



## Fact Sheet: The Protection Against Retaliation Policy

The UN's protection against retaliation policy ensures that the Organization functions in an open, transparent and fair manner and enhances protection for those who report misconduct (any violation of the Organisation's rules and regulations by staff members), wrongdoing (by any person that is harmful to the interests, operation or governance of the United Nations), or cooperate with duly authorized audits or investigations.

The reports and cooperation are considered "protected activities" under the policy.<sup>1</sup> In order to receive protection, any report should be made as soon as possible, in good faith and not later than six years since you became aware of the original misconduct. To be considered a protected activity, a report of misconduct must include information or evidence to support a reasonable belief that misconduct occurred.

**Retaliation means any direct or indirect detrimental action that adversely affects your employment or working conditions, where such action has been recommended, threatened or taken for the purpose of punishing, intimidating or injuring you because you engaged in a protected activity.** You must submit a request for protection to the Ethics Office within six months of becoming aware of the retaliation.

Under the policy, the Ethics Office maintains the confidentiality of all communications received from complainants who request protection. We will not discuss your matter with third parties without receiving your consent first. Seeking protection from the Ethics Office does not preclude you from seeking recourse from other UN offices, when applicable.

Retaliation for activities that are not "protected" under this policy (e.g. requesting management evaluation, testifying before a UN administrative tribunal, seeking the assistance of the Ombudsman, disagreeing with management decisions, etc.) may amount to prohibited conduct or misconduct, if proven, and may be protected or remedied under other policies.

### ETHICS OFFICE ROLE

The Ethics Office's mandate includes:

- Receiving retaliation complaints and conducting preliminary reviews;
- Referring prima facie cases of retaliation to OIOS for investigation;
- Recommending interim protection measures to protect complainants during an investigation;
- Referring complainants to the Ombudsman or other informal conflict resolution resources or heads of department/office for managerial problems, as appropriate; and
- Recommending final, post-investigation corrective measures when a case of retaliation has been established and recommending referrals for disciplinary action, as appropriate.

The Ethics Office does not receive reports of misconduct or wrongdoing; staff members must report to one of the following established internal mechanisms:

- [reporting wrongdoing to Office of Internal Oversight Services \(OIOS\)](#),
- the head of department or office concerned, or
- the focal point appointed to receive reports of sexual exploitation and abuse.

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<sup>1</sup> Under very specific and limited conditions, protection against retaliation may be extended to individuals who report misconduct through external mechanisms.



# United Nations Ethics Office

*Integrity begins with me*

All staff members, interns, UN volunteers and individual contactors or consultants are protected from retaliation under the policy. If you feel you were subjected to retaliation because you reported misconduct or wrongdoing, or cooperated with an audit or investigation, contact the Ethics Office. Complete the Ethics Office's [Protection against Retaliation Form](#).

If the Ethics Office finds that there is no prima facie case of retaliation and you wish to have the matter reviewed further, you must request review from the [Alternate Chair of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations](#) within 30 days of notification.

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## References

- [ST/SGB/2005/22](#), *Ethics Office establishment and terms of reference*
- [ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev. 1](#), *Protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations*
- [ST/AI/2017/1](#), *Unsatisfactory conduct, investigations and the disciplinary process*
- [ST/SGB/2019/8](#), *Addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority*
- UN Ethics Office's [Protection against Retaliation Form](#)

UNITED NATIONS  
ETHICS OFFICE



BUREAU DE LA  
DÉONTOLOGIE DE L'ONU

**YOU ARE  
PROTECTED**

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED  
ABOUT RETALIATION,  
CONTACT US

**VOUS ÊTES  
PROTÉGÉ**

SI VOUS ÊTES PRÉOCCUPÉ AU  
SUJET DES RÉPRÉSAILLES,  
CONTACTEZ - NOUS

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