



UNDSS Electronic Travel Advisory (eTA) Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTIONS FROM APP USERS

1. Is the eTA mandatory?

No, except in the following cases:

- A Designated Official (DO) can make use of the eTA App mandatory by approving it as a Security Risk Management (SRM) measure
 - This is a process that usually involves deliberation within the Security Management Team and advice from the Security Adviser.
 - In areas where the DO has made use of the eTA an SRM measure, all staff within the relevant SRM Area, must comply with this mandate, just as with any other SRM measure.
- The USG of UNDSS has mandated that staff of the UNDSS Integrated Security Workforce that have UN-provided smartphones must download and activate the eTA location and notification services.

2. Why should I use the eTA App?

- The App provides a lot of helpful security information, including contact information of security staff, premises locations, security advisories and the ability to receive notifications and headcounts from security professionals in your area. [A brief video detailing these benefits is available here:](#)
<http://webtv.un.org/watch/player/6047468156001>.
- On 1 October 2019, the eTA will be the primary security notification system for the United Nations Security Management System. It is critically important that all staff transition to the use of the eTA between 1 July and 30 September 2019.
- It is recommended that all UN System personnel use the eTA App to ensure they receive its benefits, including local emergency contact information, Security Advisories, and the ability to receive security messages and headcount requests from security professionals in their location.

3. Does the eTA App share information on my location with security staff?

Yes, under the following conditions:

- **During headcounts** – when a headcount is activated, icons representing users will be shown on the map along with their contact information and current status (OKAY, NOT



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OKAY, no response). This will enable security personnel to more easily assist persons in need.

- **When the DO approves** the use of either the “GeoLocation” feature or the “Locate & Assist” feature as an SRM measure.
 - This will be after deliberation within the SMT and recommended by the Security Adviser.
 - GeoLocation allows eTA Command Center administrators to see eTA users as visible as icons on a map (see below). UNDSS personnel can click on any icon and see information that is included in user TRIP profiles, which contains:

- Name
- Current Security Clearance status
- Functional Title
- UN System employer
- Contact information



AT ALL OTHER TIMES (most of the time):

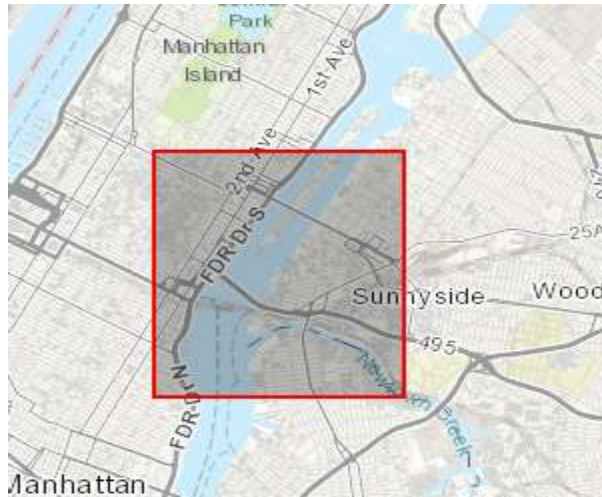
- **User location is not visible nor searchable on the eTA Command Center.** The image below is typical of what security personnel will see when using eTA Command Center; security personnel will only see a map of their Designated Area and will be able to draw areas (the red square) to send notifications or headcount requests, as shown. Any user within the drawn area will receive a notification because the smartphone will recognize that it is within the area.
- Like any other App on a smartphone; the phone “knows” its location, but this information is not provided to UNSMS personnel who are Administrators of the eTA Command Center.¹

TYPICAL VIEW OF eTA COMMAND CENTER (USER LOCATIONS DO NOT APPEAR)

¹ The eTA has two parts, the App (for UN System personnel, called “users”) and the Desk top Command Center (for UNSMS security personnel, called “administrators”). They work as a system to automatically provide users with information relevant to their location, including premises locations, local emergency contact information and current security clearance status. Administrators can also manually push and pull information to/from users in an area. All actions taken by eTA administrators are regulated and recorded as described in this FAQ, the eTA Standard Operating Procedures and the eTA Legal Framework, which are available to any UN System personnel.



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4. What user information does eTA gather and store?

Currently, user data stored by eTA includes:

- **TRIP information:** User contact information, security clearance status and travel document information are pulled by eTA from the TRIP dataset when a user logs-in to eTA.
 - An individual's TRIP information is always available to each App user, but is only pulled for security professionals when a headcount is conducted or the GeoLocation feature is turned on.
- **Responses to headcount:** In the event of a headcount, each user's response is recorded.
- **Users' last known location data:**
 - **This information is only stored in areas where GeoLocation or Locate & Assist is used as an SRM measure, and during headcounts**
 - Location information, when collected as described above, is stored for 96 hours, then deleted

5. How is eTA data protected?

a. From outsiders

eTA is a system developed and maintained by the UN Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) and governed by the Organization's information security standards. The eTA was reviewed and assessed as compliant with the information security standards prior to its launch in September 2018. OICT is responsible for monitoring the security of the System and ensuring sufficient information security measures are in place as the eTA is used and upgraded



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regularly. Information security of all data continues to be compliant with the latest organizational standards.

b. From internal misuse

The eTA will be a global security tool used by personnel of the Integrated Security Workforce in the Secretariat and by authorized users within all of your organizations. To ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the eTA system, access to the Command Center is strictly regulated and all authorized Command Center Administrators acknowledge its purpose, use and restrictions. Text of this acknowledgment is available to any personnel on request.

All actions by eTA Command Center administrators are logged and regularly evaluated. Any misuse is subject to disciplinary action.

Sections 2 and 3 of ST/SGB/2004/15 are applicable to the use of the eTA App and Command Center by UN personnel as part of their obligations as authorized users of ICT resources.

6. Can users refuse to provide their location data by turning off location services on the App?

In areas where use of eTA geolocation is required by the DO/SMT as a Security Risk Management (SRM) measure² to reduce risk to staff members, UN personnel must use eTA on their UN-provided mobile devices.

In areas where eTA is NOT used as an SRM measure, use of the eTA is voluntary but strongly encouraged. All personnel should review their responsibilities for their own security according to the UNSMS Framework of Accountability, which is the UNSMS policy that outlines staff obligations security. The role of each UN System personnel is described as follows:

“Personnel employed by the organizations of the United Nations system are accountable to their respective organizations. All such personnel, regardless of their rank or level, have the responsibility to abide by security policies, guidelines, directives, plans and procedures of the UNSMS and its organizations.” (UNSMS Security Policy Manual, Chapter II, Section A).

² SRM measures are put in place by the DO/SMT to reduce risk to staff in an area. They are based on extant threats and are identified by the UNSMS Security Risk Management process.



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7. Privacy laws vary by country; for instance, in Europe more stringent disclaimers are required about the type of data collected by geo-aware systems. Will this affect the App in different countries?

No. Use of eTA is an internal issue subject to UN regulations and not subject to national regulations.

8. Can data collected by the App be used for disciplinary measures?

- Data collected by the eTA will be used by UNDSS only for security purposes.
- Data collected by eTA is not exempt from being requested as part of OIOS investigations.
- Location data is currently NOT stored by eTA, unless GeoLocation or Locate & Assist is approved as an SRM measure to reduce risk to staff, or a headcount is activated.
- User location data, when collected as described above, is only kept for 96 hours, after which, it is deleted/non-retrievable.

9. Will the UN provide me with a smartphone and/or data plan?

The issuance of UN-provided smartphones and data plans for use of the App is the decision of each Agency/Fund/Programme/Department/UN Entity.

10. Can my family download the App?

Not yet. Currently, the App is only for UN System personnel. Please do not download it to devices other than your own. In the event of a headcount, the eTA Command Center will only recognize one device per user. We are looking into ways to make the App available for dependents.

11. Can I apply for security clearance on the App?

Not yet. This feature is being developed.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT ETA

12. What's the purpose of the eTA APP?

The purpose of the eTA is to provide UN personnel with enhanced security awareness of their current location by providing them with relevant security information at their fingertips, including:

- The UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Location-based Travel Advisory, which includes information on threats and risks in each location
- Emergency contact information of the closest UNDSS security personnel
- Notifications sent by security personnel to inform and warn users about current or potential security events that could affect their work



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- Conduct headcounts: the app allows UNSMS security personnel to send and receive notifications of your status in the event of a crisis or emergency and allows them to know where you are if you need help.

13. Can I use the tool to contact security staff in the event of an emergency?

YES! Emergency contact information for UNDSS staff is included in the “Emergency” tab in the App. Contact numbers listed in this section include local numbers and the 24/7 UNDSS COMSCEN. In some countries, the Emergency Chat may also be available.

14. How does eTA know what information to give me?

The App uses a mobile device’s existing system software to be aware of the device’s current location. If there has been a change in the location that is detected by the device’s geolocation system, the App queries the UNDSS systems to find out if there is any information particular to the new location that should be sent to the device (e.g. Does the user have a security clearance for that location?). Based on the configuration settings of the SRM Area, the UNDSS systems will then update the information pushed to the device. The App queries the device software to find out if there has been a change in location of 500 meters.

15. What information is included in the Travel Advisory?

Everything you need to know about the security context in your location. Information for the eTA Travel Advisory is pulled directly from the UNDSS Weekly Travel Advisory that is maintained by UNDSS, Division of Regional Operations.

16. What are the map layers on the homepage of the App?

The map has three layers:

- i Basic map layer shows you your location. The following layers can be added to the based map:
 - 1 UN premises locations – find where you need to go, fast!
 - 2 Operational Zones – If there are active security notifications in your area, you might see different colors on the map. These represent security perimeters assigned by UNSMS security professionals when using the eTA tool. Information about these areas can be found in the “My profile”> “Security Messages” section of the eTA App or by tapping the bell icon on the eTA homescreen.
- ii The local Security Advisory can be accessed by tapping the “Emergency Information” button on the top left part of the screen.
- iii Your current Security Clearance status is shown in the upper right. There are three possible statuses:
 - 1 AT YOUR DUTY STATION – will show whenever you are at you’re not travelling
 - 2 CLEARED – will show when you are travelling WITH Security Clearance



3 NOT CLEARED – will show when you are travelling WITHOUT Security Clearance

17. Is there a way to search for UN premises?

There is no search function for UN premises, but premises location information includes addresses and directions for all nearby UN offices.

18. Where does the information about premises come from?

The UNSMS Premises Database is maintained by DSS – Division of Regional Operations. If you spot an error, please contact UNDSS security personnel.

19. What numbers are included in the emergency tab?

These are numbers where you can reach your local DSS staff! They are drawn from the UNDSS Travel Advisory.

20. Where does the information from the contact directory come from?

This directory is retrieved from the TRIP dataset. It includes all UN System staff with a TRIP Identification. You are encouraged to update your TRIP information, so the directory can be as up-to-date as possible. The ability to change this information right in the App is available.

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

21. How do I download the APP?

The app is available in the Apple App store and on Google Play for Android devices. Search for “United Nations Electronic Travel Advisory.” In some locations, download is restricted, in which case a networked computer solution is available.

22. What is the minimal phone specification for using the eTA?

eTA has been tested for phones running Android 5 and above and iOS 9.3 and above.

23. My security clearance status seems to be wrong, what do I do?

The security clearance status should reflect your current TRIP profile, which contains information on your current duty station and travel requests. If the information on the APP is incorrect, please check the information you currently have in [TRIP](http://trip.undss.org) (trip.undss.org). Make sure your current duty station is listed and that you have requested clearance for any official business travel you are doing. If the information in TRIP is correct, but the APP is displaying what you believe is incorrect information, please contact your UNDSS personnel. We are working on the ability for you to review and update this information using the APP.



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24. I just travelled for work, but contact numbers from my home duty station/ previous location are still in my phone? Why? What should I do?

If travelled means reassigned: Please go to dss.un.org – login and update the information in your TRIP profile.

If travelled means on mission: There is no need to do anything the system stores information at your current duty station. Your accommodation details and other information is available on your security clearance request.

25. How do I configure my phone to ensure I get all security messages?

Please ensure that location reporting in the App is enabled and that your device has the location services switched on.

QUESTIONS FROM ETA COMMAND CENTER ADMINISTRATORS

26. My Security Operation Center staff share a group email; how do I ensure each person in the SOC has access to the eTA Command Center?

Each eTA Command Center Administrator is required to log-in using their individual email address to ensure personal accountability of actions taken. If current SOC staff do not have individual email addresses, they should be provided for them.

27. I'm in an area where cell phone and/or internet service is not reliable, how can I implement eTA as the primary method for notifications and headcounts?

- eTA should be used as the first tool for notification and headcounts with secondary means still used to ensure all staff receive notification and headcount requests.
- It is hoped that over time, UN personnel will become accustomed to having and using the eTA and the user base will be the majority of staff in your area of responsibility.
- In addition, OICT and UNDSS are working closely with WFP and the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) project to improve the way eTA works; we are hoping to enable eTA to use radio and satellite technology.

28. Why is only UNDSS ISW staff allowed to use the eTA Command Center?

The way eTA is currently configured, individual agencies are not able to send notifications only to their staff. Any administrator for an SRM Area sending notifications will send notifications to users in all agencies. Until the agency-administrator to agency-user direct link is put in place, only DSS staff will be allowed to use eTA. Soon, security staff of AFP will be able to send notifications to their own staff. When this functionality is available, new SOP will be drafted and disseminated.



29. Are there differences in eTA functionality based on telephone service provider?

As long as there is a data connection from your mobile phone provider (3G, 4G, 5G), eTA will work the same for all smartphones and wireless providers. The only difference between different carriers in developing countries, could be:

- Data services might be switched off by the host government (e.g. in political turmoil) on one carrier but not on the other
- In a natural disaster, in a particular area, data (or any mobile service) might not be available because the infrastructure for one carrier is more damaged than the other
- In most developing countries, internal roaming within the country does not exist as it does in developed countries

30. Are there SIM card solutions to avoiding the cost of data?

Yes. Using a SIM card on a smartphone when travelling will reduce data roaming charges. eTA on a smart phone will work with any SIM card. Non-smart phones with different SIM cards would need to re-register the new number in TRIP.

31. What will happen to eTA in countries where social media is switched off?

- eTA will only be disabled when all data services are blocked.
- The eTA will still work if social media is switched off.
- eTA continued to work over the public networks during the weeks of Sudan protests (Jan-April), where a lot of the social media was cut off from public networks, as well as in Indonesia, where the government switched off WhatsApp.
- The eTA is not a social media platform; it is an internal security communication tool. It is proprietary to the UN. As a result, it is not subject to being switched off by local governments.

32. What is happening with IOM and SCAAN?

IOM has a communications tool that is similar to eTA called SCAAN. IOM will not be using eTA; rather, DSS and IOM have an agreement that technically links SCAAN and eTA. The immediate priorities of the agreement include two main links: 1) updated IOM staff profile data in the TRIP database for access by DSS, and 2) IOM's SCAAN system to automatically receive notifications and headcount requests sent through the eTA Command Centre. This will ensure that messages UNDSS staff send to all users in the area of responsibility, including IOM staff using SCAAN, will be the same message as eTA users receive.

COMING FEATURES OF ETA



1. Command Center delivery of eTA messages via SMS

Messages sent from the Command Center will not only go to App users, they will be delivered to any mobile device in the specified area for which we have a working mobile phone number.

2. Providing for Security Clearance via the App

OICT is currently developing the functionality to request security clearance from the App. This will be developed in stages, with the first version of the functionality allowing users to create and submit a simple, One Way or Return TRIP request, for himself/herself, with corresponding accommodation details.

3. Enabling a headcount for an entire SRM Area

This functionality will be similar to the “Quick Notification” feature and will allow eTA Command Center Administrators to conduct a headcount for an entire SRM Area. It can be used to conduct “Phone Tree” or “Radio Check” functions. This will enable faster headcount requests and assist in warden system procedures.

4. Implementation of the concept of “Operational Zone” for use in areas where UN personnel often travel across SRM areas

There are some areas where staff travel through different SRM Areas when traveling to/from/for work. In these areas, “Operational Zones” will be established that will prevent eTA App users from getting messages/showing security clearance as “not cleared”.

5. Connecting travel requests directly with security clearance requests

UNDSS is working with OICT and UMOJA and other UNSMS entities to develop/enhance processes of submitting TRIP requests directly from ERP systems so staff travel information (flights, cities visited) will be automatically pushed to TRIP for security clearance purposes.

OTHER WORK TO IMPROVE ETA

6. Providing staff of the AFP with access to all eTA functions

Currently, only UNDSS staff have access to eTA functions; personnel of the AFP can only have access to data for their own staff by pulling a report. In the near future, AFP staff will be able to use the eTA Command Center to send notifications to their own staff. They will only be able to see their own staff on the Command Center. Along with definitive local SOP, enabling AFP access will streamline existing notification and headcount procedures, as well as provide an additional means for the UN System to provide duty of care to staff.



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7. Links to eTA, TRIP and UNDSS listed accommodations are on the Humanitarian Booking Hub.

The [Humanitarian Booking Hub](#) is a site where UN personnel can book UN accommodations, UNHAS flights, drivers and appointments at medical and mental health clinics. WFP has already provided a UNDSS presence on this site that links to TRIP, eTA and accommodations listed in UNDSS Travel Advisories for those locations where accommodation information is required for security clearance. It is hoped that providing visibility to UNDSS services, including eTA, on this site will help encourage staff to get security clearance and download the eTA.