



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2023/095

Audit of the occupational safety and health programme in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MONUSCO needed to fully integrate police and military components into the occupational safety and health programme, improve risk management and incident data reporting

27 December 2023

Assignment No. AP2023-620-04

Audit of the occupational safety and health programme in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the occupational safety and health programme in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The objective of the audit was to assess whether MONUSCO effectively implemented an occupational safety and health (OSH) programme to prevent and minimize workplace health risks to mission personnel. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2021 to 30 September 2023 and included: (a) OSH governance arrangements; (b) implementation of the OSH programme; and (c) performance monitoring.

MONUSCO had established an OSH oversight committee that met quarterly to deliberate on pertinent matters; however, required interventions were not escalated to senior management. The police and military units were not fully integrated into the OSH programme, which resulted in significant OSH incidents like spillage of sewerage into the communities neighbouring military units camps. The OSH risk register was not comprehensive, and some significant risks had not been incorporated. In addition, not all OSH incidents were recorded, as the online data reporting form was not accessible to staff and medical personnel.

OIOS made seven recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, MONUSCO needed to:

- Include wider personnel participation on the OSH Committee and ensure that the OSH Committee introduces a mechanism to escalate significant OSH matters to senior management for their action;
- Fully integrate police and military units into the OSH programme and operationalize the police and military focal points to reduce workplace injuries;
- Enhance OSH risk management by analyzing and considering relevant OSH risk factors and incorporating aggregate, non-confidential medical data reported in Earthmed;
- Develop and implement an OSH training programme based on data-driven assessments of needs and best safety practices for Mission personnel, including contingent units and contractor personnel;
- Develop and implement a safety and health inspection work plan and follow up on documented inspection recommendations;
- Re-establish the OSH data reporting form to make it accessible to all personnel and regularly review and reconcile the information with other safety-related data to ensure the completeness of its OSH data; and
- Establish performance targets, including overall incident reduction targets, to enable monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the occupational safety and health programme and its impact.

MONUSCO accepted all recommendations and initiated action to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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Audit of the occupational safety and health programme in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the occupational safety and health (OSH) programme in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).
2. The overall objective of the Mission is to advance peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The 2022/2023 budget of \$1.1 billion provided for the deployment of 14,531 uniformed personnel and 2,668 civilian staff.
3. Occupational accidents and diseases can be prevented with proper planning, active supervision and sound risk controls. Multiple categories of hazards could be present in the workplace, including physical, chemical, biological, electrical, acoustic, structural and mechanical hazards that pose health risks to staff. While it is not possible to eliminate all hazards, it is possible to prevent, minimize and control the exposure to the hazard. The Mission senior management is responsible for providing its personnel with a safe and healthy work environment. The Director of Mission Support (DMS) is responsible for the day-to-day management of OSH within the Mission. In 2021, the Mission established an OSH oversight committee, chaired by the Chief of Service Delivery, to provide strategic guidance on managing the OSH programme in the Mission.
4. The OSH Unit is the Mission's focal point for the OSH programme and its implementation and is responsible for developing the OSH risk management programme. The Unit is headed by a Chief at the P-4 level who reports directly to the DMS. The OSH Unit has a field focal representative at the P-3 level based in Goma and two vacant national posts.
5. The Mission's OSH programme and activities are governed by the: United Nations Common System OSH Framework, the Secretary-General's bulletin on the OSH management system (ST/SGB/2018/5), Field Occupational Safety Risk Management Policy, Field Occupational Safety Incident Reporting standard operating procedure (SOP), MONUSCO OSH Policy Statement and MONUSCO OSH Risk Management Programme.
6. From January 2021 to May 2023, the United Nations field missions recorded 281 occupational safety incidents. Of these, 38 incidents or 14 per cent occurred in MONUSCO.
7. Comments provided by MONUSCO are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess whether MONUSCO effectively implemented an occupational safety and health programme to prevent and minimize workplace health risks to mission personnel.
9. This audit was included in the 2023 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to operational and financial risks related to OSH in MONUSCO. The Action for Peacekeeping priorities requires the Organization to

ensure the well-being of personnel, including developing and implementing system-wide mental health and well-being strategies for uniformed and civilian personnel.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from July to October 2023 and was carried out in Beni, Bukavu, Bunia and Goma. The audit covered the period from January 2021 to October 2023. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered high and medium-risk areas in the OSH activities, which included: (a) OSH governance arrangements; (b) implementation of the OSH programme; and (c) performance monitoring.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel, (b) review of relevant documentation, (c) a review of all 38 OSH incident and accident cases reported during the audit period to test the completeness and accuracy of the data, and (d) physical observation and inspection.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Occupational safety and health governance arrangements

Need to escalate required interventions effectively to senior management

13. The United Nations OSH Framework requires executive accountability as part of an effective OSH management system. The Mission is required to establish an appropriately constituted safety and health oversight body. The oversight body should comprise senior management leadership, varied personnel categories, medical services, staff counsellors and other specialists.

14. MONUSCO established an oversight committee through an information circular of November 2020, with stated objectives. These objectives included reducing work-related injuries and improving staff physical and mental well-being. The Chief of Service Delivery chaired the OSH Committee (Committee), and the DMS approved its minutes of meetings.

15. The Committee met quarterly to review OSH activities. However, OIOS noted insufficient participation by some locations and section representatives. The Committee meeting minutes indicated that some field locations were not represented in the meetings for prolonged periods. For example, there was no representative from Beni (1 of the 4 field offices) for 7 of 10 meetings during the audit period. The Transport Section was also not represented in four of the meetings. Further, the Committee membership did not include military unit representatives. Excluding some Mission personnel components and locations could delay identifying and resolving workplace safety and health issues.

16. The Committee deliberations were not marked for senior management follow-up. Matters that are complex to resolve or require coordination of multiple units should be referred to the Chair of the Committee and then to Mission leadership for direction as recommendations. OIOS noted that significant challenges impeding the implementation of the OSH programme were not escalated. For example, discussions with the OSH Unit indicated that they did not obtain support from some sections in conducting regular inspections. Further, the Unit would have desired that military OSH inspections be covered by the Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE) Unit in a more comprehensive manner.

17. Further, the Committee minutes did not have action points or recommendations for the attention of the DMS, who was responsible for approving the minutes. In the meeting of October 2021, the Chair

emphasized the need for an action matrix to capture required activities to be prepared after every meeting and circulated to responsible officers. However, there was no evidence that this direction was implemented.

(1) MONUSCO should include wider personnel participation on the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Committee, and ensure that the OSH Committee introduces a mechanism to escalate significant OSH matters to senior management for their action.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the OSH Committee would be reconstituted to include military and police personnel to widen participation. In addition, significant OSH deliberations that are complex and require coordination with multiple units will be taken up by the Chair of the OSH Committee for follow-up/escalation with Mission leadership through a matrix that will capture action points assigned to various respondents.

Need to include military and police personnel in the occupational safety and health programme

18. MONUSCO is required to protect and promote the safety and health of all personnel, including police and military, to offer a safe and healthy work environment where personnel are protected from hazards, risks, work-related injuries and diseases.

19. OIOS review of the OSH Committee meeting minutes and discussion with management indicated that the OSH programme primarily focused on civilian staff. There was no evidence that the Mission had included the police and military components in the OSH programme. OIOS field inspection of 15 police and military camps noted the observations below.

20. Three military units experienced challenges with sewage waste disposal. In one location, the raw sewage overflow had spread into the neighboring local community, as seen in figure 1, which contributed to protest demonstrations against the contingent in June and July 2023. For the camps where MONUSCO was responsible for collecting raw sewage for disposal at a centralized sewage treatment plant, OIOS was informed that the Mission had limited transportation options as two sewer trucks had broken down. The MONUSCO 2022/2023 budget included replacing water and sewerage trucks. The centralized sewer plant was an open septic tank whose external walls had collapsed and risked overflowing to the local communities. The sewage challenges pose risks to mission personnel, such as spreading infectious diseases through contamination and fall accidents.

Figure 1: Sewage overflow from a military camp in Bunia



21. OIOS also noted that some safety hazards at military units were not mitigated. One battalion reported cases of skin rash infection to the soldiers in Gina and Fataki as they were using contaminated river water for bathing. OIOS observed inadequate and substandard accommodation units. In 5 of the 10 units inspected, OIOS noted that the accommodations were congested. In these camps, one accommodation

room held 8 to 10 personnel, well above the 4 personnel recommended in the Contingent-Owned Equipment Manual. Due to the congestion, the troops could not effectively use mosquito nets for malaria prevention. OIOS inspection noted that a camp in Gina had 10 active malaria cases. In 1 out of 5 Beni military camps, personnel were not using mosquito nets in their accommodations. In this location, overgrown grass around the camps could pose a malaria hazard in addition to other safety and security threats. At one camp, the troops had to keep their weapons under the bed as there was no dedicated armory storage facility, also attributed to insufficient accommodation. At another camp, a storm had blown away the roofing structure and exposed the personnel to a leaking housing unit.

22. After the audit, the Mission initiated steps to incorporate police and military into the OSH programme. In August 2023, the Mission wrote to contingents requesting the names of designated OSH officers responsible for coordinating and reporting occupational injuries. Adding military and police OSH officers and focal points can enhance OSH activities such as training and awareness sensitization, regular hazard identification through inspections, unified incident reporting to OSH and representation of military units at the OSH Committee. The OSH Unit also informed that a more comprehensive review of OSH parameters would require coordination and support of the COE Unit, and this support was yet to be structured. OIOS review of the incident data indicated that military and police personnel injuries comprised 22 out of the 38 incidents (or 58 per cent) reported in the audit period. This highlights the importance of effective OSH practices for these personnel categories.

(2) MONUSCO should fully integrate police and military units into the occupational safety and health programme and operationalize the police and military focal points to reduce workplace injuries.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the integration of police and military components was ongoing. MONUSCO had already reached out to the military, requesting them to designate OSH safety officers who would be responsible for coordinating and reporting on instances involving occupational injuries. The next step will involve the establishment of roles and responsibilities of contingent OSH focal points in the terms of reference. Also, various inspection checklists will be discussed to enhance understanding of and to start OSH activities at the camp level.

B. Occupational safety and health programme implementation

Need to conduct more comprehensive occupational safety and health risk management

23. MONUSCO was required to examine what could harm its personnel and assess whether enough precautions had been taken to prevent the risk. A plan should be implemented to mitigate identified risks.

24. The 2023 MONUSCO risk register rated OSH as a medium risk needing limited improvement. However, the Mission had not adequately analyzed the organizational workplace safety and health risks, rated and prioritized these risks, and developed risk management plans for existing risks, as highlighted below.

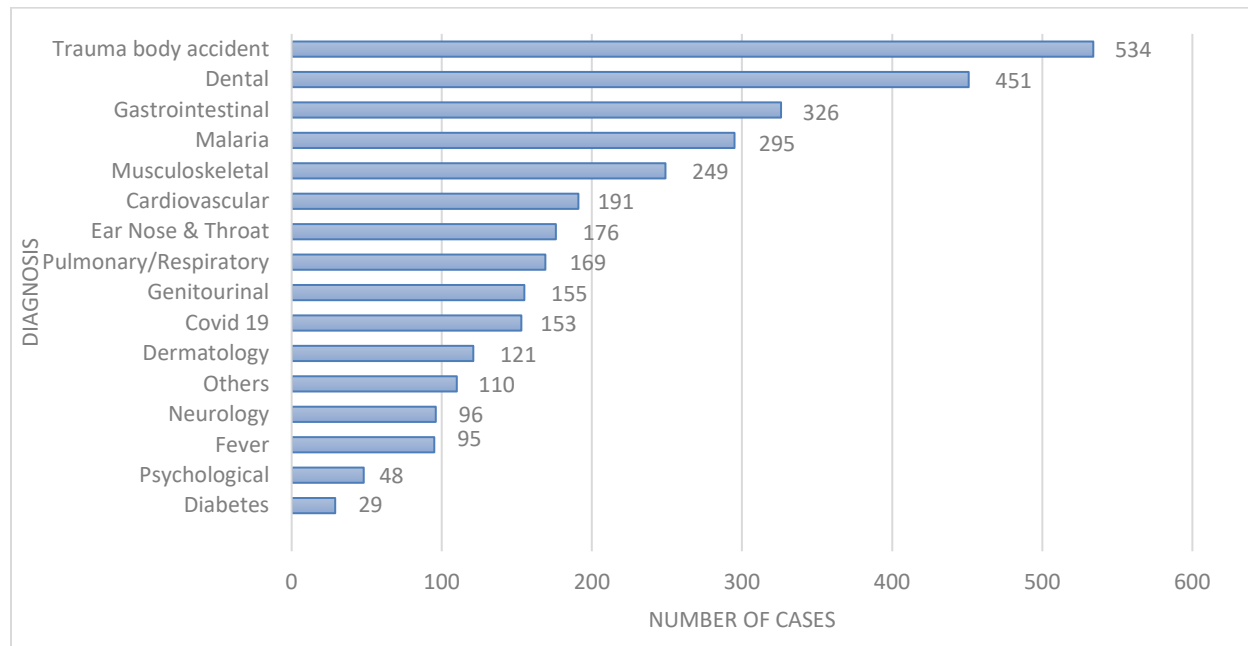
25. The safety hazards and risks related to major incidents like the COVID-19 pandemic were identified and assessed, but some other significant risk factors were not identified, which included:

- Toxic gas emissions from beneath Lake Kivu in Goma.
- Lava and dust emissions from nearby Nyiragongo, an active volcano in Goma. There was escalated volcano activity during the audit period that required the evacuation of personnel out of Goma.

- Fall from high heights for personnel working at telecommunications masts/towers. There were two such incidents during the audit period.
- Defective appliances, inadequate training on the use of equipment and not wearing personal protective gear correctly. There was an explosion of a defective water heater in the audit period.

26. The Mission lacked a plan to identify occupational health and psychological hazards and risks in the workplace. At the time of the audit, the OSH Unit did not identify all occupational health hazards or perform health risk assessments. For example, diseases and injuries recorded in the EarthMed¹ system (as shown in figure 2) were not analyzed to identify possible causality and develop preventive or mitigating measures.

Figure 2: Number of medical conditions for the period January 2021 to June 2023



Source: MONUSCO EarthMed system data

27. The online job hazard analysis form expected to capture emerging hazards from all personnel was not accessible. OIOS inspection of the three compounds in Goma indicated visible hazards were only addressed after causing major accidents. For example, the Lava site had iron rods and elevated obstructions on walk paths. Two staff members tripped on these obstructions, resulting in serious injuries. The hazard reporting platform, that would have been useful to record and proactively address emerging OSH risks, had been decommissioned, and the Field Technology Service could not recover the recorded hazard concerns.

28. The OSH Unit informed that there was no sharing of medical health data records with OSH staff for risk identification due to confidentiality considerations. While OIOS acknowledged the importance of privacy when dealing with medical health data, MONUSCO could work with its medical counterparts to obtain aggregate, non-confidential data to inform its decision-making.

(3) MONUSCO should enhance occupational safety and health (OSH) risk management by analyzing and considering relevant OSH risk factors and incorporating aggregate, non-confidential medical data reported in Earthmed.

¹ The EarthMed system is an electronic medical records and occupational health management system

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 3 and stated that the Mission would enhance the OSH risk management activities. The OSH risk register and treatment plans will be expanded to incorporate risks and key drivers developed from analysis of medical incidents reported in Earthmed and other incident reporting systems. The OSH Unit will coordinate with Medical and other sections to obtain and analyze data in their incident reporting systems and develop risks and key drivers to be included in the risk register.

Need for a training and awareness campaign programme

29. The field OSH implementation guide requires awareness and specific training for mission personnel. A training regimen should be implemented to embed OSH in line management functions, train all supervisors in roles and responsibilities and instruct them how to manage workplace OSH incidents.

30. The Mission did not develop a training plan based on a needs assessment that would have been helpful in evaluating the gaps in training and the audience and training needs that is targeted. During the audit period, MONUSCO conducted three training sessions.

- In March 2021, the Mission conducted OSH responsibilities for supervisors that reached 39 staff members, including only 4 of the 16 OSH Committee members.
- In November 2021, 139 staff were trained in accident causes and prevention.
- In October 2022, 39 staff members were trained in electrical safety, while 185 were trained in warehouse fires, causes and prevention.

31. There was no review of the effectiveness of the trainings by comparing the above attendance to the target audience. Also, no OSH training targeted police, military and contracted personnel. OIOS inspection of four construction projects in Beni and Bunia indicated individual contractors had not received any OSH training, which could have led to at least two personnel in each construction project not using personal protective equipment.

32. Regarding awareness raising, the Mission did not include OSH components in the new personnel induction training sessions, which were mandatory and have high attendance rates. There were no email broadcasts, intranet pop-ups or bulletins to promote awareness of safety hazards to staff members. For example, water purity/safety tests indicated that 2 out of 14 drinking water bottles available regionally (and used by staff) were not fit for human consumption. Awareness of unsafe drinking water hazards could have been included in OSH communications. Interviews with all three field office OSH focal points and operation support managers reiterated the need for enhanced OSH training and awareness campaigns. In October 2023, an OSH awareness campaign was conducted in Kinshasa. In addition to these new awareness campaigns undertaken by the OSH Chief, the OSH Unit had planned to prepare printouts with relevant information to be given to on-boarding Mission personnel.

33. The lack of training and awareness resulted from limited staff to implement the OSH programme. MONUSCO had two staff members dedicated to implementing the OSH training programme. Inadequate training impacted the ability of Mission staff, OSH focal points, OSH Committee members and military focal points to effectively incorporate and consider OSH-related perspectives in their areas of responsibility.

(4) MONUSCO should develop and implement an occupational safety and health training programme based on data-driven assessments of needs and best safety practices for Mission personnel, including contingent units and contractor personnel.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Mission would collect and analyze relevant data from various sources to develop training themes. A training programme based on the developed themes will then be established, with target dates and audience from the civilian and uniformed components of the Mission and contractor personnel working within the Mission. However, due to the current status of the Mission, it is not certain how much of this recommendation can be implemented.

Need to conduct workplace inspections and track implementation of inspection recommendations

34. To identify OSH hazards as part of ongoing risk assessment, the Mission is required to conduct regular OSH inspections. The recommendations arising from the inspections should be recorded and tracked for implementation in a time-bound manner.

35. The Mission had not regularly conducted the required OSH inspections at its warehouses and campsites. Only 52 of the required 180 inspections (or 29 per cent) for warehouses, transport workshops, clinics and cafeteria were conducted. OIOS also noted that there were no documented inspection work plans to record the workplaces to be inspected, inspections conducted, outstanding recommendations made and the status of their implementation. Consequently, when the quarterly inspections in field offices were delayed, there was no established monitoring to identify these delays and initiate remedial actions for recommendations made. For example, the OSH Unit did not track the implementation of the 244 recommendations from the 52 inspections, and it was not possible to assess whether these were implemented.

36. The Mission's OSH programme contained multiple activities, including conducting OSH inspections covering various facilities in different locations, which required resources to support the implementation of the programme activities. The OSH Unit comprised four staff members, so it needed to develop an inspection plan to allocate constrained resources to focus on the facilities and locations that pose higher workplace safety risks and focus on remediating the recommendations that significantly impact the workplace.

(5) MONUSCO should develop and implement a safety and health inspection work plan and follow up on documented inspection recommendations.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 5 and stated that a workplace safety and health inspection plan would be developed and implemented. A matrix would also be developed to track implementation of major recommendations. The new approach will involve senior management as this will enhance adherence to the inspection plan by all relevant sections/units involved in the inspection, and thereby a wider coverage of required inspections.

Need to improve the incident data collection system

37. The United Nations OSH Framework calls for implementing an incident reporting system where occupational safety-related incidents are reported and documented. The collection and analysis of reliable incident/accident data enables informed decision-making that targets actions and resources to the areas of higher occupational risks and enables objective performance assessment of safety risk management efforts.

38. MONUSCO had deployed an online data capture incident report form accessed through a link in iSeek. The incident report forms were approved by the OSH officer and submitted to the OSH Office in the United Nations Headquarters. An email communication about the availability and how to use the form was made to the medical facilities in March 2023.

39. However, the link had been non-functional since June 2023, as confirmed by the OSH officer. Interviews with health officers in the field offices indicated that they were not aware of the requirement to report OSH incidents through these forms and only used Earthmed for capturing data on medical conditions. Earthmed was a repository for all medical records and was not leveraged to support OSH reporting. The OSH Unit stated that training on reporting OSH incidents will be held with all contingent OSH focal points and medical officers before February 2024. The medical officers will receive reminder information from time to time during the weekly section meetings. Due to the frequent rotation of contingent focal points, there will be periodic presentations online and in person.

40. Not capturing complete OSH-related data distorted the Mission's understanding of its OSH environment and required interventions. For example, there was a considerable disparity between the reported OSH incidents of 38 against Earthmed's 534 cases (504 relating to military personnel largely not captured in the OSH database) related to body accidents from 1 January 2021 to June 2023. Without complete reporting, there is a risk that severe OSH cases may not be investigated, and corrective actions taken. For example, during the field inspection in Bukavu, OIOS noted there were two serious accidents involving staff members falling while attending to a communication antenna. One involved a fall from a high altitude in July 2021 which resulted in a broken arm and required four outside Mission hospitalizations for periods exceeding six months. These cases were not captured in the OSH reporting database, and neither were they investigated.

41. Incomplete records of work-related incidents impact the Mission's ability to identify and promptly correct hazardous workplace conditions to prevent recurrences.

(6) MONUSCO should re-establish the occupational safety and health (OSH) data reporting form to make it accessible to all personnel and regularly review and reconcile the information with other safety-related data to ensure the completeness of its OSH data.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the OSH Unit was in contact with the Field Technology Section to have the link to the UNHQ online OSH incident report form posted on the MONUSCO iSeek page on desktops. This will facilitate access by all staff members. Reporting of OSH incidents by contingent facilities will be emphasized; and reporting by staff facilities will be enhanced to capture fairly accurate OSH incident data involving all Mission personnel.

The Mission was taking action to improve fact-finding investigations for major incidents

42. MONUSCO was required to analyze and investigate all major OSH incidents to identify causes and implement remedial measures to prevent recurrence. Incident investigations also assist in developing best practices and improving the design of training programmes and safety messaging. Every injury and near misses where personnel narrowly avoided severe injury should be seen as a tool for understanding why injuries occur.

43. OIOS review of all the 13 incidents that resulted in the loss of more than three working days, the criterion for major incidents, indicated that MONUSCO did not initiate investigations or fact-finding reviews for 12 of the incidents to analyze the injuries for the causal factors that could be modified or eliminated through best safety practices. Such investigation results could also be used to update the risk register and Mission hazard profiles. As a result, the Mission did not seize the opportunity to prevent the recurrence of the major incidents. For example, there were 13 fall incidents out of the 38 OSH incidents reported throughout the audit period, and proper investigations and prompt corrective actions may have served to prevent or slow down recurrence.

44. MONUSCO informed that the OSH Unit did not have an investigative but rather fact-finding role on incidents that occurred. Further, fact-finding teams are set up by the DMS based on any incident occurring at the time. The team setup comprises membership to address the particular incident. Therefore, it would not be feasible to set up fact-finding investigation teams in the field offices to be on standby to carry out the required major incident investigations when they occur. Teams are only set up when required and cannot be established on a long-term basis. Of the 12 incidents, 8 were related to the military component. The OSH Unit does not have authority to conduct investigations or initiate fact-finding teams for military-related incidents. In a meeting with the Special Investigations Unit and the Force Provost Martial, it was agreed that all OSH-related incidents/investigation reports would be shared with the OSH Unit. In view of the commitment of the OSH Unit to obtain all investigation reports from the Special Investigations Unit and the Force Provost Martial and to set up ad hoc fact-finding teams as required, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

C. Performance monitoring

Need to establish and evaluate accident and incident reduction targets

45. MONUSCO is required to monitor and measure the performance of OSH implementation to reduce work-related accidents and incidents. The OSH Committee should establish overall incident reduction targets and review the achievement of those targets.

46. MONUSCO kept track of the incidents recorded and the related personnel hours lost, and these were presented at every quarterly OSH Committee meeting. Further reporting was made on training conducted and progress on workplace inspections. However, this reporting was not adequate as the number of incidents or persons to be trained had not been specified. Also, there were 15 incidents in 2022 compared to 11 in 2021. There were 12 incidents already recorded halfway through 2023. This upward increase in incidents had not been analyzed to establish the root cause and devise targeted interventions to reduce the incidents.

47. MONUSCO had established an annual self-assessment using Department of Operational Support templates. While the Mission completed these assessments for 2021 and 2022, these were compliance-focused, and the responses were generic against the minimum operational occupational safety requirements. For example, the template required MONUSCO to indicate if regular workplace inspections were conducted. In 2021 and 2022, the OSH Unit indicated that this was done even though the inspections did not cover all the facilities and were only for 29 per cent of the required inspections. In 2022, the OSH Unit also indicated compliance to organize OSH campaigns through CISCO phones, office computers and posters, even though the general safety rules posters were only produced in October 2021, and no other awareness activities were conducted. The generic nature of the responses did not provide an adequate basis for evaluating the Mission's performance in implementing the OSH programme.

48. The OSH Unit informed OIOS that OSH practices were at the early stages and a level of maturity was required prior to establishing performance benchmarks, which has now been attained.

(7) MONUSCO should establish performance targets, including overall incident reduction targets, to enable monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the occupational safety and health programme and its impact.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 7 and stated that there was an OSH programme implementation plan that was followed annually. Going forward, with the participation of senior

management, target dates for the implementation of elements of the programme will be set and reports of implementation will be submitted to the OSH Committee.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

49. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of MONUSCO 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 occupational safety and health programme in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ² / Important ³	C/O ⁴	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁵
1	MONUSCO should include wider personnel participation on the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Committee and ensure that the OSH Committee introduce a mechanism to escalate significant OSH matters to senior management for their action.	Important	O	Receipt of the reconstituted OSH Committee, and evidence of a mechanism for the escalation of significant OSH matters to mission senior management.	31 December 2024
2	MONUSCO should fully integrate police and military units into the occupational safety and health programme and operationalize the police and military focal points to reduce workplace injuries.	Important	O	Receipt of a list of contingent OSH safety officers and focal points, updated OSH Committee terms of reference and inspection checklists.	31 December 2024
3	MONUSCO should enhance occupational safety and health (OSH) risk management by analyzing and considering relevant OSH risk factors, and incorporating aggregate, non-confidential medical data reported in Earthmed.	Important	O	Receipt of a revised and comprehensive OSH risk register derived from analysis of relevant medical and other incident data.	31 December 2024
4	MONUSCO should develop and implement an occupational safety and health training programme based on data-driven assessments of needs and best safety practices for Mission personnel, including contingent units and contractor personnel.	Important	O	Receipt of a comprehensive training programme based on assessed needs and with target dates and audience.	31 December 2024
5	MONUSCO should develop and implement a safety and health inspection work plan and follow up on documented inspection recommendations.	Important	O	Receipt of a workplace safety and health inspection plan and evidence of tracking of implementation of major recommendations.	31 December 2024
6	MONUSCO should re-establish the occupational safety and health (OSH) data reporting form to make it accessible to all personnel and regularly review and reconcile the information with other safety-related data to ensure the completeness of its OSH data.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the online OSH incident report form has been re-established and its usage by military and staff facilities enhanced to boost the completeness of OSH data.	31 December 2024
7	MONUSCO should establish performance targets, including overall incident reduction targets, to enable monitoring and reporting on the	Important	O	Receipt of established OSH performance targets, related timelines, and reporting of performance results.	31 December 2024

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of occupational safety and health programme in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical²/ Important³	C/ O⁴	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date⁵
	implementation of the occupational safety and health programme and its impact.				

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 MONUSCO in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response



MONUSCO

Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la
Stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission
in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: 22 December 2023

Ref.: SRSG.DMS.MONUSCO-2023-02275

To: Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Director
À: Internal Audit Division, OIOS

From: Ms. Bintou Keita 
De: Special Representative of the Secretary-General
and Head of MONUSCO

**Subject: Mission response to the Draft Report on the audit of
Objet: occupational safety and health programme in MONUSCO
(Assignment No. AP2023-620-04)**

1. Your Interoffice memorandum dated 11 December 2023 (Ref: OIOS-2023-02251) forwarding the Draft Report on the subject audit is received with thanks.
2. Attached please find the Mission's comments on the recommendations in the Draft Report for your consideration.
3. Thank you and best regards.

cc: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General for OIOS
Mr. Ebrima Ceesay, Director of Mission Support, MONUSCO
Mr. Elie Rizkallah, Senior Administrative Officer, MONUSCO
Mr. Muhammad Zia Khan, Chief, Occupational Safety and Health Unit
Ms. Judith Atiagaga, Mission Audit Focal Point, MONUSCO
Mr. Jeffrey Lin, Professional Practices Section, Internal Audit Division,
OIOS

Management Response

Audit of occupational safety and health programme in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1.	MONUSCO should include wider personnel participation on the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Committee and ensure that the OSH Committee introduce a mechanism to escalate significant OSH matters to senior management for their action.	Important	Yes	Chief, OSH	31 December 2024	<p>The Mission accepts recommendation #1 and action will be taken to reconstitute the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Committee in order to widen the participation on the Committee by including representatives from the Military and Police components, in keeping with the integration of uniformed personnel into MONUSCO OSH practices.</p> <p>In addition, the significant OSH deliberations that are complex and require coordination with multiple units will be taken up by the Chair of the OSH Committee for follow up/escalation with Mission Leadership through a matrix that will capture action points assigned to various respondents.</p>
2.	MONUSCO should fully integrate police and military units into the occupational safety and health programme and operationalize the police and military focal points to reduce workplace injuries.	Important	Yes	Chief, OSH	31 December 2024	<p>The Mission accepts recommendation #2 and would like to state that the process of integrating police and military components in the occupational safety and health programme is ongoing. As correctly noted by the Audit Team and acknowledged in the report, OSH has already reached out to the military requesting them to designate OSH safety officers who would be responsible for coordination and reporting on instances involving occupational injuries.</p> <p>The next step will involve the establishment of roles and responsibilities of Contingent OSH focal points. Also,</p>

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.

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Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>to be discussed and determined will be the various inspection checklists in order to enhance understanding and start of OSH activities at Camp level where most of the occupational incidents occur.</p> <p>Further, the Force Commander has issued an order for each contingent to designate an OSH officer to work closely with OSH Unit. In this regard, OSH is in the process of developing a template to be used for fact-finding by the Troop Contributing Countries (TCC)/Police Contributing Countries (PCC) OSH designated officers. Terms of Reference (TORs) will also be developed for the TCC/PCC designated OSH officers. A first draft of the TORs is attached, which will be discussed with TCC and PCC colleagues before finalization. Upon development, the template and TORs will be provided to the Audit Team for verification.</p>
3.	MONUSCO should enhance occupational safety and health (OSH) risk management by analyzing and considering relevant OSH risk factors, and incorporating aggregate, non-confidential medical data reported in Earthmed	Important	Yes	Chief, OSH	31 December 2024	The Mission accepts recommendation #3 and will enhance the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) risk management activities. The OSH risk register and treatment plans will be expanded to incorporate risks and key drivers developed from analysis of medical incidents reported in Earthmed and other incident reporting systems. OSH will coordinate with Medical and other Sections to obtain and analyze data in their incident reporting systems and develop risks and key drivers to be included in the risk register. Once developed, the risk register and treatment plans will be provided to the Audit Team for verification.

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Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
4.	MONUSCO should develop and implement an occupational safety and health training programme based on data-driven assessments of needs and best safety practices for Mission personnel, including contingent units and contractor personnel.	Important	Yes	Chief, OSH	31 December 2024	MONUSCO accepts recommendation #4 and will collect and analyze relevant data from various sources to develop training themes. A training program based on the developed themes will then be established, with target dates and audience from both the civilian and uniformed components of the Mission, and contractor personnel working within mission premises where required. Due to the current stage of the Mission, it is not certain how much of this recommendation can be implemented. But, as far as it is feasible, the progress of the implementation of training plan will be shared with the Audit Team for verification at each stage.
5.	MONUSCO should develop and implement a safety and health inspection work plan and follow up on documented inspection recommendations.	Important	Yes	Chief, OSH	31 December 2024	MONUSCO accepts recommendation #5 and will develop and implement workplace safety and health inspection plan. A matrix will also be developed to track implementation of major recommendations. This new approach will involve Senior Management as this will enhance adherence to the inspection plan by all relevant Sections/Units involved in the inspection, and thereby a wider coverage of required inspections.
6.	MONUSCO should re-establish the occupational safety and health (OSH) data reporting form to make it accessible to all personnel and regularly review and reconcile the information with other safety-related data to ensure the completeness of its OSH data.	Important	Yes	Chief, OSH	31 December 2024	MONUSCO accepts recommendation #6. The OSH Unit is in contact with the Field Technology Section (FTS) to have the link to the UNHQ online OSH incident report form to be posted on MONUSCO Iseek page on desktop. This will facilitate access by all staff members. Reporting of OSH incidents by Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) facilities will be emphasized; and reporting by UNOE facilities enhanced so as to capture

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						a fairly accurate OSH incident data involving all Mission personnel.
7.	MONUSCO should establish performance targets, including overall incident reduction targets, to enable monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the occupational safety and health programme and its impact.	Important	Yes	Chief, OSH	31 December 2024	MONUSCO accepts recommendation #7 and would like to state that there is an OSH program implementation plan which is followed annually. Henceforth, with participation of Senior Management, target dates for the implementation of elements of the program will be set and reports of implementation will be submitted to the OSH Committee.