. Exercise the highest standard of integrity. Dress, think, talk and behave in a dignified manner befitting a mature, respectable and honourable peacekeeper.
4. Implement the mandate of the Mission to the best of your ability and dedicate yourself to the overall goals of the United Nations.
5. Be courteous to all members of the Mission and always be mindful of the multicultural nature of UN personnel, including the diversity of backgrounds, origin and/or rank.
6. Act with impartiality. Do not engage in activities that are incompatible with your duties, including giving public statements that may adversely reflect on your status as peacekeepers and public pronouncements which may compromise your impartiality.
7. Acceptance of any honour, decoration, favours, gift or remuneration from any government or non-governmental sources for activities carried out during the course of your official functions requires the prior approval of the Secretary-General. Do not use your office or knowledge gained from your official functions for private gain, financial or otherwise, or for the gain of any third party, including family, friends and those they favour.
8. Exercise utmost discretion in handling confidential information and all matters of official business that could put lives in danger. Do not communicate to any government, entity, person or any other source any information known to you by reason of your official position that has not been made public, except as appropriate in the normal course of your duties or as authorised by the Head of Mission.

Sexual Misconduct

9. The Head of Mission demands adherence by all mission staff to the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy toward sexual exploitation and abuse.
10. Any form of prostitution, the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is strictly prohibited.
11. Sexual activity with persons under the age of 18 is prohibited under UN rules and under Liberian law. Mistaken belief in the age of the person is no defence.
12. Any other act of sexual misconduct that has a detrimental effect on the image, credibility, impartiality or integrity of the United Nations is forbidden.

Alcohol and Drugs

13. Refrain from excessive consumption of alcohol. Driving while intoxicated is forbidden.
14. Drug consumption or trafficking is strictly prohibited. Such behaviour constitutes a criminal offence under the Liberian Penal Code, and may lead to the lifting of immunity and local prosecution in addition to internal disciplinary measures.

Mission Assets

15. Exercise responsible stewardship and be accountable for all the Mission assets under your charge, including money, vehicles, property and equipment. Misuse of mission computers by creating, downloading, storing and/or circulating pornographic or other offensive material is strictly prohibited.
16. At all times, take maximum precautions and exercise cautious defensive driving when operating UN vehicles. Use of seat belts is mandatory. In case of any vehicle related incident, no matter how minor, you must inform Mission Security immediately. Violations of existing regulations can put lives at risk and therefore will be met with severe sanctions.

Curfew

17. Respect the curfew. Curfew violators will be severely sanctioned. It should be noted that violation of the UNMIL curfew is a serious misconduct.
18. During curfew hours all UN vehicles must be parked either at UN premises or in your residence. In case of an emergency notify Security immediately.

Staff Regulations and Rules

19. Further details on the code of conduct expected by a UN peacekeeper, be s/he civilian, military or Police, are given in the following documents: Staff Regulations and Rules, Secretary-General's Bulletins (SGBs); Administrative Instructions (ST/AIs); Information Circulars (ST/ICs) and other directives from the Secretary-General and/or his Special Representative, the Force Commander and the CAO in the Mission. While all such directives shall be circulated to all personnel upon arrival and/or upon issuance, it is the staff member's responsibility to remain informed of all such documents as applicable.
20. Staff members are reminded that any breach of the host country's laws, including the bribing of officials, may result in the lifting of immunities and privileges, and may also constitute grounds for dismissal.

The guidelines outlined above are not all inclusive. Staff members are obliged to comply with the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments, as well as the principles of International Humanitarian Law as contained in the Geneva Conventions and the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).