



OMBUDSMAN AND MEDIATION SERVICES

What is an ombudsman?

In the United Nations, the Ombudsman is an 'organizational ombudsman' whose role is to provide workplace conflict resolution services to United Nations personnel worldwide. An ombudsman, as a neutral person, listens to you, helps you gain perspective and explores options confidentially.

Why an Ombudsman's Office?

The Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services was established in 2002 as the informal component of the system of administration of justice. The United Nations Ombudsman acts in accordance with the principles of independence, neutrality, confidentiality, and informality. For more information about our mandate and principles, please consult our terms of reference [ST/SGB/2016/7].

Who can use the services?

Any current or former employee of the United Nations Secretariat can contact our Office for assistance.

Our Team

Our diverse team of conflict-resolution experts, led by Ms. Shireen Dodson, United Nations Ombudsman, and carrying out functions of ombudsman and mediators, is committed to supporting a harmonious workplace in which United Nations personnel can thrive and serve the Organization's beneficiaries around the globe. We have offices around the globe ready to help you and we can provide services, in person or virtually, in any of the six official languages of the United Nations.

What type of issues can I discuss with an ombudsman?

You can ask for help from us regarding any type of work-related conflict or concern, big or small. The earlier you come to us the better, to prevent the situation from escalating. We can help with almost any work-related concern. Here are some of the most common issues visitors bring to us:

- Interpersonal conflicts, harassment, discrimination, and abuse of authority;
- Job and career;
- Administrative services;
- Wellbeing and health;
- Organizational and leadership;
- Values and standards.

Working with an ombudsman

Our first step is to listen to you to understand your specific workplace-related concerns. During our first conversation(s), we will help you review options. Depending on your preference and your situation, we may then provide individual sessions, including conflict coaching, facilitate difficult conversations or conduct mediations between two or more parties, or tailor group interventions to address specific conflicts. We are here to support you in the next steps you choose to take. Options could include:

- Helping you navigate the system and identify available resources;
- Referring you to a more appropriate office;
- Assessing the advantages and risks of the formal process;
- Exploring various perspectives on the situation, considering the underlying needs and interests of all involved, to identify possible courses of action.

We are here to help you make an informed decision and to support you in your choice. Through it all, you are in the driver's seat: ombudsman and mediators will not tell you what to do. You will make the decision of what to do next according to what would be best for you.



Our Services

- **Conflict coaching:** preparing you for a difficult conversation and exploring new ways of communicating with colleagues to improve current and future professional relationships.
- **Facilitated conversation:** when communications with a colleague become difficult or strained, they usually benefit from the presence of a neutral third-party facilitator; together, with the assistance of the facilitator, you and your colleague will look at ways to reach resolution, gain mutual understanding, and move forward.
- **Mediation:** a structured, collaborative process to manage and help to resolve workplace disputes, concerns, and differences with the assistance of an impartial third party. It is most useful when parties are looking to resolve a specific, identified issue.

Community Civility Communication (C3) Workshops

This interactive, three-hour workshop is being delivered across the Organization by the staff of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman. Acknowledging the fundamental importance of dignity as stated in the Charter of the United Nations, the workshop aims to illustrate a new dynamic of workplace interactions, provide participants with a language to describe this dynamic, shift mindsets towards civility and inspire participants to take concrete actions.

Civility Cafés

The Civility Cafés offer a unique opportunity for United Nations employees at all levels to come together and discuss issues that matter to them. Based on the World Café conversation model, the Civility Cafés allow decentralized, self-directed groupings (duty stations, work teams, offices) to establish an environment where individuals or groups can offer diverse perspectives to explore the topic, listen to one another and leave with a greater sense of understanding and, ideally, with some action steps they can take to improve the quality of civility in their workplace.

Dialogues on Racism

To promote diversity and inclusion and to explore how racism manifests itself within the Organization, our conflict-resolution experts developed a dialogue model that provides a framework using conversation guidelines and carefully considered questions. The goal is to create a safe space for participants to exchange perspectives and experiences relating to racism in the workplace. By sharing their ideas and comments, participants contribute to changing the culture of the United Nations. In addition, the harvest of ideas (without attribution) helps inform the future strategic action plan for the Organization.

CONTACT US

We are ready to help anyone working at the United Nations Secretariat, regardless of employment categories and levels, type of contract, or geographical location, as well as former employees and retirees. Just reach out to us.

You can send a confidential email to unoms@un.org, call **+1-917-367-5731** or contact your regional ombudsman directly.

Remember: no issue is too big or too small. In addition, members of our team visit other duty stations either virtually or in person. Our team of ombudsman and conflict-resolution experts provide confidential services to anyone in any duty station in any of the six official United Nations languages.

For additional information please visit [our page on iSeek](#) and our website at un.org/ombudsman.