

PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE  
**HEADQUARTERS AIR DEFENSE COMMAND**  
Clark Air Base, Mabalacat City, Pampanga

OACCS-3/CAAdj

25 August 2023

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE  
NUMBER 2023-15**

**FIGHTER INTERCEPTION OF UNKNOWN TRACKS**

**I. REFERENCES:**

- A. Executive Order 292: Administrative Code of 1987
- B. Republic Act 9522 defining the Archipelagic baselines of the Philippines;
- C. Presidential Decree 1599 series of 1978: Establishing the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone;
- D. Administrative Order no. 222 s. 1953 Establishing the Philippine Air Defense Identification Zone (PADIZ)
- E. National Military Strategy;
- F. AFP Standing Rules of Engagement (SROE) 2005;
- G. Rules of Engagement (ROE) for Air Defense Operations 2020;
- H. PAFM 3-03 Air Defense Manual 2016;
- I. PAFM 3-05.04 Fighter Intercept and Escort Manual; and
- J. 1944 Chicago Convention/Convention on International Civil Aviation

**II. PURPOSE:**

This Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) prescribes the guidelines on the fighter interception of tracks, as directed by Philippine Air Defense Control Center (PADCC), to visually or appropriately establish the identity and intention of aircraft within the Philippine airspace and within PADIZ.

**III. SCOPE:**

This SOP includes all corresponding processes involving fighter interception of unknown tracks for visual/ combat identification.

**IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS:**

- A. **Air Defense** – The protection of territorial airspace in order to secure the sovereignty of the state and territorial integrity of the national territory from air threat.
- B. **Civil Track** – Track(s) that are known to be a civilian aircraft like commercial domestic/international flights and General Aviation.
- C. **Classification** – the assignment or designating of a type of track as a result of initial assessment based on available data provided at PADCC.

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D. **Detection** – Sensing of airborne objects using Air Defense Surveillance Radar and other sensors.

E. **Friendly Track** – Identified military aircraft, including foreign military aircraft with proper coordination from the AFP.

F. **Hostile Track** – During peacetime operations, track is declared hostile by the Commander-in-Chief, based on the recommendation by the Chief of Staff; or the Air Component Commander (Commanding General, Philippine Air Force); or the Air Defense Commander; or by the Interceptor invoking self-defense.

- During wartime operations, all enemy fighter/ attack aircraft are declared hostile track.

G. **Identification** – Confirmation of track's route, position and intent based on relevant information from all available sources. Identification may be through the following means:

1. Correlation of flight plan with Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP);
2. Existence of approved foreign military diplomatic flight clearance;
3. Coordination with other Major Services and Agencies;
4. Confirmation of track(s)'s general position and route/ heading from radar surveillance reports from Battle Control Center (BCC);
5. Confirmation for Electronic and Signal identification (Identification, Friend or Foe/Selective Identification Feature (IFF/SIF); and
6. Response to Radio Challenge on guard frequency.

H. **Interception** – the phase in active air defense where the interceptor acquires visual identification or combat identification of the unknown track.

I. **Interceptor** – is a fighter aircraft configured to intercept unknown track.

J. **Intrusion** – an act of a foreign civil or state aircraft entering the territorial airspace of another state without securing permission regardless of whether there is a manifestation of hostile intent.

K. **Known Track** – Track that have associated and verifiable data.

L. **Military Track** – Track that are known to be from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) or foreign armed forces.

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M. **Neutral Track** – Track of foreign military aircraft with appropriate clearance from CAAP or other relevant agencies, but without prior coordination from PAF or AFP.

N. **Pending Track** – Track detected but not classified within two (2) minutes.

O. **Special Track** – Track that is highlighted which requires constant monitoring and coordination with CAAP and other relevant agencies. The following tracks will be classified special:

1. Aircraft in distress/emergency
2. Designated VIP Aircraft
3. Hijacked Aircraft
4. Search and Rescue Aircraft

P. **Surveillance** – The systematic observation of airspace within the Philippine airspace and Philippine Defense Area of Operations (PDAO).

Q. **Suspected Hostile Track** – track suspected to be with hostile intent against the Philippines based on the current flight profile and initial assessment from Intelligence sources.

R. **Track of Interest (TOI)** – a high-priority track with no data and no response to radio challenges.

S. **Unknown Track** – Aircraft with no data from CAAP (Squawking or non-Squawking) nor from other relevant agencies. This includes aircraft that responded to radio challenges.

**V. POLICIES:**

A. The Air Defense Command shall be responsible for the Air Defense of the Philippines.

B. The freedom of overflight in international airspace shall be guaranteed and maintained.

C. The procedures enumerated in this SOP are based on existing international and domestic laws, and shall be strictly followed by all Air Defense elements during the interception phase of the active Air Defense.

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## **VI. PROCEDURES:**

### **A. Scramble:**

1. Battle Control Centers (BCC) will detect and provide tactical early warning of hostile activity and coordinate with PADCC in order to notify the Air Defense Alert Center (ADAC) to prepare the aircraft for Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) or scramble missions to intercept, identify, inspect, influence and, if necessary, neutralize a potential airborne threat.

2. Alert aircraft at ADAC will scramble upon orders from the PADCC.

3. Depending on the prevailing air defense condition, ACA aircrew alert status will be as follows:

- Suit-up;
- Battle station; and
- Runway alert.

*Note: Scramble order can be given at any ACA aircrew alert conditions.*

Upon the receipt of scramble order, alert aircraft must take-off as soon as possible.

4. Aircraft on scramble shall monitor assigned control frequency for any changes or updates in the mission.

5. ADAC will immediately alert standby aircraft for another scramble.

### **B. Interception Procedures:**

1. Upon airborne, the interceptor shall establish contact with the assigned Battle Control Center (BCC).

2. BCC will provide the 9-line A to the interceptor.

3. The fighter interceptors will perform interception procedures based on established TTPs for day and night operations. Interceptors will transmit 9-line B to BCC.

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4. The Air Weapons Controller (AWC) shall continue to monitor and provide instruction to the interceptor on the course of action such as:

- Escort in;
- Escort out;
- Shadow; and
- Engage.

5. Interceptors will refer to Fighter ROE Card.

6. The interceptor shall establish radio contact with the intercepted aircraft through primary and secondary guard frequencies.

7. If radio communications fail, the interceptor can resort to visual communications through the use of signals until the intercepted aircraft will acknowledged. (Chapter 3.8, Appendix 2 and Attachment A of the Annex 2 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and/or PAFM 3-05.04 Fighter Intercept and Escort Manual).

8. The interceptor must perform the following in case intercepted aircraft is responsive:

a. If instructed to be escorted to an airfield within the country, the interceptor shall guide the intercepted aircraft. The interceptor shall maintain radio or visual communication with the intercepted aircraft until relieved of his duties.

b. If instructed to escort out of the country, the interceptor aircraft shall escort the intercepted aircraft out of the Philippine airspace. The interceptor can perform a "headbutt" to forcedly divert the course of the intercepted aircraft.

c. The interceptor must adhere to Chapter 3.8, Appendix 2 and Attachment A of the Annex 2 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and/or PAFM 3-05.04 Fighter Intercept and Escort Manual at all times unless directed by competent authorities otherwise.

9. If intercepted aircraft is unresponsive, the interceptor shall inform BCC. The latter will relay the information to PADCC for a dispositive course of action. The interceptor will standby for further instruction.

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C. Declaration of Hostile Aircraft:

1. During peacetime operations, TOI is declared hostile by the Commander-in-Chief based on the recommendation by the Chief of Staff; or the Air Component Commander (Commanding General, Philippine Air Force); or the Air Defense Commander.

2. Interceptors can declare intercepted aircraft as hostile based on criteria invoking self-defense. Interceptors will refer to Fighter ROE Card.

3. During wartime operations, all enemy fighter/ attack aircraft are declared hostile.

D. Contingencies:

1. The 5FW shall ensure that the alert aircraft is full mission capable. A spare aircraft must be available at all times.

2. Alert pilots shall conduct a detailed pre-flight briefing that shall cover contingencies for any scenario they might encounter.

3. In the event of a radio communications failure between BCC/ AWC and interceptor, PADCC shall scramble another element of interceptor 5 minutes after losing radio communications with the first flight to pursue a successful intercept.

E. Termination of the intercept shall upon order from competent authorities and/or PADCC. Upon termination of the intercept, the interceptor shall proceed back to base.

**VII. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A. All Integrated Air Defense System (IADS) Forces should be knowledgeable in the current ROE for Air Defense Operations.

B. The Assistant Chief of Command Staff for Operations, C3, ADC shall be responsible for the issuance of Air Tasking Order.

C. 5FW shall be responsible in providing alert aircraft with pilots at ADACs.

D. PADCC shall be responsible for providing command-and-control during Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) operations.

E. BCC shall be responsible for providing situational awareness to the interceptor.

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**VIII. RESCISSION:** All publications and instructions/directives whose provisions are in conflict to this SOP are hereby rescinded.

**EFFECTIVITY:** This SOP takes effect upon publication.

**BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL MALINIT:**

OFFICIAL:

**AUGUSTO N PADUA**  
Colonel PAF (NSA)  
Chief of Command Staff

  
**REDEMER B PUTOL**  
1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant PAF  
Command Adjutant

DISTRIBUTION  
"A"

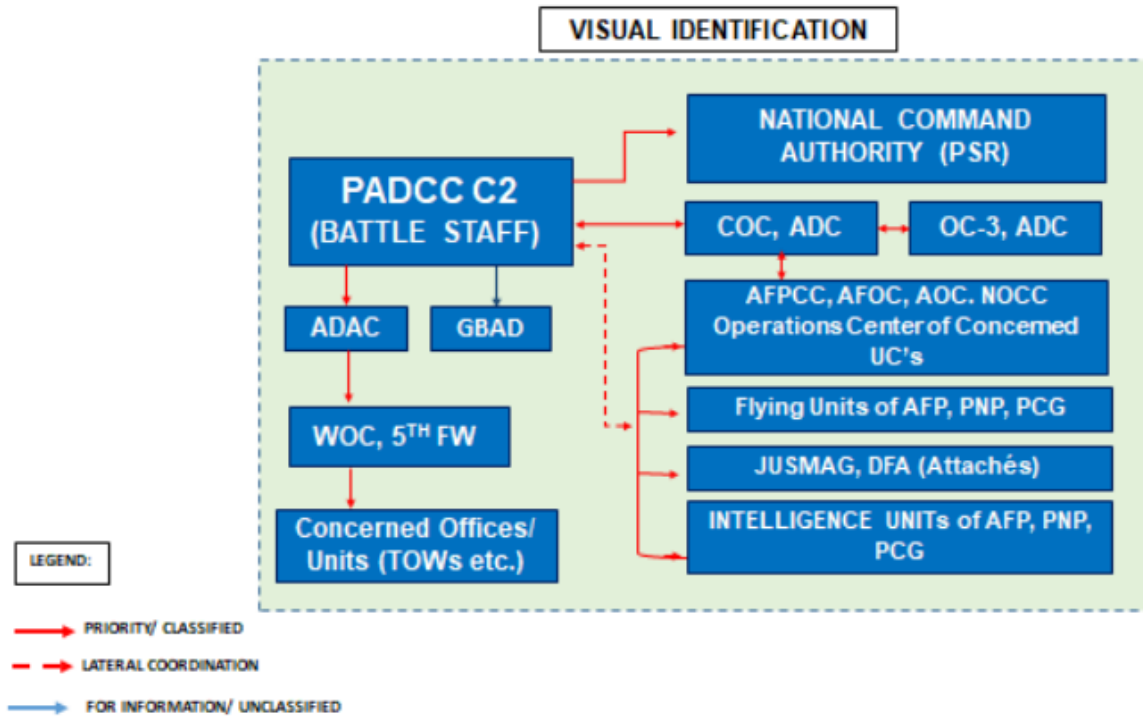
**ANNEXES:**

**ANNEX "A" – COMMUNICATION FLOW CHART**  
**ANNEX "B" – RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (ROE) CARD**  
**ANNEX "C" - CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES TO FOREIGN AIRCRAFT AND VESSELS**

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## Annex "A"

### Communication Flow Chart





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**Annex “B”**

**AIR DEFENSE OPERATIONS ROE CARD**

**Reference:** Approved Rules of Engagement for Air Defense Operations dated 27 August 2020

**NOTHING IN YOUR ROE LIMITS YOUR RIGHT TO TAKE ACTION IN SELF-DEFENSE.**

**MISSION:**

Conduct of Air Defense operations during peacetime and armed conflict as Fighter Interceptor pilot.

**USE OF FORCE IN SELF-DEFENSE:**

1. You may use force, up to and including deadly force, in response to a hostile act and/or hostile intent.
2. You may use maneuvers, visual signals, radio transmissions, and other measures to avoid the use of deadly force to de-escalate situation as necessary.
3. You may use proportional force to control situation.

**USE OF FORCE:**

1. You are authorized to intercept Unknown TOI.
2. Advice intercepted aircraft to land for interrogation on a zone determined by CG, PAF or the AD Commander.
3. You are authorized to use force on a declared hostile aircraft within the Philippine Airspace.
4. You are authorized to pursue and engage hostile entity that continue to commit hostile acts or hostile intent.
5. You are authorized to neutralize hostile aircraft if it is the only means to prevent hostile act.

**OTHER RULES ON THE USE OF FORCE THAT ARE PERMITTED:**

1. Request for identification.
2. Advising intruding aircraft to avoid territorial and/or restricted airspace.
3. Ordering of diversion to designated airfield for distressed aircraft.
4. Use of non-deadly force to compel compliance with diversion instructions.
5. Use of verbal warning.
6. Energizing FCR in the direction of hostile aircraft.
7. Shadowing.
8. Conduct of air surveillance and use of active sensors.
9. Use of EW against enemy/hostile forces.

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10. Use of EW to protect personnel, facilities and equipment.
11. Air-to-Air engagement against hostile aircraft.
12. Use of precision and non-precision munitions against hostile aircraft.

**HOSTILE INTENT**

**MILITARY**

- ✓ Positive enemy ID.
- ✓ Conducting flight operations within the Philippine Airspace without diplomatic clearance.
  - ✓ Aiming or directing weapons.
- ✓ Adopting an attack profile.
- ✓ Closing within weapons release range.
- ✓ Illuminating with laser or laser designators.
- ✓ Passing targeting information.
- ✓ Failing to respond to proactive measures

**CIVILIAN**

- ✓ Entering restricted airspace and no fly zone without clearance.
- ✓ Conducting flight operations within the restricted airspace without clearance from CAAP.
- ✓ Repeated non-compliance with GCI and CAAP ATC's instructions.
- ✓ Non-compliance with audio and visual instructions from intercepting aircraft.
- ✓ Failing to respond to proactive measures.
- ✓ Hi-jacked aircraft or presence of terrorist inside the aircraft. ✓ Presence of CBRNE materials in the aircraft.

**HOSTILE ACT**

**MILITARY**

- ✓ Attacking or acting in a manner which indicates reasonable certainty of an attack against AFP personnel, aircraft, vessel or installation/facilities.
- ✓ Employing offensive EW measures.

**CIVILIAN**

- ✓ Acting in a manner to crash at government/civilian facilities, vital installation, populated centers and congregation of people within the Philippine territory.
- ✓ Aircraft with CBRNE payload, acting in a manner to crash or dispense CBRNE at populated centers or congregation of people.

Prior intelligence/information on aircraft with reasonable certainty of attack against populated areas and with consideration to the political and military implications.

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## Annex “C”

### CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES TO FOREIGN AIRCRAFT AND VESSELS

**Reference:** SOP 13 GHQ, AFP dated 19 June 2019, Radio Communication Challenges and Responses in the West Philippine Sea.

#### Challenge of PH Aircraft to Foreign Vessel/Aircraft within PH EEZ

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>“Calling unidentified foreign (naval/commercial vessel/aircraft), this is a Philippine Government Aircraft, in accordance with the International and PH National Laws you are within the PH EEZ. You are requested to provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. Name of Vessel/Aircraft;</li><li>. Intention; and,</li><li>. Last and next port of call (for vessel only). Over.”</li></ul> |   |
| <p>(IF RESPONDS)</p> <p>“Thank you for your cooperation, have a safe voyage/flight.”</p>  | <p>(IF NO RESPONSE)</p> <p>“Calling unidentified foreign (naval/commercial vessel/aircraft) at (location). This is a Philippine Government Aircraft, in accordance with the International and PH National Laws you are within the PH EEZ. You are not responding. Your actions will be reported to concerned authorities.” (REPEAT)</p> |
| <p>(IF RESPONSE IS COUNTER CHALLENGE)</p> <p>“To (identity of foreign naval/commercial vessel/aircraft), this is a Philippine Government Aircraft, in accordance with the International and PH National Laws you are within the PH EEZ. You are not responding. Your actions will affect PH and (name of foreign nation) relations, and will be reported to concerned authorities.” (REPEAT)</p>                        |   |

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### Responses of PH Aircraft to Foreign Vessel/Aircraft within PH EEZ

“(Identity of foreign vessel/aircraft), this is a PH Government Aircraft, conducting routine maritime patrol over PH EEZ. We are proceeding according to our planned route. Over”

**Counter challenge since within PH EEZ. Apply ROE.**

“Based on 2015 Ruling of the UN Permanent Court of Arbitration,

Philippines has **Jurisdiction and Sovereign Rights** within our 200NM

EEZ. We are exercising these rights in accordance with International and PH National laws.”

### Challenge of PH Aircraft to Foreign Vessel/Aircraft within WPS PHowned and occupied features (Pag-asa, Lawak, Patag, Likas, Parola, Panata, Kota Islands and Bajo de Masinloc)

“Calling unidentified foreign (naval/commercial vessel/aircraft), this is a Philippine Government Aircraft, in accordance with the International and PH National Laws you are within the PH Territorial sea/airspace at (state specific owned/occupied feature). You are requested to provide the following:

- Name of Vessel/Aircraft;
- Intention; and,
- Last and next port of call (for vessel only). Over.”

(IF RESPONDS)

“Thank you for your cooperation, have a safe voyage/flight.”

(IF NO RESPONSE)

“Calling unidentified foreign (naval/commercial vessel/aircraft) at (location). This is a Philippine Government Aircraft, in accordance with the International and PH National Laws you are within the PH Territorial sea/airspace at (state specific owned/occupied feature). You are not responding. Your actions will be reported to concerned authorities.” (REPEAT)

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(IF RESPONSE IS COUNTER CHALLENGE)

“Calling (identity of foreign naval/commercial vessel/aircraft) at (location), this is a Philippine Government Aircraft, in accordance with the International and PH National Laws you are within the PH Territorial sea at (state specific owned/occupied feature). You are violating International and PH National Laws. You are advised to leave the area immediately. Your actions will affect PH and (name of foreign nation) relations, and will be reported to concerned authorities.”  
(REPEAT)

### Responses of PH Aircraft to Foreign Vessel/Aircraft within PH EEZ

“(Identity of foreign vessel/aircraft), this is a PH Government Aircraft, we are flying over our PH Territorial Airspace. We are proceeding according to our planned route. Over”

**Counter challenge since within PH territory. Apply ROE.**

| 9-LINE A (GCI to Fighters) |           |                                       |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| 1                          | TOI#      | - Target of Interest Number           |
| 2                          | JTN#      | - Joint Tactical Network Number       |
| 3                          | Mode 3    | - Squawk Code                         |
| 4                          | Call sign | - Designation for radio transmitting. |
| 5                          | A/C Type  | - Type of aircraft if known.          |
| 6                          | Tail #    | - Aircraft tail number if known.      |
| 7                          | Markings  | - Visible aircraft markings if known. |

|   |         |                                 |
|---|---------|---------------------------------|
| 8 | Reason  | - Why needed to be intercepted? |
| 9 | Remarks | - Type of Intercept Mission     |

| 9-LINE B (Fighters to GCI) |             |  |
|----------------------------|-------------|--|
| 1                          | A/C Type    | - Type of aircraft.                                      |
| 2                          | Tail #      | - Aircraft tail number.                                  |
| 3                          | Markings    | - Any visible aircraft markings.                         |
| 4                          | Lights/Elec | - Does the aircraft lights or electrical system working? |

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|   |                   |   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| 5 | Shades            | - Does the aircraft window shades are up or down or not applicable? |
| 6 | Number of Pilots  | - How many visible pilots on board?                                 |
| 7 | Acknowledge?      | - Do the pilots acknowledge on signals or on guard calls?           |
| 8 | A/C Configuration | - Does the aircraft has external stores? What are they?             |
| 9 | Remarks           | - Any information that can help the C2 for decision making.         |