



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2023/061

Audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

The Mission started taking action to create a harmonious working environment within the Transport Unit for its effective operation. However, the Mission needed to address other operational needs, including enhancing data utilization to effectively manage its transport fleet and providing adequate workshop infrastructure for efficient fleet repairs and maintenance

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Audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The objective of the audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of transport and fleet management in MINUSCA. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023 and included: (a) operating environment; (b) fleet planning, management, repair and maintenance; and (c) road safety, fleet insurance and handling of accidents.

MINUSCA established a functional Vehicle Establishment Committee to assist in allocating its light passenger vehicle fleet and reducing the number of vehicles. However, controls over data utilization to effectively manage the transport fleet were inadequate. The workshop infrastructure to ensure efficient fleet repairs and maintenance also needed to be improved. There was also a need to create a harmonious and healthy working environment within the Transport Unit to motivate staff, achieve goals, and reduce negative stress. The Mission started taking actions in this regard.

OIOS made eight recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, MINUSCA needed to:

- Conduct a security risk assessment for deployment of the armored vehicle and review their allocation and assignment to conform with security risk assessment results.
- Monitor reports of the Electronic Vehicle Monitoring System to confirm the reasonable operation of its transport fleet, and promptly take actions to resolve any exceptions.
- Enhance the Field Support Suite to actively identify and prevent continued driving by personnel with expired permits.
- Assign trained and qualified personnel to operate specialized vehicles.
- Prioritize completion of the construction of transport workshops and installation of workshop equipment in Bangui and the field offices.
- Ensure regular meetings of the Road Safety Committee to enable the Committee to address road safety concerns and review progress in implementing its recommendations.
- Ensure that credit memoranda for premium payments for third-party liability insurance to cover National Support Elements of contingent-owned equipment vehicles are timely prepared to initiate recovery from the respective Troop/Police Contributing Countries.
- Assign the Local Property Survey Board and the Chief Transport Officer responsibilities to timely review cases of reports of damages to the Mission's transport fleet and recommend the recovery of costs from personnel as appropriate.

MINUSCA accepted all recommendations, implemented one, and has initiated action to implement the remaining recommendations. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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Audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

2. The Transport Unit was responsible for the management, maintenance and operation of the United Nations-owned vehicles (UNOE) and related equipment to provide safe, efficient, reliable and cost-effective surface transportation services in support of implementing the MINUSCA mandate. The transport operations and activities were governed by the United Nations Surface Transport Manual (The Manual), Road Safety Management in the Field Manual and MINUSCA vehicle utilization and operating policies and procedures. The Transport Unit comprises two sub-units: Fleet Maintenance and Regional Coordination; and Fleet Management.

3. As of 4 May 2023, MINUSCA had 1,406 vehicles with a combined acquisition value of around \$68 million as outlined in table 1 below:

Table 1: MINUSCA transport fleet as of 4 May 2023

Category	Number	Acquisition value (\$)
Light passenger vehicles	799	18,882,978
Special purpose vehicles	229	21,317,664
Ambulances	7	444,461
Armored vehicles	108	13,044,672
Engineering equipment	26	3,975,945
Material handling equipment	36	4,788,201
Trailers	9	584,766
Vehicle attachments	186	4,276,198
Other vehicles (aircraft generator power units)	6	307,240
Total	1,406	67,622,125

Source: MINUSCA Transport Unit

4. The Transport Unit is headed by the Chief Transport Officer (CTO) at the P-4 level and reports to the Chief Service Delivery Management (CSDM). The Unit has 76 staff consisting of 13 international staff, 31 national staff and 32 United Nations volunteers (UNVs). In addition, the Unit has 158 individual contractors who work as mechanics and drivers. The Unit maintains workshops in Bangui and 10 field offices, namely Bambari, Bangassou, Berberati, Birao, Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, Kaga-Bandoro, Ndele and Obo.

5. The MINUSCA budget for ground transportation for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 is summarized in table 2 below:

Table 2: **Transport budgets for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 (in \$)**

Budget line items	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Staffing costs	3,585,000	3,585,000	3,585,000
Acquisition and maintenance of vehicles	5,817,700	5,817,700	5,974,200
Official travel	43,300	83,300	98,000
Total	9,446,000	9,486,000	9,657,200

Source: MINUSCA Budget Unit

6. Comments provided by MINUSCA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The objective of the audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of transport and fleet management in MINUSCA.

8. This audit was included in the 2022 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to operational risks and the criticality of sufficient and safe surface transport to support the implementation of the Mission’s mandate and the financial resources involved in fleet management.

9. OIOS conducted this audit from March to June 2023. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks areas in transport and fleet management, which included: (a) operating environment; (b) fleet planning, management, repair and maintenance; and (c) road safety, fleet insurance and handling of accidents.

10. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key Mission personnel; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of data on transport and fleet management; (d) visits to transport workshops in Bangui, Bouar, Bria and Kaga-Bandoro; and observation of a driving assessment in Bangui.

11. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Operating environment

Need to create a harmonious working environment within the Transport Unit

12. The United Nations is committed to promoting a harmonious work environment, fostering productivity and treating all personnel with courtesy, dignity and respect. Personnel are expected to be aware of their own behaviour and consider how others may perceive and receive it. This is reinforced through various mandatory trainings for staff, including the “United to Respect” course. A harmonious and healthy workplace motivates staff, helps achieve strategic, tactical and operational goals in a sustainable manner, prevents reputational and financial damage and reduces negative stress factors. Leadership plays a significant role in creating and fostering a harmonious work environment.

13. OIOS observed that the Transport Unit work environment was characterized by protracted acrimonious relationships, deep-seated disagreements and mistrust, especially at the management level. Many incidents of conflict were noted as the audit was ongoing.

14. The conflicts in the Unit had sometimes translated into cases of lack of coordination and consultation, resulting in incoherent decision-making. For example, there were disagreements in transfer decisions due to inadequate coordination and consultation, resulting in delays in implementation and, in some instances, revisions or cancellations of the planned reassignments. The protracted conflicts (which have been in existence since 2020) extended to some other Unit personnel who, in interviews with OIOS, noted that they felt pressure to take sides and felt the effect of working under a divided and conflict-prone management team. This situation negatively impacted the efficiency and effectiveness of the Unit because time that could have been used to support the Unit's objectives was expended by personnel to resolve conflict.

15. OIOS noted that despite knowing about the relationship issues, actions taken to address them over the years were limited.

16. However, the Mission had recently reinitiated measures to resolve the conflicts and create a conducive environment within the Unit, including efforts initiated by the new Director of Mission Support (DMS) in July 2023 to reconcile the Unit's personnel. The Mission was also pursuing staff to take all the mandatory courses, including the "United to Respect" course. Given that MINUSCA senior leadership was taking actions to resolve the situation, OIOS did not issue a recommendation but stressed the importance of timely addressing the problems during the exit briefing of the audit.

The Mission had defined plans to reduce the gender parity gap in the Transport Unit

17. MINUSCA is required to achieve the goal of a 50/50 gender balance at all staff levels and is expected to apply special temporary measures in the selection and appointment at each level where gender parity has not been achieved. The Transport Unit's gender ratio as of February 2023 indicated that only 5 (6.5 per cent) of the 76 international, national, and UNV staff were female.

18. The Transport Unit indicated its operations were technical and did not attract many female candidates. However, it was in the process of implementing measures to improve the number of female personnel across all its levels. For instance, efforts have been made to recruit female candidates since 2020, resulting in the recruitment of six female staff (individual contractors) deployed as drivers in the Dispatch cell. Two female staff were in the process of onboarding as UNVs at the time of the audit. Plans were underway to recruit at least two female Transport Officers upon completion of the ongoing staffing review exercise. MINUSCA had commenced enforcing measures to improve the gender parity ratio across the Mission. All recruitments that do not recommend female candidates are subject to review by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). Therefore, OIOS concluded that MINUSCA was making efforts to reduce the gender imbalance in the staffing across the Mission, including the Transport Unit.

B. Fleet planning, management, repair and maintenance

The Mission had an effective Vehicle Establishment Committee

19. A functional and effective Vehicle Establishment Committee (VEC) assists the Mission by: (i) defining and proposing the vehicle establishment for each Unit/Section and any subsequent amendments in response to changes in the Mission's operational needs; and (ii) implementing policies concerning the vehicle establishment of the Mission.

20. MINUSCA established a VEC, which comprised representatives from various components, including Mission support, substantive, police and military. Minutes of meetings held during the audit period indicated that the VEC reviewed and approved the allocation of vehicles across the Mission. It also

reviewed and approved additional vehicles to the police and military components to support the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2566 (2021), which increased the Mission's troop strength. To address a recommendation by the Board of Auditors, which indicated that the Mission had exceeded its LPV holdings by 74 vehicles, the VEC approved the write-off of 148 vehicles and their replacement with 74 minibuses with higher seating capacity. In addition, the VEC endorsed the write-off of 399 vehicles. As of 5 June 2023, based on approvals provided as per the delegation of authority, the Mission had disposed of 34 vehicles, including 5 armored vehicles disposed of through cannibalization and crushing in compliance with the end user certificates.

21. OIOS concluded that the VEC was effectively discharging its responsibilities, which included reviewing and guiding the Mission's vehicle establishment.

Need to review the allocation of armored vehicles

22. MINUSCA personnel conduct operations in areas characterized by high-security threats. Regular security reviews need to be carried out to assess the nature of threats in these areas of operation and determine the quantity of armored vehicles that need to be availed for the safe transportation of personnel.

23. Following a review of the prevailing security situation in the country by the Security Management Team in December 2015, the SRSG, as the Designated Official, restricted the movement of the Mission's personnel in soft-skin vehicles during outbreaks of violence and other incidents and recommended the use of armored vehicles. The SRSG defined the distribution plan for the available 67 armored vehicles in serviceable condition amongst the Mission's personnel and offices. The SRSG also designated the DMS, in consultation with the Chief Security Adviser, to ensure the effective deployment of armored vehicles received in the future.

24. The Mission subsequently acquired additional armored vehicles with a holding of 108 vehicles as of 4 May 2023. It allocated them to users/offices: 80 in Bangui (65 for the Mission and 15 for the Special Criminal Court) and 28 in field offices that were not initially in receipt of such vehicles. However, the Mission had not conducted a pre-requisite security risk assessment to determine its requirements for armored vehicles and their allocation.

25. Following a request in September 2022 by the CTO for a security risk assessment, the Security Section in January 2023 prepared draft standard operating procedures (SOPs) on the risk assessments for the deployment of armored vehicles. A review of these SOPs indicated that they: (i) defined the type/level of vehicles that was considered appropriate to mitigate against the minimum standard threat in the country; (ii) recommended that armored vehicles needed to be allocated based on risk and not grade, and hence field locations needed to be prioritized in the allocation based on risks identified through the security risk management process; (iii) recommended flexibility in the deployment of vehicles to enable the Mission promptly respond to unexpected changes in the security situation; (iv) recommended that armored vehicles needed to be availed to personnel involved in road missions in high-risk areas; and (v) provided that the Security Section would conduct personal security risk assessments for any personnel reported or perceived to face an elevated risk. Based on the SOP, there was a need to maintain a pool of armored vehicles to respond to contingency requirements as the need arose.

26. However, due to competing priorities, the security risk assessment to determine the vehicle requirements and their allocation was still outstanding. In the absence of these assessments, personnel in high-risk locations who have a greater need for the vehicles may not receive them, while the vehicles may be allocated to less risky areas.

- (1) MINUSCA should conduct a security risk assessment for deployment of armored vehicles and review the allocation and assignment of armored vehicles to conform with security risk assessment results.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the United Nations Department for Safety and Security had completed the required security assessment and submitted recommendations to the Director of Mission Support and Chief of Staff for review before endorsement by the Head of Mission as the Designated Official and subsequent implementation.

MINUSCA needed to regularly monitor and share relevant data on vehicle operations/usage

27. Implementing an Electronic Vehicle Monitoring System (EVMS) enhances monitoring of the usage and performance of the Mission's transport fleet. It mitigates against unauthorized vehicle use, speeding, high accident rates, low reporting rates for vehicle maintenance, and supports investigations of accidents.

28. The Mission installed an EVMS on its UNOE (except for two vehicles deployed in Douala, Cameroon) to monitor their utilization.

29. A review of a sample of EVMS reports for 32 vehicles that were operated in high-risk (isolated) locations during the audit period indicated the following:

- Data for 11 vehicles was not available for the entire period covered by the audit. These included 7 vehicles whose EVMS information was not downloaded and two in Douala, Cameroon.
- There were extended periods averaging 478 days during which the EVMS did not record movement and operational data for 21 of the 32 vehicles. In addition, the EVMS reports did not provide user details for multiple vehicles although they were in operation.
- For 19 of the 32 vehicles, there were long periods where stationary vehicles had their engines running (i.e., idling time). For instance, an idling time of 40.12 hours was recorded for a vehicle assigned to Sibut team site for the four days from 6 to 9 January 2022.
- Reports for a vehicle assigned to the Nola team site indicated that: (i) no data was recorded for a cumulative period of 151 days on various dates between 1 July 2020 and 5 June 2021; and (ii) odometer readings were inconsistent and were not sequential. For example, on 23 October 2020, the odometer reading on the report was 0.60 kilometers, whereas the previous reading was 62,031 kilometers. On 31 October 2020, the new odometer reading was 37.90 kilometers from a previous reading of 3,944.90 kilometers. Similarly, numerous odometer reading changes were noted between 18 November 2020 and 21 July 2021, and a trip distance of 14,418 kilometers was recorded on a single day's operation on 13 November 2020, indicating either a severe malfunction of the system or manual intervention to reset the odometer.
- The odometer readings for two vehicles located in the Bocaranga team site went from 50,230.10 kilometers to 43,000 kilometers on 1 February 2023 and from 53,041 kilometers to 10,018 kilometers on 21 January 2021, respectively. A further adjustment on the odometer reading for the second vehicle was noted on 23 January 2021, when the odometer reading went from 10,041.30 kilometers to 0.50 kilometers, again indicating either a system malfunction or manual intervention to reset the odometer.

30. The Mission did not regularly monitor and review the EVMS reports to identify cases of incomplete and inconsistent data and investigate reasons to enable it initiate prompt remedial actions. In addition, the reports were centralized in Bangui and not distributed to Transport Officers assigned to the workshops in Bangui and the field offices to enable them to monitor data on the operation of vehicles assigned to their locations. In the absence of complete data on the operation/use of its fleet in the high-risk locations/team sites sampled, the Mission did not have pertinent information on various vehicle operation parameters, including the identification of the drivers, date of operation, journey time, distance travelled, maximum and average speed and second-by-second data that could assist in the planning of its vehicle maintenance schedules and provide information to support investigations by oversight bodies.

(2) MINUSCA should: (a) effectively monitor reports of the Electronic Vehicle Monitoring System to confirm the reasonable operation of its transport fleet and promptly take actions to resolve any exceptions; and (b) periodically distribute Electronic Vehicle Monitoring System reports to all its Transport Officers to enable them to review the operational data of vehicles assigned to their locations.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that: (a) a server had been set up at the United Nations Global Service Centre to support the Electronic Vehicle Monitoring System (EVMS), and the Mission was currently working on opening the required ports. The Mission's EVMS technicians were scheduled for a training with the United Nations Global Service Centre on the use of new EVMS. This would ensure that they have the required knowledge to install the receiving stations and proceed to use them by 31 March 2024; and (b) it would share the vehicle usage report with all the Regional Transport Officers/Motor vehicle Transport Officers every second week of the month.

Need to monitor the validity of driving permits

31. MINUSCA is mandated to issue permits to operate its UNOE and COE vehicle fleet only to personnel who have demonstrated that they qualify in the vehicle category required to perform their duties. The expiration date of the driving permit is required to conform to the validity date of the applicant's current national/military driver's license or the expiry date of their United Nations identity card, whichever expires first. The Mission's guidelines on violations involving United Nations vehicles outline sanctions related to violations that could be committed while operating a United Nations vehicle, including driving without a valid driving permit.

32. The Mission established driving assessment centres in Bangui and field offices that conducted driving tests for its personnel, including civilian, military, police and authorized contractors, prior to issuing driving permits to those who successfully completed the assessments. Driving assessments for military and formed police units contingents who deployed directly to their areas of assignment were conducted from their respective locations. Interviews with personnel of the Transport Unit who conducted driving assessments in Bangui and the three Sector offices visited, and observation of driving assessments conducted in Bangui on 26 June 2023 indicated that the candidates were briefed on the defensive driving techniques and traffic code of the Mission area. The candidates were subjected to two levels of assessments: a vehicle handling test within the premises and a driving test on main roads. During the assessment observed by OIOS, 10 of the 15 candidates tested were successful and were issued driving permits, whereas the unsuccessful candidates were required to schedule repeat assessments.

33. The Field Support Suite (FSS) platform was used to administer the application, issuance and monitoring of the expiry dates of driving permits. A review of a random sample of 70 driving permits issued to personnel indicated that they included the reason for their application and the category of vehicles they were licensed to operate. These permits were supported by copies of valid national, international and military driving licenses and Security Investigations Unit (SIU) incident reports in cases of requests for

replacement of lost driving permits. In addition, the database included dates when the driving assessments were conducted and the outcome of each assessment.

34. Effective November 2021, the FSS platform generated emails to notify users of the impending expiry of their driving permits. Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, the Mission had issued 8,071 driving permits. A review of a report generated from FSS on 12 June 2023 showed that driving permits issued to 46 users had expired. An analysis of the EVMS reports indicated that holders of 30 of the 46 permits had continued to use them to operate the Mission's fleet for periods ranging from 31 to 463 days beyond their expiry dates. As a result, some of the Mission's fleet was operated by unauthorized personnel, which could adversely impact the Organization's ability to access insurance coverage in the event of road accidents/incidents. However, the Mission did not identify the use of such expired driving permits as driving violations and issued sanctions to the concerned personnel. This occurred as MINUSCA did not monitor the use of expired driving permits, including the regular review of FSS reports, but had instead relied on the random spot checks by the Military Police to identify these cases and the initiative of respective personnel to present their expired permits for renewal.

(3) MINUSCA should enhance the Field Support Suite to actively identify and prevent continued driving by personnel with expired permits.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it had enhanced the current system which sends email notifications automatically five days prior to the expiration of the driving permit and continues to send reminders daily until its expiration if no action is taken by the driver to renew it on Share Point. To this effect, a change request and the platform would be presented to the United Nations Global Service Centre Change Management Team for the Field Support Suite so that this option could be assessed for implementation in the Field Support Suite driving permit module by 31 March 2024 to enable notifications by the module.

There was a need to monitor the effective deployment and use of the transport fleet to avoid waste

35. Regular monitoring of the utilization of the UNOE vehicle fleet will enable MINUSCA to determine if its transport fleet is being effectively utilized to support the implementation of the Mission's mandate.

36. OIOS observed the following shortcomings:

- The Mission did not regularly use a garbage truck valued at \$112,375 deployed to the Bouar Sector Office on 29 June 2022 to transport garbage from collection points in the Mission's premises and military contingent/formed police units compounds to the garbage disposal sites. At the time of the audit visit in April 2023, a pickup truck was being used for this purpose. This happened as qualified personnel to operate the garbage truck were not available in the Sector Office. The Mission stated that it had assigned a driver effective May 2023 to operate the truck.
- A fire truck valued at \$237,597 assigned to the Bria Sector Office in March 2021 to provide a quick response in the event of a fire incident during the landing, take-off and fueling of aircraft at the air terminal was not being utilized due to the absence of qualified personnel to operate it. As a result, the risk of fire was not adequately mitigated. The implementation of a recommendation to enhance the Mission's firefighting capabilities at its air terminals/fields, highlighted in a previous OIOS audit of air operations in MINUSCA (Report 2022/041) was still outstanding as at the time of the audit.

- MINUSCA did not deploy two aircraft loaders valued at \$674,233 procured on 29 April 2016 to support loading its cargo aircraft. This occurred as the Mission had outsourced the provision of ground handling services for its passenger and cargo aircraft operations at the airport in Bangui but did not take action to designate the loaders as surplus assets. At the time of the audit, these assets were located at the transport workshop in Bangui, pending repairs despite not having been used by the Mission.
- Three aircraft ground power units valued at \$153,619 procured on 16 May 2015 were not timely assigned. These assets were handed over to the Aviation Section in June 2023 while the audit was ongoing. This happened because the Mission did not conduct reviews of assets that had been procured but not issued.

37. Delays in the assignment and deployment of assets procured by the Mission resulted in the waste of the assets as they had not been deployed for their intended purpose in a timely manner, and the Organization lost the opportunity to derive value from the resources it had incurred to procure them.

(4) MINUSCA should: (a) assign trained and qualified personnel to operate vehicles that require specialized skills to ensure that they are effectively deployed; and (b) regularly monitor the assignment of its procured transport fleet and ensure that they are promptly deployed by the responsible sections.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Mission had recently recruited 10 fire truck drivers and deployed them to their respective duty stations. All 10 fire trucks were handed over to the Aviation Section and deployed to their respective locations.

Adequate controls were in place for the temporary assignment of vehicles to United Nations agencies

38. The Manual allows MINUSCA to provide vehicular support or vehicles on loan to United Nations programmes and other agencies where it is considered that their activities would be essential to the success of the Mission's mandate. Detailed agreements need to be made regarding repayment and liability prior to the handover of the vehicles.

39. MINUSCA, as part of its contractual obligations, provided 10 vehicles on loan to the United Nations Office for Project Services. Additionally, to support the operationalization of a Special Criminal Court that was established by Security Council Resolution 2387 (2017), MINUSCA, through an inter-office memorandum, allocated 20 vehicles (15 armored vehicles, 4 soft skin vehicles and one van) to the court. Under the terms of the contracts and memorandum, the Mission continued to provide insurance coverage, fuel and maintenance services for these vehicles.

40. The Mission further provided vehicular support on a cost reimbursement basis to other United Nations agencies and non-United Nations entities, including Embassies and non-government agencies. A review of all 50 requests for support received between November 2020 and December 2022 indicated that the support was provided following appropriate approvals by the DMS/Chief of Staff. As of 31 July 2023, the Mission had received \$11,891 (58 per cent) of the invoices issued for cost recovery valued at \$20,657 and was following up on the recovery of the outstanding balances.

41. OIOS concluded that the Mission had implemented adequate controls for the temporary assignment of vehicles to entities that supported the implementation of its mandate and for the temporary use of its vehicles on a cost-reimbursement basis.

Training opportunities were provided to the Transport Unit personnel

42. Regular training of the Transport Unit personnel would increase their technical capacity and enable them to keep abreast of the latest industry practices that can be employed in the repair and maintenance of the transport fleet.

43. Workshop supervisors and vehicle mechanics/technicians attended various training sessions that were held within/outside the Mission area and through online forums. These trainings, which were in the annual training plans of the Transport Unit, included: technical training on the maintenance of newer models of assorted heavy-duty trucks that were added to the Mission's transport fleet; training of trainers on defensive driving and driving test officer certification to enable Motor Transport Officers to conduct driving assessments from their areas of assignment; armored vehicle maintenance training; requisitioners training to equip transport officers with skills to order for spare parts through the Umoja system; and preventive maintenance training. The Transport Unit ensured that staff who had attended external trainings shared their learning experiences upon their return to the Mission. For instance, a staff who had participated in an external training on the maintenance of a new range of trucks conducted a training session in Bangui in April 2023 that was attended by 20 participants comprising 14 mechanics and 6 drivers from the Transport Unit and the Movement Control Unit respectively who maintained and operated these vehicles.

44. OIOS concluded that the Mission provided adequate training to enhance the technical skills of personnel involved in maintaining its transport fleet.

Need to provide adequate workshop infrastructure

45. MINUSCA is required to provide its personnel with a workplace that is appropriate for each potentially hazardous work, and that would pose minimal risk to their health and safety.

46. Due to the ageing fleet (which had an average age of eight years) and poor road conditions in the Mission area, the Transport Unit had reported an increased workload in the workshops for repair works that needed to be performed on the vehicles between the scheduled maintenance. The number of service orders created in Umoja for maintenance works were 3,417, 4,176 and 3,952 for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23, respectively. Furthermore, correspondences between the Transport Unit and Engineering Section in August 2018 indicated that requirements had been prepared for workshops that needed to be established at each location. OIOS physical inspection of workshops in Bangui, Bria, Bouar and Kaga-Bandoro indicated that the Mission had provided necessary equipment to support various vehicle maintenance works, yet OIOS noted different levels of implementation of the 2018 requirements at the time of the audit, as follows:

- The construction of rub hall facilities for transport workshops in Bouar and Kaga-Bandoro was complete, while a workshop in Bria was in progress. However, the installation of all the requisite equipment delivered to the workshops still needed to be completed. Additionally, the LPV and heavy-duty workshops in Bangui lacked adequate space to accommodate the influx of vehicles, leading to repair work being carried out in areas not designated for such activities. These areas lacked suitable ground surfaces necessary for the safe lifting of vehicles, and the mechanics were exposed to the sun and rain, thus affecting their safety and well-being.
- Facilities and arrangements for minor repair and maintenance in Bangui, including repair of tyre punctures and changing oil and filters, were neither adequate nor efficient. Simple tasks involving the repair of tyre punctures or their replacement entailed driving to the M'Poko transport workshop and could take two to three days to complete due to inefficient processes. The Transport Unit indicated that its request to the Engineering Section to establish a quick inspection workshop in Bangui was pending. The location identified for establishing the workshop was reallocated to

construct a welfare village to provide for the well-being of personnel. As a result, the main workshop, with its limited space, continued to handle all minor and major repair and maintenance works, and the Mission personnel encountered inconveniences in their work schedules due to the time taken and distance covered to avail vehicles to the workshop. Some staff resorted to using roadside vulcanizers to repair tyre punctures, which was faster and more efficient but contrary to the norms of the Mission.

- Adequate facilities were not provided to safeguard the safety of personnel working in the workshops, including enclosed battery charging stations, tyre changing ramps and enclosed vehicle spraying booths. This exposed the personnel to the risk of injuries. For instance, in June 2022, a workshop personnel in the Bangassou field office was injured following the explosion of a battery that was being charged. At the time of the audit, the Mission's Occupational Health and Safety Unit was conducting risk assessments on workplace safety in various locations. It recommended improvements to be implemented to enhance the safety of the Mission's personnel.

47. The Mission attributed delays in the allocation of additional spaces and completion of construction and installation of equipment in transport workshops to competing priorities, which included the reassignment of resources to construct accommodation for military contingents following an increase in the Mission's troop strength in 2021, and inadequately qualified technicians to install equipment in transport workshops in the field offices.

(5) MINUSCA should prioritize completion of the construction of transport workshops and installation of workshop equipment in Bangui and the field offices, including a quick inspection workshop in Bangui to ensure the safety of personnel and enhance the efficiency of the repairs and maintenance of the transport fleet.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it would prioritise construction of transport workshops mission-wide along with other major construction projects with the aim to complete and equip them by 31 December 2024.

C. Road safety, fleet insurance and handling of accidents

Need to implement recommendations of the Road Safety Committee

48. A functional and effective Road Safety Committee (RSC) assists a Mission to: review road accidents involving Mission vehicles; identify unsafe driving behaviours and conditions; identify suitable methods/strategies to ensure safe operation of Mission vehicles; and monitor the progress of road safety activities.

49. MINUSCA established a RSC on 6 October 2017 and outlined its terms of reference and membership, which comprised representatives from principal user groups and sections involved in enforcing the road safety programme. The RSC was required to meet quarterly to address road safety issues but met only three times during the period under review. This was despite the Committee in all its meetings reiterating the need to hold regular meetings. A review of all three minutes of meetings indicated that the Committee: (i) reviewed statistics on road traffic accidents involving the Mission's fleet; (ii) endorsed the defensive driving training programme that was used in the briefing/training of the Mission's personnel; and (iii) reviewed a case for the permanent withdrawal of a driving permit from a staff member who had been involved in various road traffic violations. Following approval by the RSC, the Mission jointly conducted road safety campaigns with the Ministry of Transport of the host country that comprised awareness sessions

in schools, painting/erecting of road signs, including pedestrian crossings, and training and sensitization of motorcycle taxi operators in Bangui and field offices.

50. The inability of the RSC to meet regularly happened because it was not taken as a priority by the Mission. As a result, there was inadequate implementation of action points arising from previous meetings. For example, a recommendation of a meeting held in September 2019 to adopt the use of breathalyzers in the Mission was yet to be implemented, resulting in inadequate mitigation of the risk of driving while intoxicated.

(6) MINUSCA should ensure regular meetings of the Road Safety Committee to enable the Committee to address road safety concerns and review progress in implementing its recommendations to mitigate the risk of injuries and damage to the Mission's personnel, property and third parties.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the Road Safety Advisory Committee last met on 10 August 2023 and had scheduled its next meeting for November 2023.

Need to recover from troop/police contributing countries insurance premium payments to cover NSE contingent owned equipment

51. MINUSCA is required to obtain third-party liability insurance for all UNOE and COE vehicles operated in the country and prepare and submit a monthly insurance report to the United Nations Headquarters on the number of vehicles in use. Reconciliations are required semi-annually of the fleet additions or deletions to determine the adequacy of premiums paid for third-party liability insurance and for the insurer to issue the Mission credits for any payments in excess of the Mission's existing transport fleet. The United Nations National Support Element¹ (NSE) Policy provides that the Organization does not bear the financial obligation or responsibility for equipment deployed by Troop/Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) as NSE. Where this occurs, the Organization is required to recover the amounts from the relevant T/PCCs.

52. Through a systems contract, the Mission obtained a worldwide third-party liability insurance coverage that provided protection against legal liabilities that the Organization may incur in case of an accident involving a United Nations vehicle driven by an authorized driver. The Mission also contracted a vendor locally for a Not-to- Exceed amount of \$805,434 to provide additional third-party liability insurance for its vehicles in line with requirements of the status of force agreement with the host country and the local laws. MINUSCA prepared and submitted monthly reports on its holdings of UNOE and COE vehicles to the United Nations Headquarters. It periodically reviewed its holdings of UNOE and COE vehicles during the year and updated its insurance registers with movements in its vehicles to ensure they were all insured.

53. The Claims Unit was a liaison between third-party claimants and the local insurance company and guided the Mission on appropriate actions to manage the claims. In addition, the Mission regularly liaised with the insurance company that provided third-party liability insurance and obtained/cancelled coverage for vehicles added to or removed from its fleet. As a result, the Mission received credits for unutilized premiums on vehicles whose insurance was cancelled prior to the expiry of the coverage period.

54. MINUSCA identified items of COE vehicles that were deployed to the Mission as NSEs and determined that it had paid an equivalent of \$159,109 as premiums for third-party liability insurance for

¹ National Support Elements comprise of personnel or equipment that are deployed to the Mission in excess of the United Nations requirements that are outlined in the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and a Troop/Police Contributing Country.

these COE vehicle items that had been deployed from the effective date of the Policy in December 2015 to 31 December 2022. However, the Mission had not taken further steps to recover these amounts. The Mission had not assigned the responsibility to prepare and submit credit memoranda to the responsible office at the Regional Support Centre in Entebbe to enable these amounts to be recorded in Umoja to initiate their recovery from the reimbursements to the respective T/PCCs. Delays in recovering insurance premiums for NSE COE vehicles adversely impacted the availability of funds for other aspects of the Mission's mandate.

- (7) MINUSCA should ensure that credit memoranda for premium payments for third-party liability insurance to cover National Support Elements of contingent-owned equipment vehicles are timely prepared and submitted to the Regional Support Centre in Entebbe to initiate recovery from the respective Troop/Police Contributing Countries.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 7 and stated that it had received the necessary guidance from the Uniformed Capabilities Support Division at the United Nations Headquarters and would initiate the invoicing and recovery process in Umoja.

Need to initiate financial recovery for damages to the Mission's transport fleet

55. The Manual requires the Transport Unit to prepare documentation relating to accident cases and, where relevant, forward it to the Secretary of the Local Property Survey Board (LPSB) for processing. The delegation of authority from the Secretary-General to the Head of Mission (HoM) also required the HoM or delegate to set up an LPSB to deliberate on cases involving damage greater than \$3,000 and make recommendations. Additionally, the Controller's decision on "recovery of deMinimis amounts from United Nations personnel for damage or loss of UNOE" provides for recovery of amounts for accidental damage in excess of \$500 where staff are at fault.

56. OIOS review indicated that prior to accepting damaged vehicles for repair, the transport workshops reviewed documentation to ensure that the cases had been reported to the SIU for investigations and accident/incident reports were prepared. In addition, the Transport workshops prepared service orders/Damage Discrepancy Report (DDR) reports in Umoja and recorded the estimated and actual costs for the repairs. A review of the summary of DDR reports indicated that 200 (valued at \$332,692) of the 648 cases recorded during the period were above the \$500 limit that required the Mission to review and subsequently surcharge personnel found to have been grossly negligent in causing the damage.

57. However, the cases of damage to the Mission's vehicles had not been presented to the LPSB for review, and recovery actions were not recommended where deemed necessary. This occurred because, during the reconfiguring of its Property Management and Claims Units to comply with guidelines issued by the United Nations Headquarters in November 2016, the Mission did not assign the responsibility of reviewing cases related to damage caused by its personnel to United Nations property. As a result, the Mission did not recover costs incurred in the repair of vehicles and could have suffered financial loss in instances where personnel subsequently found to be grossly negligent in causing the damage may have separated from the Organization.

- (8) MINUSCA should assign the Local Property Survey Board and the Chief Transport Officer responsibilities to timely review cases of reports of damages to the Mission's transport fleet and recommend the recovery of costs from personnel as appropriate.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 8 and stated that it would convene the Local Property Survey Board (LPSB) by 31 March 2024 to close existing gaps since the implementation of Umoja (Galileo

Decommissioning Project) in September 2017 to date. Thereafter, the LPSB deliberations on cost recovery from personnel would be convened on a quarterly basis. Additionally, the Mission would issue a directive by 31 January 2024 to stress the need for the LPSB and Chief Transport Officer to expedite such claims arising from staff members.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

58. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of MINUSCA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ² / Important ³	C/ O ⁴	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁵
1	MINUSCA should conduct a security risk assessment for deployment of armored vehicles and review the allocation and assignment of armored vehicles to conform with security risk assessment results	Important	O	Receipt of results of the security risk assessment on the holding and allocation of armored vehicles and evidence of review of the allocation of its armored vehicles in conformance to the security risk assessment.	31 March 2024
2	MINUSCA should: (a) effectively monitor reports of the Electronic Vehicle Monitoring System to confirm the reasonable operation of its transport fleet and promptly take actions to resolve any exceptions; and (b) periodically distribute Electronic Vehicle Monitoring System reports to all its Transport Officers to enable them to review the operational data of vehicles assigned to their locations.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the Mission's Transport Officers have effectively reviewed reports of the electronic vehicle monitoring system and taken appropriate action against exceptions.	31 March 2024
3	MINUSCA should enhance the Field Support Suite to actively identify and prevent continued driving by personnel with expired permits.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the Mission has identified and prevented the use of expired driving permits.	30 April 2024
4	MINUSCA should: (a) assign trained and qualified personnel to operate vehicles that require specialized skills to ensure that they are effectively deployed; and (b) regularly monitor the assignment of its procured transport fleet and ensure that they are promptly deployed by the responsible sections.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that trained and qualified personnel have been assigned to all specialized vehicles and not just the fire trucks and all specialized vehicles have been suitably deployed.	31 December 2024
5	MINUSCA should prioritize completion of the construction of transport workshops and installation of workshop equipment in Bangui and the field offices, including a quick inspection workshop in Bangui to ensure the safety of personnel and enhance the efficiency of the repairs and maintenance of the transport fleet.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of actions taken by MINUSCA to complete the construction of transport workshops and installation of equipment therein and provide a quick inspection workshop to conduct minor vehicle repairs in close proximity to the Mission compounds at the Log Base and Mission Headquarters in Bangui.	31 December 2024

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ² / Important ³	C/ O ⁴	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁵
6	MINUSCA should ensure regular meetings of the Road Safety Committee to enable the Committee to address road safety concerns and review progress in implementing its recommendations to mitigate the risk of injuries and damage to the Mission's personnel, property and third parties.	Important	C	Implemented	NA
7	MINUSCA should ensure that credit memoranda for premium payments for third-party liability insurance to cover National Support Elements of contingent-owned equipment vehicles are timely prepared and submitted to the Regional Support Centre in Entebbe to initiate recovery from the respective Troop/Police Contributing Countries.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of regular recovery of premium payments for third-party insurance for NSE contingent-owned equipment vehicles from the respective Troop/Police Contributing Countries.	28 February 2024
8	MINUSCA should assign the Local Property Survey Board and the Chief Transport Officer responsibilities to timely review cases of reports of damages to the Mission's transport fleet and recommend the recovery of costs from personnel as appropriate.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the Local Property Survey Board has reviewed cases of damage caused to United Nations property by the Mission's personnel, and its recommendations have been implemented.	30 June 2024

² Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

³ Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

⁴ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁵ Date provided by MINUSCA in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response

**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM****MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR**

TO: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye
A: Under-Secretary-General for OIOS

DATE: 29 November 2023

FROM: Valentine Rugwabiza
DE: SRSG and Head of MINUSCA

REFERENCE: MINUSCA/OSRSG/212/2023

SUBJECT: **MINUSCA's comments on a Draft report on an audit of transport and fleet management in MINUSCA (Assignment No. AP2022-632-07)**

1. With reference to your interoffice memorandum dated 7 November 2023 on the above captioned subject, kindly find attached MINUSCA's comments on a Draft report on an audit of transport and fleet management in MINUSCA.
2. I take this opportunity to thank your team for the findings and recommendations issued in this audit.

Annex (2): – MINUSCA's comments on a Draft report on an audit of transport and fleet management in MINUSCA.
- Portfolio of Evidence

cc: Mr. Byung-Kun Min Chief, Peacekeeping Audit Service,
Internal Audit Division, OIOS
Mr. Sory Sangaré, Director of Mission Support, MINUSCA
Mr. Souleymane Thioune, Chief of Staff, *a.i.*, MINUSCA
Mr. Braïma Jamanca, Chief Service Delivery Services, MINUSCA
Mr. Sylvain Provost, Chief Transport Officer, MINUSCA
Mr. Jeffrey Lin, Professional Practices Section, Internal Audit Division, OIOS
Mr. Laud Botchwey, Chief Resident Auditor for MINUSCA, Internal Audit Division, OIOS
Ms. Tiphaine Dickson, Risk Management and Compliance Officer, MINUSCA

Management Response

Audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	MINUSCA should conduct a security risk assessment for deployment of the armored vehicle and review the allocation and assignment of armored vehicles to conform with security risk assessment results	Important	Yes	Chief Security Advisor	31 March 2024	UNDSS completed the required security assessment with subsequent recommendations submitted on 24 November for review of the DMS and the COS before the Head of Mission/DO endorsement for onward implementation.
2	MINUSCA should: (a) effectively monitor reports of the Electronic Vehicle Monitoring System to confirm the reasonable operation of its transport fleet and promptly take actions to resolve any exceptions; and (b) periodically distribute Electronic Vehicle Monitoring System reports to all its Transport Officers to enable them to review the operational data of vehicles assigned to their locations.	Important	Yes	Chief Transport Officer	31 March 2024	(a) The server is up and running at UNGSC, and the Mission is currently working on opening the required ports. MINUSCA Carlog Technicians are scheduled for a training with UNGSC on the use of the new devices during the third week of November 2023. They will have the required knowledge to install the receiving stations and proceed to use it by 31 March 2024. (b) The Vehicle Usage Report as well as other relevant reports will be

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

Management Response

Audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						shared with all RTOs/MTOs every 2 nd week of the month.
3	MINUSCA should enhance the Field Support Suite to actively identify and prevent continued driving by personnel with expired permits.	Important	Yes	Chief Transport Officer	30 April 2024	(i) The current system has been enhanced and sends email notifications automatically 5 days prior to the expiration of the driver permit and continues to send reminders daily until its expiration if no action is taken by the driver to renew it on SharePoint (<i>see attached supporting documents</i>). (ii) To that effect, a change request and the platform will be presented to the UNGSC Change Management Team for FSS, so that this option can be assessed for implementation in the FSS-DP module by 31 March 2024, to enable notifications by FSS-DP module. <i>See attached Documents.</i>
4	MINUSCA should: (a) assign trained and qualified personnel to operate vehicles that require specialized skills to ensure that they are effectively deployed; and (b) regularly monitor the assignment of its procured transport fleet and ensure that they are promptly deployed by the responsible sections.	Important	Yes	Chief Aviation Officer & Chief Transport Officer	Implemented	(a) Ten (10) firefighting truck drivers were recently recruited and have been deployed to their respective duty stations. (b) All ten (10) fire trucks were handed over to Aviation Section and deployed to respective locations.

Management Response

Audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
5	MINUSCA should prioritize completion of the construction of transport workshops and installation of workshop equipment in Bangui and the field offices, including a quick inspection workshop in Bangui to ensure the safety of personnel and enhance the efficiency of the repairs and maintenance.	Important	Yes	Chief Engineering and Facilities Management Section	31 December 2024	The Mission will prioritize the construction of transport workshops mission-wide along with other major construction projects with the aim to complete and equip them by 31 December 2024 (<i>See attached FEMS' planning</i>).
6	MINUSCA should ensure regular meetings of the Road Safety Committee to enable the Committee to address road safety concerns and review progress in implementing its recommendations to mitigate the risk of injuries and damage to the Mission's personnel, property and third parties.	Important	Yes	Chief Transport Officer	Implemented	Mission's Road Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) last met on the 10 August 2023 and the next meeting is planned for Nov 2023 (<i>Minutes and attendance sheet are attached</i>).
7	MINUSCA should ensure that credit memoranda for premium payments for third-party liability insurance to cover National Support Elements of contingent-owned equipment vehicles are timely prepared and submitted to the Regional Support Centre in Entebbe to initiate recovery from the respective Troop/Police Contributing Countries.	Important	Yes	Chief Transport Officer	28 February 2024	Mission has received the necessary guidance from UCSD in Headquarters and will initiate the invoicing and recovery processes in Umoja.
8	MINUSCA should assign the Local Property Survey Board and the Chief Transport Officer responsibilities to timely review cases of reports of damages to the Mission's transport fleet and recommend the recovery of costs from personnel as appropriate.	Important	Yes	Chief Transport Officer, LPSB Secretary and Chief Claims Officer	30 June 2024	The procedure on cost recovery from staff member was clarified to OIOS on 07 June 2023 (<i>email attached for ease of reference</i>). It is anticipated that the LPSB will be convened by 31 March 2024 to close existing gaps since the implementation of Umoja (Galileo Decommissioning Project (GDP)) in September 2017 to date. Thereafter, LPSB deliberations on

Management Response

Audit of transport and fleet management in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>cost recovery from staff will be convened on quarterly basis.</p> <p>Additionally, the Administration will issue a directive by 31 January 2024 to stress the need for the LPSB and CTO to expedite such claims arising from staff members.</p>