

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

Pakistan Issue Paper # 03

INCLUSION OF PSYCHIATRIST/ EQUIVALENT NURSE IN ALL LEVEL 1, 2 AND 3 HOSPITALS

1. ISSUE PAPER THEME

Other / Crosscutting

2. SUMMARY / BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS HISTORY

Mental health care is a critical yet often overlooked component of medical support in peacekeeping operations. United Nations personnel, as well as local populations in conflict zones, frequently face high levels of psychological distress due to exposure to traumatic events. However, the current medical staffing guidelines in the 2023 Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE) Manual do not explicitly mandate the presence of psychiatrists or equivalent mental health nurses in Level 1, 2, and 3 hospitals, leading to a significant gap in essential mental health services.

With the increasing emphasis on holistic health and well-being, it is imperative to integrate mental health professionals into deployed medical units. The inclusion of mental health personnel aligns with the UN's commitment to ensuring comprehensive healthcare support for all personnel and affected populations. Furthermore, adequate mental health services will enhance operational efficiency by ensuring the psychological well-being of peacekeepers, reducing burnout, and improving overall mission effectiveness.

3. DETAILED PROPOSAL

The Government of Pakistan proposes the inclusion of at least one psychiatrist or an equivalent mental health nurse in all Level 1, 2, and 3 hospitals deployed under UN peacekeeping missions. This initiative will provide necessary psychological support to peacekeeping personnel and local communities, ultimately improving medical outcomes and mission sustainability.

Specific recommendations include:

- **Level 1 Hospitals:** At least one equivalent nurse trained in mental health and psychological first aid as a Mental Health Support Module.
- **Level 2 Hospitals:** One psychiatrist and one equivalent mental health nurse as a Psychiatry Module.
- **Level 3 Hospitals:** One psychiatrist and three clinical psychologists, in addition to the existing medical personnel, as a Psychiatry Module.

References to the 2023 COE Manual:

Chapter 3 (Standards, verification and control of contingent-owned equipment for major equipment and self-sustainment) should be revised to include a provision mandating the deployment of psychiatrists or equivalent mental health personnel.

Annexure C (Principles of verification and performance standards for medical support) should be updated to reflect this requirement in staffing guidelines.

This proposal aligns with UN objectives of improving healthcare access, ensuring mental health resilience, and enhancing operational effectiveness by addressing psychological well-being within peacekeeping missions.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- **Personnel Costs**: Estimated increase in operational costs due to additional medical personnel, which can be covered through existing medical budgets or special funding allocations.
- **Training Costs**: Minimal cost implications if existing medical personnel receive additional training in mental health care.
- **Equipment Costs**: Minor costs related to mental health assessment tools and psychological intervention resources.
- **Long-Term Cost Benefits**: Reduced mental health-related evacuations, improved peacekeeper retention, and enhanced mission effectiveness will lead to cost savings over time.

5. PROPOSED 2026 COE MANUAL TEXT

Amendment to Chapter 3 (Annexure C), p. 81:

“Each Level 1 hospital shall include at least one nurse trained in mental health and psychological first aid. Level 2 hospitals shall include at least one psychiatrist and one equivalent mental health nurse, while Level 3 hospitals shall have one psychiatrist and three clinical psychologists in addition to existing medical staff. These personnel shall be equipped with appropriate mental health assessment tools and intervention resources. This provision aligns with the United Nations’ commitment to holistic health support in peacekeeping operations.”

This revision ensures the integration of mental health services into UN peacekeeping medical support, enhancing the overall resilience and effectiveness of deployed personnel.