



OSMTH

Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

A Non-Governmental Organization in Special Consultative Status
with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

HOW OSMTH FUNCTIONS INTERNATIONALLY AS AN ORDER

2025 Edition: Copyright:



Guiding Principles

OSMTH follows three key guiding principles, which are:

- The Order is international in its outlook.
- The Order is democratic in its functioning.
- The Order is inter-denominational/ecumenical Christian in its membership.

Official Name

The correct full name of the Order, as registered in Geneva, is in Latin: “Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani”, and is translated into English as “Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem”. The abbreviation is “OSMTH”.

Official Symbols

The symbol of the Order is the red cross pattée on a white background, echoing the cross of the medieval Knights Templar. OSMTH Member Grand Priories, at the national level, may also use the other traditional shapes of crosses associated with Templar heritage.

The OSMTH Roundel and the OSMTH Coat of Arms are copyright symbols, which may only be used by the Magisterium, Grand Magistral Council, and/or Member Grand Priories of OSMTH in accordance with the Statutes, Rules & Regulations, and the Member Grand Priory License Agreements, of OSMTH.

International Association of OSMTH

At the international level, OSMTH is legally structured as an 'association of associations', composed of those Member Grand Priorities which have been recognized and admitted by the Grand Magistral Council. OSMTH is registered as a non-profit and tax-exempt international association in the Canton of Geneva, Switzerland, under the Swiss Federal Registration Number: CH-660.1.972.999-4; and the Swiss Business Identification Number: CHE-101.134.939.

OSMTH Member Grand Priorities (National Member Associations)

Each Member Grand Priority is made up of local Priorities or, for smaller groups, Commanderies or Preceptories. There is only one national Member Grand Priority for a country. Exception is made for just one supranational body, the Grand Priority of NATO, which groups together individual members of the Order who are Reserve Officers of NATO countries, and is therefore not bound geographically.

For those countries which do not yet have a recognized Member Grand Priority, the Deputy Grand Commander appoints an existing Grand Priority to act as "mentor", on the basis that such a "mentor" is willing and able to fulfill the role and has relevant historical, geographical, and/or cultural links with the country concerned. The role of the "mentor" Grand Priority is to assist the development of the national entity and bring it progressively to the status of a recognised Grand Priority.

The Member Grand Priorities of OSMTH are self-governing entities, operating autonomously as national associations under the laws of their respective countries, and setting their own domestic policies and programmes. Grand Priors, as well as Priors and Commanders at the local level, are elected by their national memberships.

As of February 2025 there are 22 recognised national Member Grand Priorities in OSMTH: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America; and 1 specifically supranational Member Association, the NATO Grand Priority.

Grand Magistral Council (International Governing Council)

As an international association, OSMTH is governed by the Grand Magistral Council (GMC), which is chaired by the Grand Commander, and on which each Grand Priority, as a voting Member, is represented by its Grand Prior or their officially nominated Proxy. The "one country, one vote" system has been implemented to ensure that all Member Grand Priorities have an equal vote, whatever the sizes of their individual memberships may be.

The Grand Magistral Council is the legislative body of OSMTH and decides on the Statutes, Rules & Regulations, policies, and programs for the international operations and management of the Order.

The GMC usually meets in-person twice a year, in spring and autumn/fall, hosted by a Member Grand Priority in a pre-designated country. When necessary, GMC meetings may be conducted through on-line video conference calls. The Priors and Commanders of "mentored" entities are welcomed to attend, and may be invited to speak, but do not have a vote on the GMC. The meetings are also open for individual members of the Order from Member Grand Priorities to observe.

The decisions taken on international matters, by the Grand Magistral Council in accordance with the Statutes and Rules & Regulations of the international association of OSMTH, are valid for the whole of the Order.

International Committees

The Grand Magistral Council is supported by a number of international Standing Committees, which currently include the following:

- Awards & Devices Committee
- Communications & Press Committee
- Financial Management Committee
- History & Archives Committee
- Governance Committee
- Security Committee
- Venues Committee

The individual Chairs and Members of the Committees are: recruited from among the Member Grand Pories; appointed by the Grand Commander; and ratified by the Grand Magistral Council.

Grand Chapter General (International General Assembly)

Every two years, OSMTH holds a Grand Chapter General (GCG), which offers the opportunity for a wider assembly of individual members from the Member Grand Pories to gather together. A Grand Chapter General may be held in-person or by video conference.

The Grand Chapter General is a consultative body which receives reports from the senior international Officeholders of the Order. The GCG may also put forward matters for consideration by the Grand Magistral Council.

Grand Magistral Officers (International Officeholders)

The Grand Magistral Council elects four senior Grand Magistral Officers to lead and manage the international work of the Order.

- The **Grand Master**, elected for a single term of eight years, is the ceremonial head of OSMTH. The Grand Master also leads the international advocacy and diplomatic work of the Order.
- The **Grand Commander**, elected for a term of three years renewable once, is the Chair of the Grand Magistral Council. The Grand Commander is also the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of OSMTH and chairs the Magisterium (International Executive Committee) of OSMTH.
- The **Deputy Grand Commander**, elected for a term of three years renewable once, deputizes for the Grand Commander, as and when necessary, and leads on the OSMTH Mentorship program.
- The **Chancellor General**, elected for a term of three years renewable once, is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of OSMTH.

The Grand Magistral Council appoints two honorary Special Grand Magistral Officers:

- The **Religious Protector** is a senior church leader.
- The **Royal Patron** maintains relations between the Order and various Royal and Noble Houses.

The Grand Commander appoints, for ratification by the Grand Magistral Council, other key international officeholders, including the OSMTH Delegates to the United Nations ECOSOC, and the Advocate General, the Secretary General, the Treasurer General, and the Chaplain General of OSMTH.

Magisterium (International Executive Committee)

The international administration of the Order, and the day-to-day management of international programs of activity agreed by the Grand Magistral Council, are undertaken by the Magisterium as the International Executive Committee of OSMTH. The Magisterium is chaired by the Grand Commander and also comprises the:

- Deputy Grand Commander (deputy chair & deputy chief executive officer)
- Chancellor General (chief operational officer)
- Secretary General (chief administrative officer)
- Treasurer General (chief financial officer)
- Advocate General (chief legal officer).

The Grand Master is a non-executive advisory member of the Magisterium.

Office of the Grand Master

In leading the international advocacy and diplomatic work of the Order, the Grand Master is supported by the:

- Envoy General (for matters of advocacy and for relationships with civil society and cultural organizations)
- Legate General (for matters of religious diplomacy and for relationships with Churches and faith bodies)

Finances

Annual international budgets for the international association of OSMTH are approved by the Grand Magistral Council, and the Treasurer General provides annual financial reports to the GMC. The Grand Magistral Officeholders of OSMTH carry out their duties on an unpaid voluntary basis. The most senior international Officeholders of OSMTH receive a limited contribution towards their travel expenses.

The charitable activities of the Order are primarily carried on at national level through the Member Grand Priories, partly financed by the annual oblations of their individual members, and partly financed by additional personal donations from individual members, according to their financial means and their areas of interest. A number of Member Grand Priories also have associated charitable foundations, which carry out cultural and educational activities and/or provide humanitarian aid.

The international administration and advocacy work of the Order is financed by the annual oblations (membership dues) of the Member Grand Priories and by the sale of insignia and publications.

A limited annual program of OSMTH international charitable donations supports the international advocacy and religious diplomacy activities of the Order.

Individual Full Membership

Every individual member of the Order within OSMTH belongs to a Member Grand Priory or to one of its 'mentored' entities, as described above. An individual cannot be simply a "member of OSMTH".

Individual men and women, who meet the criteria for full membership of, and who are accepted by, the Member Grand Priory for their nation, join a local Priory, Commandery, or Preceptory. If they distinguish themselves by their service and merit, then individual members may be promoted by the national Member Grand Priory to higher grades.

The Order has adopted forms of behavior and ceremonies based on the chivalric tradition, but grades and titles used within OSMTH do not carry any legal status or social precedence outside of the Order.

Associate Membership

Grand Priorities may also welcome men and women of goodwill, who wish to support the goals of the Order but who cannot become full individual members (for example, because of personal circumstances, or because they belong to another faith) as companions or associates. Such companions or associates may attend the Order's meetings and events, and support its work, but they cannot vote or hold office in the Order.

Other International Templar Orders

There are many modern organizations that choose to take the medieval Order of Knights Templar as a model for their current-day organizational structures.

OSMTH strictly rejects those other organizations and individuals that use Templar symbols and heritage to promote extreme views and actions.

With regard to those other International Templar Orders, that trace their history from the 19th century Order of the Temple led by Grand Master Fabre-Palaprat, OSMTH takes a position of "live and let live" friendly coexistence.

As a matter of policy, the international association of OSMTH does not enter into mutual recognition, formal collaboration, and/or friendship agreements with such other International Templar Orders. However, the Member Grand Priorities and the Standing Committees of OSMTH may choose to cooperate with such other International Templar Orders on charitable, humanitarian relief, and/or historical research projects, where they share a common interest.

