



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2023/099

Audit of movement control activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

The Mission needed to enhance the capacity of its movement control function to effectively support and monitor the movement of passengers and cargo, install security scanners to identify forbidden items in cargo, and provide appropriate facilities for the safe storage of dangerous goods

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Audit of movement control activities 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 movement control activities 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 activities implemented by MINUSCA for the movement of passengers and cargo and compliance with policies and guidelines governing movement control activities in field missions. The audit covered the period from July 2021 to June 2023 and included a review of (a) staffing resources for movement control activities; (b) processes for moving civilians, troops and formed police units' passengers and cargo; and (c) movement tracking and performance monitoring.

MINUSCA implemented measures to ensure that only authorized passengers travelled on the Mission's aircraft. Between July 2021 and June 2023, the Mission carried out 97 strategic flights to rotate troops and police units, transporting a total of 59,287 passengers. However, MINUSCA MovCon Unit did not have staffing resources to adequately support and monitor the movement of passengers and cargo. The Mission also had a significant backlog of containers to be moved to sector locations. Additionally, MINUSCA was not able to scan cargo to identify dangerous goods and did not have the facilities for safe storage of dangerous goods pending shipment.

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

- Take steps, including addressing staffing constraints in line with the civilian staffing review, to ensure that prioritized movement control tasks are adequately implemented;
- Issue revised guidance on the approval process of movement of personnel forms to include the need for the immediate supervisors' involvement prior to approval of travel within the Mission area;
- Install x-ray security scanners at all locations used to receive cargo to be transported using the Mission's transport assets to ensure that dangerous or forbidden items are identified;
- Avail sufficient spare parts for the timely repair and maintenance of the Heavy Transport Units trucks, and provide adequate number of drivers to operate available trucks;
- Finalize the code cable to the Logistics Division at Headquarters presenting the impact of the use of heavy transport company and explore all options to ensure an economical and efficient solution is achieved to minimize the backlog of containers held in Bangui;
- Provide adequate designated facilities for the safe storage of dangerous goods at its cargo terminals; and
- Enhance the required equipment and ground surface conditions at the centralized warehouse; and timely recover amounts paid as demurrage charges due to delays by the customs clearance vendor.

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

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Audit of movement control activities 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 movement control activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

2. Movement Control (MovCon) operations include planning, coordinating, organizing, executing and controlling of transportation of passengers and cargo from a point of origin to a destination. It also covers selecting the mode of transport, including the allocation and/or commitment of transportation assets within a given timeframe, whilst maintaining visibility in transit and utilizing the most cost-effective means to meet operational requirements.

3. Movement control activities in MINUSCA are managed by the MovCon Unit under the Supply Chain Management pillar of the Mission Support Division. MovCon operations and activities are governed by the Department of Peace Operations and Department of Operational Support Movement Control Manual (issued on 1 December 2014), the MINUSCA standard operating procedures (SOP) for MovCon Unit (August 2016) and the MINUSCA joint SOP for road convoy movements.

4. The MovCon Unit carried out movement of passengers and cargo during the period from July 2021 to June 2023 as reflected in table 1.

Table 1- Summary of movements of passengers (including military/Formed Police Units troops) and cargo

Financial year	Passengers			Cargo (tons)		
	Air	Road	Total	Air	Road	Total
2021/22	38,275	-	38,275	570.70	3,580.10	4,150.80
2022/23	42,303	-	42,303	640.80	3,766.80	4,407.60
Total	80,578	-	80,578	1,211.50	7,346.90	8,558.40

Source: MovCon Unit statistics of passenger and cargo movements for 2021/22 and 2022/23

5. Movement of military troops and formed police units (FPUs) personnel on deployment, rotation, and repatriation was carried out under two instruments: (a) long-term charter (LTC) arrangements entered into by the MovCon Section (MCS) at United Nations Headquarters; and (b) letters of assist (LOA) where troop/police contributing countries provide short term air transport services on a reimbursable basis. All the movements of military troops/FPU personnel on deployment, rotation and repatriation require the issuance of an approved movement order (MovOrd) and on completion, a movement completion report (MCR).

6. The MovCon Unit in MINUSCA is headed by a Chief at P4 level. The Unit has 70 staff, comprising 19 international and 26 national staff, 19 United Nations volunteers and 6 military staff officers. In addition, the Unit has 37 individual contractors. MovCon Unit operates offices in Bangui, 11 field offices and Douala in Cameroon.

7. The approved budgets, including staffing costs, for movement control activities for 2021/22 and 2022/23 were \$39 million and \$31 million, respectively.

8. Comments provided by MINUSCA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

9. The objective of the audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of activities implemented by MINUSCA for the movement of passengers and cargo and compliance with policies and guidelines governing movement control activities in field missions.

10. This audit was included in the 2023 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the criticality of movement control activities to effectively move personnel and cargo to support the implementation of the Mission's mandate.

11. OIOS conducted this audit from August to October 2023. The audit covered the period from July 2021 to June 2023. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks areas in the movement control activities, which included: (a) staffing resources for movement control activities; (b) processes for moving civilians, troops and formed police units passengers and cargo; and (c) movement tracking and performance monitoring.

12. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel involved in the movement control activities; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of data related to movement of personnel and cargo; (d) random sample testing of 66 of 97 flights to check compliance with policies and guidelines; (e) observation of the rotation of uniformed personnel in Bangui; and (f) inspection of cargo handling facilities in Bangui.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Staffing resources for movement control activities

Need for adequate staffing resources to implement priority tasks of the Movement Control Unit and the Joint Movement Coordination Centre

14. The Joint Movement Coordination Centre (JMCC) within MovCon Unit is responsible for the planning and coordination of all movements of military troops and FPU contingents within the Mission's area of operations. The Movement Control Manual requires MINUSCA to ensure that the JMCC is fully staffed and represented by all Mission components, including military, police and civilian.

15. JMCC in MINUSCA had seven staff, including three international staff members (of which one had been on sick leave for over one year and one other post had been vacant from December 2022 until August 2023), one national staff member, and three military staff officers. There was no representation from the police component even though an estimated 11 per cent of the troop movements were conducted for FPUs. Compared to staff assigned to support MovCon operations in other Missions of a similar size, MINUSCA was operating with minimal staff. For example, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (which had 6 integrated locations compared to 12 locations for MINUSCA) had 23 staff in its JMCC operations. Also, although the United Nations Mission in South Sudan was configured differently, it had 181 staff in its MovCon Unit compared to 70 for MINUSCA.

16. During the audit, the MovCon Unit proposed three new posts for international UNVs, three individual police officers and one military staff officer for the JMCC as a result of the civilian staffing review (CSR), which was being finalized by the Mission. The CSR supported seven additional posts for

MovCon (including three for JMCC), which would be implemented in a phased manner due to budgetary constraints. The limited staffing in JMCC and the MovCon Unit had a detrimental effect on its operations as it resulted in multiple failures to complete tasks as set out throughout this report.

- (1) MINUSCA should take necessary steps, including addressing staffing resources in line with the civilian staffing review, to ensure that prioritized movement control tasks such as organization of rotation meetings, preparation and dissemination of movement orders, flight monitoring, and timely preparation of movement completion reports are adequately implemented.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Mission would take the necessary steps to recommend the remaining staffing establishment for consideration during the preparation of the 2025/26 budget to supplement the positions that the recent Civilian Staffing Review endorsed, and which have been included in the 2024/25 budget. Meanwhile, as interim measures, individual police officers with the required skillsets will be identified to provide additional support to the Unit.

B. Processes for moving civilians, troops and formed police units passengers and cargo

(i) Movement of passengers on the Mission's aircraft

Need to document the revised approval process for movement of personnel forms

17. The Mission, through an administrative directive dated 14 September 2020, required all personnel intending to proceed on official travel with a cost implication within the Mission area to prepare justification requests for approval by the Director of Mission Support (DMS) prior to their travel. To facilitate requisitioning and approval of movement of personnel (MOP) requests, MINUSCA had developed a travel module in the Field Support Suite (FSS) enterprise system. A review of 75 randomly selected MOP requests indicated that they had been authorized and approved prior to travel, and where required for cases of travel with cost implication, the memoranda duly signed by the DMS. However, all the three levels of required approvals in FSS were granted by personnel in the Travel Unit only, without the involvement of immediate supervisors of the travelling personnel, resulting in the supervisors sometimes not being aware of the proposed travel.

18. In September 2023, the Mission initiated measures in a phased manner to review and amend the approval process of MOPs, that would require prior approval of MOP requests by immediate supervisors and designated officers before approval by the Travel Unit. However, as at the time of the audit, the Mission had not yet developed and disseminated standard procedures to effect this change. This may result in delays in the implementation of the revisions of the approval process for passenger MOPs.

- (2) MINUSCA should issue revised standard operating procedures on the approval process of movement of personnel forms to include the need for the immediate supervisors' involvement prior to approval of travel within the Mission area.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the approval process of the movement of personnel (MOP) holistically was currently under review. Once approved, the new procedure will be communicated to all stakeholders and implemented Mission wide.

Measures were implemented to allow only authorized passengers to travel on the Mission's aircraft

19. To optimize the utilization of its air assets, and to facilitate the movement of passengers and cargo, the Mission prepared flight schedules which were reviewed on a quarterly basis and distributed to all personnel. These schedules indicated locations and frequencies of flights. MovCon Unit prepared load lists and subsequently passenger manifests based on approved MOPs and travel priorities.

20. OIOS review of 47 flights that were operated on two days during the audit period indicated that the policies governing the movement control activities were adhered to for all 403 passengers. The load lists included information relating to travel destination; names of passengers; category of personnel; the passenger's organizational unit; identification document number; the date when the MOP was initiated; and the travel priority assigned. MovCon Unit subsequently used this information to prepare passenger manifests which assigned passengers to the allocated aircraft, with preference provided to the passengers with a higher travel priority. OIOS noted that 68 passengers on the load lists were rightfully not included on the manifests, due to late submission of their MOPs and limited capacity on the aircraft assigned.

21. In Bangui, MINUSCA had implemented measures to ensure that only authorized passengers were allowed to travel on the Mission's aircraft. This included requiring passengers to present approved MOPs together with their identification documents during check-in. A review of a register of incidents noted an instance where the Mission's check-in personnel identified an unauthorized person who had presented a validly approved MOP matching their identification document but whose appearance was different from the photograph in the identification document, indicating an impersonation. Also, OIOS observed an instance in April 2023 where a passenger, who had not travelled as previously scheduled, was denied boarding due to not following the required process for amendment of MOP and inclusion on the passenger manifest. Following an amendment of the MOP, the passenger was allowed to travel on a different flight. OIOS concluded that the Mission had implemented adequate measures to ensure that only authorized passengers were allowed on the Mission's aircraft in Bangui.

(ii) Movement of troops/formed police units

There was need to enhance the coordination and monitoring of the movement of troops

22. MovCon Unit, in co-ordination with MCS developed annual rotation/deployment plans that indicated the dates, routes, types of aircraft and number of passengers for the movement of each military troop and FPU contingent. During the audit period, the MovCon Unit conducted 97 strategic flight movements carrying 59,287 passengers using LOAs (48 flights) and LTCs (49 flights) at a total cost of \$41.6 million. A review of 35 movements (66 flights) that consisted of 18 LOAs and 17 LTCs indicated the following:

- As required, MovOrd for all movements were approved by the DMS and the Force Chief of Staff (for the movement of military troops) and the Police Commissioner (for the movement of FPUs).
- 29 of the 66 flights reviewed did not have adequately completed passenger manifests indicating the number and weight of checked-in and carry-on luggage items. Instead, only passenger lists were provided, particularly for the incoming rotation flights, making it impossible to check whether the terms of the MovOrd had been complied with. On several occasions, the weight of the luggage exceeded the prescribed limit. MovCon Unit stated that due to staffing constraints it did not deploy flight monitors and therefore did not have visibility and control over the weight and sometimes cargo contents of incoming rotation flights. MovCon Unit further stated that despite several reminders, most military troops and FPU contingents did not provide accurate luggage weight.

- Although the Aviation Safety Manual required MovCon Unit to prepare a carrier assessment report (CAR) in conjunction with the Mission Aviation Safety Officer, CARs were available for only 3 out of 56 (or 5 per cent) reviewed flights for which they were required. Ten reviewed flights were commercial and therefore did not require the CAR.
- MCRs, which were required to be prepared by MovCon Unit and shared with MCS within 48 hours from the completion of movements to serve as a basis for payment of services, were not always prepared and shared in a timely manner. For example, MCRs were timely submitted for only 26 out of 66 (or 39 per cent) flights reviewed. Delays in submission of MCRs ranged from 3 to 46 days, and in one instance 6 months. To facilitate the reporting process, the Mission started developing a system for digitalization of the MCRs and CARs and the project was in testing stage as of September 2023.

23. OIOS observation of a military troop unit's rotation flight on 12 and 13 September 2023 noted that during the check-in process, the troop's personnel did not adhere to instructions provided in the MovOrd, including not following the sequence indicated on the passenger list provided to the check-in counter. Consequently, the number of bags and their weight indicated in the final manifest were not matched to the actual passengers physically present at the check-in counter.

24. The above control deficiencies were attributed to resource constraints of the JMCC. The JMCC team had fallen behind in organizing rotation meetings and did not prepare and disseminate MovOrds to the concerned stakeholders in a timely manner. In the absence of flight monitors, MovCon Unit did not maintain enough visibility on the movement process. The risk of carrying undeclared passengers, restricted dangerous goods, prohibited articles in cargo and overweight luggage in the flights was increased. This risk eventuated when, in one instance, the host government authorities seized forbidden items that had been brought by a contingent upon arrival, resulting in a serious reputational damage to the Mission. As a recommendation has been included in this report on the need to take steps, including addressing staffing constraints, to ensure priority movement control tasks are completed, no additional recommendation is made in this regard.

MINUSCA needed to enhance the verification of invoices submitted by the long-term charter service provider prior to payment

25. MINUSCA utilized air assets under the LTC and LOA arrangements managed by MCS for the deployment, rotation, and repatriation of military troops and FPU contingents. In case of LTC, the service provider submitted a monthly invoice covering services for the whole Organization to the Strategic Air Operations Centre (SAOC) in the United Nations Global Service Centre in Brindisi. Upon receipt of the invoice, the SAOC requested MINUSCA to verify the flight details, including the rotating military troops or FPUs and the number of incoming and outgoing passengers. Subsequently, MINUSCA created shopping carts and purchase orders in Umoja to enable the SAOC to make payments to the service provider.

26. OIOS review of the cost involved in the rotation movements during 2021/22 and 2022/23 noted a significant increase in the costs of rotation of four units (one FPU, and three military contingents) for similar destinations. In 2022/23 the rotation costs of these four units increased by 60 per cent, 68 per cent, 66 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively, compared to 2021/22. For example, in 2021/22 MINUSCA paid \$691,000 for the rotation of a military unit with 720 personnel that was performed under LOA. However, in 2022/23, the Mission paid \$1.16 million (or 68 per cent more than the previous year) for the same number of passengers on the same route when the rotation was carried out under the LTC.

27. The MovCon Unit indicated that it was not able to verify the accuracy of each element of the invoice which made up the total cost of flights for MINUSCA as the service provider submitted a consolidated

invoice to SOAC for services provided to all the United Nations peacekeeping missions during a particular month. These invoices only indicated the total amount charged to each Mission but did not provide details on the number of flights completed, number of passengers carried and costs of various components such as fuel. Thus, MINUSCA's verification was limited to checking the lump sum amount charged to it against the budgeted amount and the number of passengers carried on the flights. There was therefore no comprehensive and detailed verification of the accuracy of the LTC invoiced amount to ensure that individual charges were in accordance with the contract terms. The Mission indicated that although it consistently reviewed and contested the LTC invoices, SAOC was yet to provide a clear methodology on the itemization of invoices. As the matter affected several peacekeeping missions, the Chief of MINUSCA MovCon Unit had sent correspondence to the Chief of MCS in New York in June and August 2023 as a prelude to escalating the issue to the Director of Logistics Division in the Department of Operational Support, if not resolved. A result was awaited. Due to the specific action planned by MINUSCA, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

There was a need to enhance the efficiency in escorting of convoys

28. OIOS review of convoy co-ordination noted that significant time was spent during the hand-over by military units involved in escorting convoys between areas of responsibility in the central and eastern parts of the country. Mission Support Centre (MSC) Operations Unit indicated that this issue had been discussed on several occasions and most recently with the visiting United Nations Headquarters' Logistics Assessment Team in September 2023 to consider the option of a single dedicated military unit to escort convoys throughout their journey. This arrangement was currently in place for the western region of the country. However, no progress had been made to implement this option in the central and eastern parts of the country as of the time of the audit. In discussions with OIOS, MINUSCA agreed to engage the relevant stakeholders, including the Force Commander's Office to discuss the feasibility of this option, and concurred that a single dedicated unit for escorting convoys could contribute to expediting the turnaround time of the convoys thereby improving the efficiency of the cargo delivery to its areas of operation.

(iii) Movement of cargo

Need to enhance the screening of cargo prior to transportation

29. The check-in process for the Mission's aircraft in Bangui was conducted at the M'poko international airport through two dedicated counters. All passengers and their luggage were subjected to the security protocols established by the civil aviation authorities of the host government, which included passengers presenting identification and authorized travel documents to the security personnel, completion of mandatory security forms that were submitted to the national authorities and the screening of luggage prior to loading. Terminals for airfields in the field offices were situated within the Mission's compound, and the Mission's personnel managed all the check-in processes. The screening of passengers, luggage and cargo, performed jointly by United Nations Department of Safety and Security and MovCon Unit personnel during the check-in process prior to boarding, was required to identify items that are forbidden from transportation using the Mission's air assets.

30. OIOS observation of the process of receiving cargo to be transported by air from Bangui showed that MovCon Unit personnel manually inspected the consignments. This was because the Mission had not yet installed its 13 x-ray security scanners with an estimated cost of \$204,602 that were received between 2016 and 2018 and were still held as inventory in the centralized warehouse in Bangui. This resulted as the Mission had not prioritized the installation of x-ray machines as a part of enhancing its security screening procedures for cargo to be transported using its air and surface transport assets. The manual inspection of cargo was not effective and could result in failure to identify dangerous or forbidden items that could

endanger the safety of passengers/personnel and the Mission’s transport assets and could expose the organization to reputational risk.

(3) MINUSCA should prioritize the installation of x-ray security scanners at all locations used to receive cargo to be transported using the Mission’s transport assets to ensure that dangerous or forbidden items are identified.

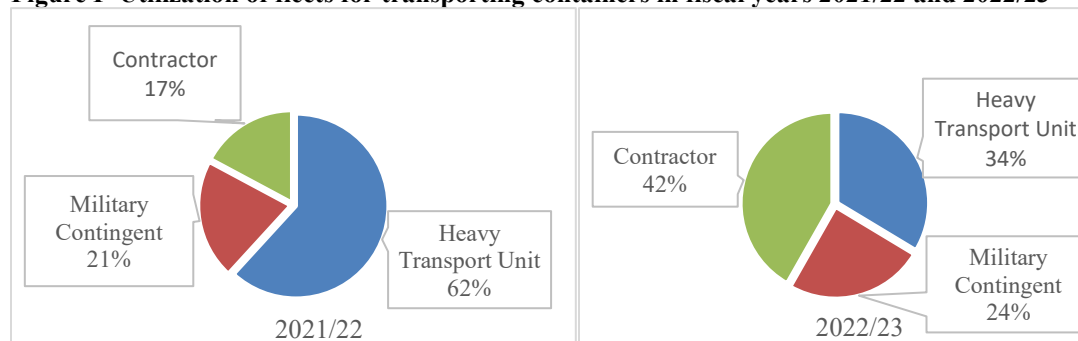
MINUSCA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that 13 x-ray machines were distributed to the Sectors, and 2 were currently on standby, pending the completion of the MINUSCA terminal at Mpoko airport.

There was a need to enhance the efficiency of inland transportation and clear the backlog of containers

31. The MovCon Unit was responsible for coordinating and planning the most economical and safe movements between Bangui and MINUSCA field locations by inland transportation for both United Nations-owned and contingent-owned cargo using three available fleet options: (i) MovCon Heavy Transportation Unit (HTU); (ii) a heavy transport company (HTC) of a military contingent; and (iii) a long-term transport contractor. A coordination mechanism, chaired by the MSC was required to determine the priority of the movement of cargo to the field locations. MINUSCA had implemented this coordination mechanism and held meetings regularly, as required.

32. Based on the priorities established during the meetings, the MovCon Unit convoy co-ordination cell utilized the available transport fleet assets and options to dispatch the cargo to the field locations. During 2021/22 and 2022/23, MovCon Unit utilized the three fleet options to transport 780 containers (4,620 metric tons) and 565 containers (3,577 metric tons), respectively, from Bangui to different sectors, as indicated in figure I below.

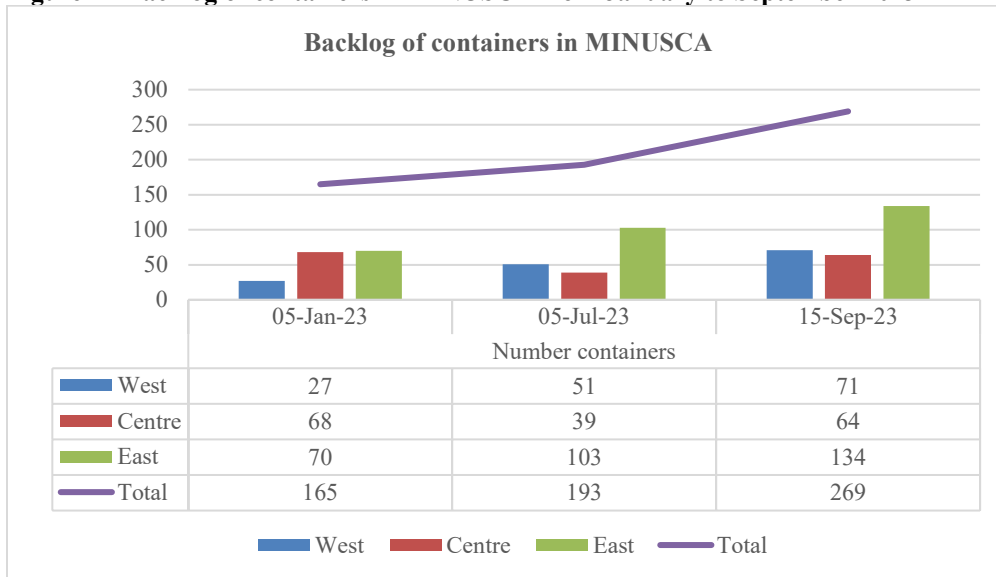
Figure I- Utilization of fleets for transporting containers in fiscal years 2021/22 and 2022/23



Source: MovCon Unit data of tonnage per fleet

33. However, OIOS review of movements from January to September 2023 noted an increasing trend in the backlog of containers that should have been transported to field locations but were still held in Bangui, as indicated in figure II.

Figure II- Backlog of containers in MINUSCA from January to September 2023



Source: Backlog database maintained by MINUSCA MovCon Unit

34. A review of the backlog of containers noted that some containers with construction materials, such as cement, water closet prefabs, septic systems and modular unit prefabs had not been moved for more than one year. From 269 containers held in Bangui as of September 2023, at least 30 containers for consignment to 7 different locations had not been moved since November 2022. MovCon Unit acknowledged that, due to staffing constraints, it had not conducted physical verifications of items in the containers, raising the possibility that items could have been stolen. There have been various reported incidents of theft within the M’Poko Greenfield location in Bangui where the container yard is situated. The yard was also accessible to various parties other than MovCon Unit staff, including MINUSCA technical units. The lack of a dedicated and secure storage area for cargo containers under the strict custody of MovCon Unit increased the risk of losses. MINUSCA indicated that it was in the process of developing a staging area at the M’Poko Greenfield for MovCon Unit to ensure the security of items placed in containers for consignment and would take necessary steps to prioritize this task. Therefore, OIOS did not make a recommendation on the secure storage area.

35. The reasons for the increasing backlog of containers are discussed as follows:

(a) Not-to-exceed amount for a long-term transportation contractor was exceeded

36. A contractor was hired on 2 August 2021 to provide long-term transportation services within the Central African Republic, with an initial not-to-exceed (NTE) amount of \$989,200 for each term of a year and extendable for additional two years. Accordingly, the contract was extended up to 1 August 2024 with a total NTE amount of \$2,967,600. As of August 2023, the Mission had utilized \$2,493,973 and expected another \$438,600 to be paid for transportation of containers for its unexpected priority operations in Sam Ouandja and Ouadda Djalle, making a total of \$2,989,171 (which would exceed the NTE amount). Consequently, MovCon Unit could no longer task the contractor until a new contract was put in place. The NTE was revised by November 2023 to allow the continuation of the contract.

(b) Unserviceable heavy transport unit equipment

37. A significant number of palletized load system (PLS) trucks were in the Transport workshop for maintenance. As of 1 September 2023, 15 of the 23 PLS trucks, had been under maintenance over

prolonged periods due to lack of spare parts. In discussions with the convoy co-ordination cell in MovCon Unit, OIOS was also informed that although there were 30 trucks (5 lowbed, 2 flatbed and 23 PLS) available in the HTU, MovCon Unit only had 16 posts for drivers of which one was banned from driving one was retired and four needed to be retained in Bangui to support movements during the rotation and deployment of military troops and FPUs. The remaining 10 drivers were not sufficient to operate all trucks at full capacity.

(c) Inefficient and uneconomical heavy transport company arrangements with a contingent

38. As of September 2023, the HTC of a military contingent that supported MovCon operations had 43 trucks and trailers of which 20 had been unserviceable for periods of up to 45 months. A Contingent-owned Equipment/Memorandum of Understanding Management Review Board (CMMRB) meeting held on 2 June 2023 discussed and reviewed the performance of these trucks. The CMMRB had in its previous meeting tasked the MovCon Unit to assess the availability of inland transport resources in the country to address deficiencies of the HTC and present a feasible plan and cost estimate. Analysis by the MovCon Unit indicated that the use of a commercial inland transportation contract would be significantly cheaper than the continued use of the HTC and recommended that: (a) the Mission increase the trucking capacity of the commercial contractor under a contract; and (b) repatriate the military contingent that provided the HTC. This would save the Mission an estimated \$6 million annually. OIOS review of the average cost calculation for two fiscal years showed that cost per container transported through the commercial contractor was \$6,893 compared to \$52,021 for the HTC of the contingent.

39. Given that the military contingent's cost was not economical, and its performance was not efficient, the CMMRB recommended that the MSC/Contingent-owned Equipment Unit and MovCon Unit draft a code cable to the Logistics Division at Headquarters, presenting the issue and the impacts (cost and operational) on the Mission, as well as possible alternative solutions with a cost benefit analysis to ensure that the Mission's inland transportation requirements were effectively implemented. However, due to other priorities, the code cable had not yet been finalized as at the end of September 2023 and the uneconomical and inefficient operations continued.

- (4) MINUSCA should: (a) take steps to ensure that sufficient spare parts are available for timely repair and maintenance of the Heavy Transport Units trucks; and (b) provide adequate number of drivers to operate available trucks to increase the performance of its Heavy Transport Unit and reduce the backlog of containers.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that its Transport Section has acquired required spare parts for the heavy transport trucks which were estimated to arrive in the third quarter of 2023/24. Drivers will also be provided as deemed necessary. Finally, five new additional trucks with sufficient spare parts are being transferred from MINUSMA to MINUSCA with an estimated arrival in the third quarter of 2023/24.

- (5) MINUSCA should: (a) finalize the code cable to the Logistics Division at Headquarters presenting the impact of the use of heavy transport company; and (b) explore all options to ensure an economical and efficient solution is achieved to minimize the backlog of containers held in Bangui.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the directive of the Senior Leadership was to work with the Heavy Transport Company (HTC) to devise ways to improve the performance of the HTC, and it would consider rotating 50 per cent of the fleet in 2023/24. The Mission is also cautiously reviewing the capacity of the contracted commercial transporter to ensure that it has the capacity to

increase its fleet. To date, the Mission has no assurance that the Contractor has the capacity to fill the gap in case a decision to repatriate the Heavy Transport Company (HTC) is made.

Training on handling of dangerous goods was provided but appropriate facilities for the storage needed to be established

40. The MovCon manual requires MovCon Unit staff to maintain a high level of training and understanding of the properties and types of dangerous goods offered for shipment. MovCon Unit identified and provided relevant training on the handling of dangerous goods for its personnel that manage such goods. The Mission included a provision of \$45,000 per annum in its 2021/22 and 2022/23 budgets for in-Mission training for 10 international and 10 national staff. Altogether, 12 MovCon Unit staff took the International Air Transport Association dangerous goods regulation course in May 2022 and 20 MovCon Unit staff took the International Maritime Dangerous Goods code training in May and November 2022.

41. A review of a sample of 22 (7 related to the shipment of dangerous goods) cargo movement requests (CMRs) indicated that these were appropriately reviewed and approved by MovCon Unit prior to reception of the consignments. MovCon Unit had verified whether the goods were dangerous, that the goods matched the description on the CMRs, and the accuracy of the weights to ensure the overall weight to be loaded on the Mission's air and road assets were not exceeded for their safe operation. During a visit to the MovCon Unit's cargo warehouse in Bangui in September 2023, OIOS noted that the MovCon Unit personnel declined to receive a consignment of batteries that were to be transported to a field location as they did not meet requirements for their safe transportation in the Mission air assets.

42. After receiving confirmation from the Mission Aviation Operations Centre of the air assets that were scheduled to operate to various Mission locations and the weight allocated for cargo, the MovCon Unit prepared manifests for cargo that could be transported based on their approved priority. OIOS review of the related cargo manifests confirmed that following completion of their loading to the respective aircraft, the manifests were signed by the representatives of the MovCon Unit and the aircraft operator.

43. However, although MINUSCA was required to: (a) provide a secure cargo terminal for storage, processing and recording of all cargo movements; and (b) correctly pack, mark and segregate dangerous goods from other cargo, OIOS inspection of the MovCon Unit's cargo facilities at the UCATEX compound in Bangui noted that the Mission used sea containers for the temporary storage of all cargo pending their transportation to the field offices using the Mission's air assets, without the appropriate segregation of dangerous goods in designated storage facilities as required. This was due to space limitations at the current storage facilities. Adequate ventilation was not provided in the storage facilities, thereby increasing the risk of contamination of cargo items, which included food and drinking water. In addition, temperature monitoring and control devices were not installed in these containers, thereby exposing the stored materials, which included batteries for motor vehicles and information technology equipment and refrigerant gas, to the risk of degradation or fire resulting from the buildup of high temperatures.

(6) MINUSCA should provide adequate designated facilities for the safe storage of dangerous goods at its cargo terminals pending their transportation within the Mission.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the Mission would ensure that all the requirements are captured, and a suitable location is identified to set up the facility for cargo operations, including the storage of dangerous goods.

C. Movement tracking and performance monitoring

Need to enhance the efficiency of offloading and receipt of shipments at the centralized warehouse

44. The MovCon Unit's inbound coordination cell and the shipping and customs cell were responsible, among other duties, to oversee the smooth flow of inbound and outbound cargo on behalf of the Mission. They interfaced between the Mission and its contractors for customs clearance, as well as the host country customs and tax authorities.

45. OIOS noted that following the issuance of a pre-shipment alert by the Procurement Section, the MovCon Unit initiated procedures to track incoming shipments depending on their delivery terms. For shipments where the Mission was responsible for collecting the goods from the vendor's warehouse or the port of origin, the Mission identified the most affordable vendor following review of bids received from clearing and freight forwarding agents under United Nations systems contracts.

46. Although a shipment and tracking module in Umoja had been developed to monitor the status of incoming shipments, the MovCon Unit did not utilize this, as it was not fully operationalized to support all the shipment and tracking activities performed by MINUSCA. Instead, it maintained a manual tracking sheet for its shipments based on purchase orders issued by the Procurement Section. While the tracking sheet included a list of purchase orders, it was not regularly updated with all the details required. The missing information from the tracking sheet, which MovCon Unit attributed to staffing constraints, included:

- Expected arrival dates at the seaports in Douala and Kirbi in Cameroon, and at the customs bonded warehouse in Bangui;
- Dates when the appointed clearing agents had presented customs clearance documents for confirmation and approval by the Mission prior to them being forwarded to the customs department of the host government;
- Dates when customs clearance procedures were completed to facilitate the receipt of the shipments by the Mission;
- Dates when the customs clearance documents were forwarded to the clearing agents in Douala and Kirbi seaports; and
- Reasons for any delays encountered during the shipment process.

47. MINUSCA indicated that due to staffing constraints, the Mission focused on only the parts of the tracking sheets required to fulfil its operational requirements. The implementation of recommendation 1 would help alleviate this situation. A review of correspondence related to these shipments indicated that although the MovCon Unit did not update the tracking sheet, it had regularly communicated with the clearing agents to ascertain the status of processing of customs clearance documents and clearance of goods at various seaports and at the customs departments in Bangui. In addition, MovCon Unit notified the Mission's organizational units, which had ordered the goods, and the Centralized Warehouse Section of the planned arrival of the shipments to enable them to make appropriate plans for their receipt.

48. However, OIOS also noted that the delays experienced in the receiving of incoming shipments, resulted in the Mission incurring demurrage charges estimated at \$431,958 which comprised of the following:

- \$125,364 (29 per cent) was attributed to delays by the Mission's Centralized Warehouse Section in offloading and receiving shipments from trucks and containers owned by the vendors of goods within the timelines stipulated in the contracts. These delays were attributed to: (i) inadequate

resources, including personnel and material handling equipment assigned to process the Mission's warehouse; and (ii) poor ground surface conditions at the warehouses that negatively impacted the movement of the material handling equipment and personnel for shipments received during the rainy season;

- \$177,933 (41 per cent) was attributable to delays in initiating, processing and obtaining customs clearance caused by the vendor providing customs clearance services to the Mission. The Mission was in discussions with the vendor as of November 2023, to recover this amount; and
- \$128,660 (30 per cent) was attributed to delays resulting from prolonged detention of the Mission's shipments by the customs authorities and other security personnel that provide security at the ports in Bangui, despite MINUSCA having completed all the required customs clearance formalities.

(7) MINUSCA should: (a) enhance the required equipment and ground surface conditions at the warehouses to improve the efficiency of the offloading and receipt of shipments at the centralized warehouse; and (b) timely recover the demurrage charges incurred by the Mission due to delays in the customs clearance process caused by the customs clearance vendor.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 7 and stated that the Mission has developed a phased plan to acquire required equipment to address the need of adequate equipment for effective and efficient warehouse operations. This strategy translates in acquiring certain specialized equipment each year considering budgetary constraints and operational needs. In this connection, the following Material Handling Equipment (MHE) had been acquired since January 2023: (i) 4 forklifts of 4 Ton each; (ii) 2 forklifts of 3 Ton each; and (iii) 3 forklifts of 5 Ton each. The remaining equipment will be acquired in 2023/24. The ground surface conditions at the warehouse are expected to be completed in December 2024. The Mission has also issued two credit notes to recover demurrage charges attributable to the Customs Clearance Vendors.

There was a need to conduct and document regular performance review meetings with the customs clearing vendor

49. Regular engagements with vendors of goods and services ensure prompt identification and resolution of matters that impact the timely and effective delivery or provision of outsourced services. In September 2021, MINUSCA contracted a vendor to provide it with customs clearance of shipments by air, sea and road.

50. OIOS reviewed minutes of four contract performance review meetings held between June and August 2023 with the vendor providing customs clearance services for MINUSCA and noted that the Mission engaged with the vendor to identify challenges in the customs clearance and processing of incoming shipments. It was further noted that action points were agreed to address the challenges, and the outcome of their implementation was discussed in subsequent meetings. However, MovCon Unit could not provide all the minutes of the monthly performance review meetings organized during the audit period and OIOS was therefore not able to confirm whether the Mission had held them. MovCon Unit indicated that it had previously been collocated with the vendor's representatives and had provided them with ongoing feedback, which was not officially documented. This may result in the Mission not promptly communicating instances of unsatisfactory performance to the vendor and subsequent delays in obtaining customs clearance for incoming shipments. MINUSCA agreed to adequately document all performance review meetings with the vendors. Based on actions taken by the Mission to hold regular meetings with the customs clearing vendor, OIOS did not issue a recommendation.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

51. 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 movement control activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	MINUSCA should take necessary steps, including addressing staffing resources in line with the civilian staffing review, to ensure that prioritized movement control tasks such as organization of rotation meetings, preparation and dissemination of movement orders, flight monitoring, and timely preparation of movement completion reports are adequately implemented.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the Mission has assigned adequate staffing resources to effectively implement prioritized movement control tasks.	1 July 2025
2	MINUSCA should issue revised standard operating procedures on the approval process of movement of personnel forms to include the need for the immediate supervisors' involvement prior to approval of travel within the Mission area.	Important	O	Receipt of revised standard operating procedures on the approval of movement of personnel forms.	31 March 2024
3	MINUSCA should prioritize the installation of x-ray security scanners at all locations used to receive cargo to be transported using the Mission's transport assets to ensure that dangerous or forbidden items are identified.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that x-ray scanners have been installed at all locations used to receive and process cargo for transportation by the Mission.	30 June 2024
4	MINUSCA should: (a) take steps to ensure that sufficient spare parts are available for timely repair and maintenance of the Heavy Transport Units trucks; and (b) provide adequate number of drivers to operate available trucks to increase the performance of its Heavy Transport Unit and reduce the backlog of containers.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the Mission has: (a) availed sufficient spare parts for the maintenance of Heavy Transport Unit trucks; and (b) deployed adequate drivers to support the optimal operation of trucks assigned to the Heavy Transport Unit.	31 March 2024
5	MINUSCA should: (a) finalize the code cable to the Logistics Division at Headquarters presenting the impact of the use of heavy transport company; and (b) explore all options to ensure an economical and efficient solution is achieved to minimize the backlog of containers held in Bangui.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that MINUSCA has: (a) liaised with the Logistics Division at Headquarters to determine viable options to efficiently transport its cargo within the Mission; and (b) implemented actions to minimize the backlog of containers in Bangui.	30 June 2024

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of movement control activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
6	MINUSCA should provide adequate designated facilities for the safe storage of dangerous goods at its cargo terminals pending their transportation within the Mission.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the Mission has provided adequate facilities to store dangerous goods at its cargo terminals pending their transportation.	30 June 2024
7	MINUSCA should: (a) enhance the required equipment and ground surface conditions at the warehouses to improve the efficiency of the offloading and receipt of shipments at the centralized warehouse; and (b) timely recover the demurrage charges incurred by the Mission due to delays in the customs clearance process caused by the customs clearance vendor.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of: (a) improved ground surface conditions at the centralized warehouse and provision of appropriate equipment required to ensure the efficient offloading and receipt of shipments; and (b) recovery of demurrage charges arising from delays caused by the customs clearance vendor.	31 December 2024

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.

³ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁴ Date provided by MINUSCA in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of movement control activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Integrated 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 take necessary steps, including addressing staffing resources in line with civilian staffing review, to ensure that prioritized movement control tasks such as organization of rotation meetings, preparation and dissemination of movement orders, flight monitoring, and timely preparation of movement completion reports are adequately implemented.	Important	Yes	Director of Mission Support	1 July 2025	MINUSCA accepted the recommendation. The Mission will take the necessary steps to recommend the remaining staffing establishment for consideration during the preparation of the P26 budget preparation (3 x FS-5 for Joint Movement Coordination Centre, and 2 x P-2 for Inbound Delivery Coordination). This will supplement the positions that the recent Civilian Staffing Review has endorsed which have been included in the P25 budget (6 x GL-5 for Air Terminal Unit, and 1 x FS-5 for Douala Office). Meanwhile, as interim measures, individual police officers with the required skillsets will be identified to provide additional support to the Unit.
2	MINUSCA should issue revised standard operating procedures on the approval process of movement of personnel forms to include the need for the immediate supervisors' involvement	Important	Yes	Chief Supply Chain Management	31 March 2024	MINUSCA accepted the recommendation. The Mission wishes to inform that the approval process of Movement of Personnel (MOP) holistically is currently under review. Once approved, the new

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 movement control activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Integrated Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	prior to approval of travel within the Mission area.					procedure will be communicated to all stakeholders and implemented Mission wide.
3	MINUSCA should prioritize the installation of x-ray security scanners at all locations used for cargo transit and use the Mission's transport assets to ensure that dangerous or forbidden items are identified.	Important	Yes	Chief Security Advisor Chief Movement Control Officer	30 June 2024	MINUSCA accepted the recommendation. The Mission wishes to inform that thirteen (13) x-ray machines were distributed to the Sectors, and two (2) are currently on standby, pending the completion of the MINUSCA terminal at Mpoko airport.
4	MINUSCA should: (a) take steps to ensure that sufficient spare parts are available for timely repair and maintenance of the Heavy Transport Units trucks; and (b) provide adequate number of drivers to operate available trucks Unit and reduce the backlog of containers.	Important	Yes	Chief Transport Officer Chief Movement Control Officer	31 March 2024	MINUSCA accepted the recommendation. However, the Mission wishes to clarify that its Transport Section has acquired required spare parts for the heavy transport trucks which are estimated to arrive in the third quarter (Q3) of P24. Drivers will also be provided as deemed necessary. Finally, five (5) new additional trucks with sufficient spare parts are being transferred from MINUSMA to MINUSCA with an estimated arrival in the third quarter (Q3) of P24.
5	MINUSCA should: (a) finalize the code cable to the Logistics Division at Headquarters presenting the impact of	Important	Yes	Senior Logistics Officer	30 June 2024	MINUSCA accepted the recommendation.

Management Response

Audit of movement control activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Integrated Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	the use of heavy transport company; and (b) explore all options to ensure an economical and efficient solution is achieved to minimize the backlog of containers held in Bangui.			Chief Movement Control Officer		However, the Mission wishes to clarify that the directive of the Senior Leadership is to work with the Heavy Transport Company (HTC) and devise ways to improve the performance of HTC, and will consider rotating 50% of the fleet in P24. Also, the Mission is cautiously reviewing the capacity of the contracted commercial transporter to ensure that it has the capacity to increase its fleet. To date, the Mission does not have any assurances that the Contractor has such capacity to fill the gap in case a decision to repatriate the Heavy Transport Company (HTC) is made.
6	MINUSCA should provide adequate designated facilities for the safe storage of dangerous goods at its cargo terminals pending their transportation within the Mission.	Important	Yes	Chief Engineer Chief Movement Control Officer	30 June 2024	MINUSCA accepted the recommendation. The Mission will ensure that all the requirements are captured, and a suitable location is identified to set up the facility for MOVCON cargo operations including a storage of dangerous goods.
7	MINUSCA should: (a) enhance the required equipment and ground surface conditions at the warehouses so as to improve the efficiency of the offloading and receipt of shipments at the centralized warehouse; and (b) timely	Important	Yes	Chief Engineer Chief of Section, Central Warehousing	31 Dec 2024 (a, b)	MINUSCA accepted the recommendation. (a) The Mission has developed a phased plan to acquire required equipment to address the need of adequate equipment for effective and efficient warehouse

Management Response

Audit of movement control activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Integrated Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	recover the demurrage charges incurred by the Mission due to delays in the customs clearance process caused by the customs clearance vendor.			Chief Movement Control Officer		<p>operations. This strategy translates in acquiring certain specialized equipment each year considering budgetary constraints and operational needs. In this connection, the following Material Handling Equipment (MHE) had been acquired since January 2023: (i) four (4) forklifts of 4 Ton each; (ii) two (2) forklifts of 3 Ton each; (iii) three (3) forklifts of 5 Ton each. The remaining equipment will be acquired in P24. The ground surface conditions at the warehouse are expected to be completed in Dec 2024.</p> <p>(b) The Mission was issued two (2) credit notes for a total amount of XAF5,511,000 to recover demurrage charges attributable to the Customs Clearance Vendors.</p>