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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES · BUREAU DES SERVICES DE CONTRÔLE INTERNE

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION · DIVISION DE L'AUDIT INTERNE

TO: Ms. Bintou Keita  
A: Special Representative of the Secretary-General  
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the  
Democratic Republic of the Congo

DATE: 23 December 2024

THROUGH: Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General  
S/C DE: for Internal Oversight Services

REFERENCE: OIOS-2024-02437

FROM: Byung-Kun Min, Director   
DE: Internal Audit Division, OIOS

SUBJECT: **Report 2024/081 on an audit of the implementation of the Comprehensive Disengagement  
OBJET: Plan by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic  
of the Congo (Assignment No. AP2023-620-02)**

1. Please find attached the final report on the above-mentioned audit.
2. Kindly note that OIOS will follow up on the progress made to implement its recommendations and will regularly report on the status of implementation through its online dashboard, as well as through annual and other reports to the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.
3. Please also note that OIOS will post a complete version of the final report on its website 30 days after its issuance in line with General Assembly resolution 69/253.
4. 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.

cc: Ms. Nicoleta Verestiuc, MONUSCO  
Mr. Ricardo Maia, MONUSCO  
Mr. Daniel Maier, MONUSCO  
Ms. Judith Atiagaga, MONUSCO  
Mr. Sejong Lee, United Nations Board of Auditors  
Mr. Uren Pillay, Joint Inspection Unit  
Mr. Moses Bamuwamye, IAAC  
Mr. Zachary Ikiara, DMSPC



## **INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION**

### **REPORT 2024/081**

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#### **Audit of the implementation of the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**The Mission had completed major  
disengagement activities; however, there was  
a need to address important aspects such as  
enhancing resource mobilization and ensuring  
a seamless transition of the protection of  
civilian mandate**

**23 December 2024  
Assignment No. AP2023-620-02**

# **Audit of the implementation of the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan by 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 implementation of the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The objective of the audit was to assess whether MONUSCO adequately implemented the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan to ensure an orderly and progressive departure from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The audit covered the period from July 2023 to September 2024 and included: (a) planning and governance arrangements; (b) transition activities; (c) disengagement activities; and (d) communication with stakeholders.

The Mission completed major disengagement activities, including closing bases and repatriating troops and contingent-owned equipment within limited timelines. It had adequate oversight structures with clear terms of reference, and a Provincial Integrated Transition Team was established as a joint planning mechanism to support the Government in developing a provincial plan in preparation for MONUSCO's disengagement and transition.

However, there were delays in MONUSCO's finalizing a resource mobilization strategy and memorandums of understanding with United Nations partner agencies for programmatic funding. The handover of military bases by MONUSCO to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (GoDRC) was delayed due to capacity challenges in GoDRC. These delays impacted the seamless transition of the protection of civilian mandate.

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

- Finalize the report on the lessons learned, including challenges faced in the process of withdrawal and transfer of responsibilities;
- In collaboration with the United Nations Country Team and GoDRC: (a) fast-track the resource mobilization efforts; and (b) initiate discussions with GoDRC and United Nations partner agencies on resource mobilisation options for subsequent disengagement phases;
- Undertake high-level engagement with the GoDRC at the national and provincial levels and operationalize the United Nations support plan to ensure a seamless transition of the protection of civilian mandate; and
- Develop and implement a comprehensive capacity-building programme for Congolese authorities and local governance structures.

MONUSCO accepted all the 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 the implementation of the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan by 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 implementation of the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
2. Security Council resolution 2556 (December 2020) endorsed the joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO and requested a transition plan. In September 2021, MONUSCO developed a transition plan that included 18 benchmarks and was jointly agreed upon between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the United Nations. Following anti-MONUSCO protests in August 2022, the President of the DRC called for a reassessment of the transition plan. A revised transition plan was made in June 2023 in line with Security Council resolution 2666 (December 2022), which focused on four benchmarks.
3. Security Council resolution 2717 (December 2023) adopted the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan, which included three distinct and successive phases to withdraw MONUSCO troops and personnel progressively and orderly:
  - In Phase 1, MONUSCO would withdraw from South Kivu by 30 April 2024 and limit mandate implementation to the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri from May 2024 until the end of the current mandate in December 2024. The Security Council authorized MONUSCO to maintain a sufficient residual civilian presence (residual team) in South Kivu to support a smooth and responsible transfer of responsibilities to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (GoDRC). The residual team would focus on the protection of civilians and the transfer of knowledge, data and capacity building.
  - Phase 2 will concentrate on North Kivu, and Phase 3 will be on Ituri and MONUSCO headquarters, with no dates specified for these phases.
4. Security Council resolution 2717 (December 2023) also extended the MONUSCO mandate until December 2024 with the overall objective to advance peace and security in the DRC. The 2023/24 budget of US\$1.07 billion provided for deploying 16,161 uniformed personnel and 2,664 civilian staff.
5. The information on disengagement activities was maintained in a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet in SharePoint. Edit rights were retained within the respective business process owners. For example, spreadsheets on drawdown activities and dates were maintained by the Mission Support Centre while troops and contingent-owned equipment (CoE) movements were maintained by the Movement Control Section. Input data was sourced from corporate systems like the electronic COE system for troops data, Umoja for data on United Nations-owned equipment, and Field Support Suite for passenger and cargo bookings.
6. The Mission's disengagement activities are governed by: (a) Security Council resolutions 2666 and 2717; (b) 2019 Secretary General Planning Directive; (c) the revised transition plan; (d) the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan; (e) standard operating procedures on relocation, closure and handover; (f) terms of reference for management mechanism for the disengagement of MONUSCO; and (g) guidelines for senior leadership on field entity closure.

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 adequately implemented the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan to ensure an orderly and progressive departure from the DRC.

9. This audit was included in the 2024 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to operational, reputational and financial risks related to disengagement activities in MONUSCO.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from May to September 2024. The audit covered the period from July 2023 to September 2024. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium-risk areas in the management of disengagement activities in MONUSCO which included: (a) planning and governance arrangements; (b) transition activities; (c) disengagement activities; and (d) communication with stakeholders.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel in the Mission, United Nations Country Team (UNCT), and other partners involved in the disengagement; (b) a review of relevant reports and documentation; (c) analytical reviews of camp closure activities and data on the repatriation of troops and equipment; (d) assessment of disengagement planning and monitoring data maintained on Microsoft Excel spreadsheets; and (e) physical inspection of closing camps and offices in South Kivu.

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

## III. AUDIT RESULTS

### A. Planning and governance arrangements

#### The Mission had set up an effective oversight structure

13. The Mission is required to develop plans and structures to support the cessation of operations of its Force from South Kivu by the end of April 2024 and close offices by 30 June 2024.

14. The Mission devised a governance structure at the strategic, operational and tactical levels to manage the transition. The structure included the Mission Leadership Team (MLT), a Disengagement Steering Committee (DSC) and various working groups, as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: MONUSCO disengagement governance structures

<b>Decision-making</b>	Mission Leadership Team				
<b>Coordination</b>	Disengagement Steering Committee				
<b>Working Groups</b>	Transition	Base closure and troops withdrawal	Personnel/Welfare	Communications	Logistics interface
<b>Geographical</b>	South Kivu	Grand Nord	Petit Nord	Ituri	Goma/Kinshasa

15. In January 2024, the Mission issued a term of reference (ToR) for the disengagement governance structures that included key objectives and various timelines. Further, the related standard operating procedures for relocation, closure and handover of bases and offices were also issued. The MLT was responsible for overall strategic decision-making and provided adequate guidance and direction to the DSC.

16. The DSC, an integrated, cross-cutting body, was tasked with implementing the decisions of the MLT and United Nations Headquarters towards the achievement of the Mission’s disengagement. The DSC was co-chaired by the Chief Joint Operations Centre and the Drawdown Coordinator and held 12 meetings between 25 January 2024 and the latest meeting on 11 July 2024. All the meetings included standing agenda issues and were attended by the chairs and co-chairs of different working groups with representatives from other offices and sections. The working groups met regularly and reported on the progress of their respective mandated tasks during the DSC meetings, and action points were adequately followed up on.

The functioning of the Provincial Integrated Transition Team was delayed in the immediate post-closure period

17. To embed a whole United Nations approach to transition, and enhance integration that promotes national ownership and leadership, a Provincial Integrated Transition Team (PITT) comprising representatives of the UNCT, DRC provincial governments and civil society was established. The related ToR was finalized in May 2023 and the Team was co-chaired by the Provincial Governor, the MONUSCO Head of Office, and provincial representative of the UNCT. The PITT and its working groups met at least once a week from February to June 2024 to develop the roadmap for the transition in South Kivu. The meetings were well attended by the members and focused on the mandated tasks. The PITT met 20 times and was credited with developing the Government’s priority areas through the Government roadmap and the United Nations support plan.

18. However, no meetings were held in July and August 2024, even though essential tasks remained for validating and operationalizing the roadmap and support plan. The provincial UNCT informed OIOS that with the transfer (non-repayable loan modality) of the MONUSCO residual team staff members to the United Nations partner agencies, the role that the Head of the MONUSCO residual team would play on the PITT was not clear to them. There had also been changes in GoDRC following the general elections, which impacted the composition and functioning of the PITT and its critical function of operationalizing the United Nations support plan and the Government roadmap.

19. At the time of the audit, the above challenges on having effective and continuing PITT and other challenges related to the withdrawal and transfer of responsibilities, as detailed later in this report, were not documented as lessons learned to guide implementation of subsequent phases and as inputs for improving future disengagement activities in other United Nations entities.

**(1) MONUSCO should ensure that the lessons learned include challenges faced in the process of withdrawal and transfer of responsibilities, such as ensuring continuity of the Provincial Integrated Transition Team’s functioning for prompt transitioning of mandated tasks and sharing it with the Department of Operational Support for future closure activities.**

*MONUSCO accepted recommendation 1 and confirmed that the report on lessons learned, which included the challenges faced during the withdrawal and transfer of responsibilities, had been finalized and would be shared with the Department of Operational Support to assist in future closure activities.*

## **B. Transition activities**

20. Security Council resolution 2717 required MONUSCO to gradually handover responsibilities, including protection of civilians, human rights and strengthening of state institutions, as part of its transition to the GoDRC. Establishing a residual presence, developing a government roadmap and United Nations

support plan, and mobilizing resources, were identified, inter alia, as key tasks to facilitate the Mission's transition, as detailed below.

The Mission was working towards finalizing memorandums of understanding with United Nations partner agencies to operationalise the residual team

21. MONUSCO was required to maintain a sufficient residual civilian presence in South Kivu to ensure an orderly withdrawal of the Mission from the province and transfer of responsibilities to GoDRC. The Mission, through an assessment of required functions to support a responsible transition of the South Kivu province, identified 42 staffing posts that were to be retained as the residual team, some of which would be deployed to other United Nations partner agencies. The residual team was expected to commence duty on 1 May 2024 and provide transition support capacity until 30 June 2025.

22. However, the residual team was not formally established at the closure of the field office in June 2024:

- MONUSCO had not formally communicated that staff from the closed field office would form part of the residual team. Rather, there were assumptions that they were part of the residual team as they had not been reassigned or separated. Further, the staff members had not received any ToR regarding their specific roles, thus creating uncertainty and substantive performance gaps.
- The setting up of the residual team and deployment to partner agencies was also impacted by the delay in negotiations and signing of the residual staff memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with United Nations partner agencies. The MOUs set the conditions of collaboration and respective responsibilities of the parties including where the residual teams would be placed. OIOS noted that most memorandums were only finalized in July 2024, and one MOU with a critical United Nations partner agency had not yet been completed as of August 2024. Further, a new set of MOUs was being developed to incorporate the transfer of programmatic funds by MONUSCO to the United Nations partner agencies that had not been included in the residual staff MOUs.

23. GoDRC representatives reiterated that earlier commencement of the transition work would have alleviated the delays. As of September 2024, United Nations partner agencies informed OIOS that due to pending funds disbursement, there were minimal residual activities on the ground, which could lead to reputational damage to the United Nations. The Mission acknowledged the delay and indicated that action was ongoing to finalize all pending MOUs. Accordingly, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

Resource mobilization strategy had been developed, but the mobilization of resources to fund transition activities could have benefited from earlier preparatory engagements

24. Security Council resolution 2717 required MONUSCO, UNCT and relevant stakeholders to support the GoDRC by developing a resource mobilization strategy to fund transferred responsibilities and for MONUSCO and UNCT to undertake priority collaborative actions identified in the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan.

25. The DRC provincial governments developed a government roadmap in April 2024 that identifies the objectives, priority actions and activities, and entities responsible for implementation. The total estimated cost of implementing the Government roadmap was \$57 million. Government partners, including United Nations partner agencies, were expected to confirm their specific contributions to each priority activity. A United Nations support plan was also prepared to complement the roadmap with a required budget of \$23 million in June 2024. MONUSCO would cover \$10 million of the \$23 million budget through its programmatic funding mechanism, and partner agencies were expected to mobilize funding for the



remaining balance. As of September 2024, MONUSCO was in the process of formalizing MOUs with United Nations implementing partners for the programmatic funding.

26. OIOS noted that an alignment workshop, a prerequisite for operational partners in South Kivu to mobilize and channel resources better, was conducted in August 2024 after the new Government had settled in office. The resource mobilization strategy and agreements for integrating the residual capacity were finalized in September 2024.

27. A GoDRC representative in South Kivu shared with OIOS the need for faster mobilization of resources. The representative emphasized that funding for the Government roadmap and United Nations support plan is a key success factor and would further buttress the success of the South Kivu model in the later phases of the disengagement. Further, the representative stated that all pillars of the roadmap are of equal and complementary importance and should be given priority in funding.

28. The provincial team of United Nations partner agencies also expressed that discussions with the GoDRC should have begun early, particularly with regards to informing the Government of its post-MONUSCO responsibilities to ensure internally generated funds are available on time or can be mobilized through alternative sources without relying on the United Nations partner agencies. Delays in mobilizing adequate resources for the transition arrangements could jeopardize MONUSCO's engagement in South Kivu, particularly in the DRC.

29. Going forward, MONUSCO could commence identifying and mobilizing longer-term resourcing requirements for North Kivu and Ituri provinces earlier and include it as part of the lessons learned report.

**(2) MONUSCO should, in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (GoDRC): (a) fast-track the resource mobilization efforts to support the Government roadmap and United Nations support plan for South Kivu; and (b) initiate discussions with GoDRC and United Nations partner agencies on resource mobilisation options for subsequent disengagement phases.**

*MONUSCO accepted recommendation 2 and stated that together with the UNCT, it established a joint resource mobilization working group in May 2024. Efforts were ongoing to mobilize resources for the transition, with over 75 per cent of required funds already identified for the United Nations Support Plan and 50 per cent identified for the Government's roadmap. In addition, efforts were also ongoing to support early and long-term resource mobilization for the United Nations system for future transition from North Kivu and Ituri.*

30. [REDACTED]

a) [REDACTED]

31. [REDACTED]



*MONUSCO accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it was regularly engaging with the GoDRC and UNCT to implement the transition, with a focus on the protection of civilians.*

- (4) MONUSCO, in coordination with the United Nations Country Team, should develop and implement a comprehensive capacity-building programme for Congolese authorities and local governance structures, focusing on civilian protection and the management of transferred resources and military installations to ensure the sustainability of local military presence.**

*MONUSCO accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the recommendation has been enacted by the Mission and is reflected in the new approach to transition and disengagement currently under development with the Congolese authorities.*

### **C. Disengagement activities**

35. The Security Council resolution 2717 required MONUSCO to close the Southern Sector by 30 June 2024. As such, the following disengagement activities needed to be carried out by the Mission: (a) full withdrawal and repatriation of the military contingents and formed police units, including their COE; (b) environmental clean-up and closure of bases and offices; (c) termination of leases and handover to landlords; and (d) relocation of personnel and disposal and movement of United Nations-owned equipment.

#### Need to ensure timely handover of commercial leases to avoid unnecessary costs

36. MONUSCO was required to timely terminate all leases and hand over premises to the respective government or private landlords.

37. OIOS reviewed the closure and handover procedures for all 19 commercial leases required to be terminated with a monthly rental payment of \$94,500. It was noted that 13 premises were properly closed following the issuance of one month's termination notices, and the handovers were supported by an exit report signed by MONUSCO and the landlord. MONUSCO retained two compounds for its residual office and holding equipment before disposal.

38. For two locations (Level 2 hospital and Peninsula compound), the landlords had written to the Mission aggrieved that the premises were occupied by the GoDRC security forces without their consent. Attempts to have the GoDRC agree with the landlords on occupation arrangements or vacating the premises had not been successful. The protracted delay in resolving the dispute resulted in the Mission having to extend the leases since the occupation in April 2024 at a monthly cost of \$9,200 (or \$27,600 up to July 2024). Subsequently, OIOS noted that the head of the residual team liaised with the provincial government officials and the landlord to resolve the matters, and handover documents were signed at the end of July 2024. The closure of the matter also necessitated the post-handover write-off and donation of 29 United Nations-owned equipment with a depreciated value of \$12,000. OIOS was informed that the handover of military equipment in this camp was made at the last minute, without leaving much room for planning on the proper handover of the base. The remaining two leases had not been closed or handed back to the respective landlords.

39. Protracted termination of leases resulted in financial loss and exposed MONUSCO to the risk of reputational damage. In its lesson learned report, the Mission could incorporate the need for streamlined handover of commercial leases to landlords.

The Mission adequately conducted environmental camp clean-ups but could involve the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on clearance certificates

40. The guide for senior leadership on field entity closure requires cleaning all vacated field mission camp sites. An environmental close-out assessment (ECO) should be performed at all sites to evaluate the state of the environment and identify remediation actions. A post-closure environmental assessment should be conducted to confirm that ECO remedial actions have been addressed before an environmental clearance certificate is issued.

41. OIOS reviewed the site closure activities for all 32 sites that were planned for closure and noted that ECOs were conducted for all the sites prior to closure. Further, the respective sections and military units implemented the remedial recommendations in these assessments, and environmental clearance certificates were subsequently issued. Where ECO reports recommended bioremediation of soil contaminated with petroleum, oil and lubricants in 13 sites, the Mission extracted and replaced the contaminated soil with safe soil. However, OIOS noted that the environmental clearance certificates were signed by MONUSCO representatives and landowners for privately owned compounds without the presence of a government official. Whilst the guidelines are silent on the requirement for review by government officials, environmental matters are significant and may pose long-term and ongoing relevance beyond the landowners and extend to local communities and GoDRC.

42. The Mission acknowledged the observations and committed to involving GoDRC officials in securing environment clearance certificates to mitigate potential long-term issues and prevent reputational damage. In this regard, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

Need to expedite logistical movements for uniformed personnel through enhanced commitment to planned deadlines

43. Security Council resolution 2717 endorsed the full withdrawal of military units by 30 April 2024 and the closure of MONUSCO offices in Bukavu and Uvira no later than 30 June 2024. The MONUSCO footprint in South Kivu included 2,539 uniformed personnel.

44. In February 2024, the Mission prepared a logistics support plan to guide the closure and repatriation of all contingents and their equipment deployed to South Kivu. During the disengagement period, MONUSCO transported 2,539 personnel, 3,120 tons of CoE, and 218 containers of United Nations-owned equipment out of South Kivu, and 167 vehicles were transported from Sector South to Goma.

45. There was an average delay of 38 days in executing these movements. While some delays were caused by several factors beyond the control of the Mission, some delays could have been avoided through adequate planning and continued in-situ disposal of obsolete CoE. For example:

- There was a significant delay of up to 135 days in closing camps in Mikenge and Minembwe with a total of 159 military personnel due to the inability to move four armored personnel carriers because of bad road conditions. While the camps were originally planned for closure in February 2024, four armored personnel carriers were disposed of in July 2024. The decision to dispose of the equipment in-situ was severely impacted by delays in obtaining clearance for end-user restriction by the manufacturer, which was received in late June 2024.
- The closure of Sange camp with 474 military personnel was delayed by more than 100 days as it was the controlled demolition site for heavy caliber ammunition. Various contingents in South Kivu held 80 tons of unserviceable ammunition, and disposing such a massive quantity during the closure period required technical expertise, which was only completed at the end of May 2024. Disposal

operations were suspended for over one month due to non-compliance with host government regulations on disposal, and blasts of heavy caliber ammunition disposal triggered resentment and protests among the local community.

46. While the in-mission disposal of CoE and unserviceable ammunition should be an ongoing process rather than an action undertaken shortly before the repatriation of contingents, the Mission informed OIOS that implementation of this requirement faced challenges due to delays by contingents in seeking approvals from their respective countries. In 2023, only 6 out of 184 tons of unserviceable ammunition in the Mission was disposed of. Subsequently, OIOS noted that the Mission had initiated actions to progressively dispose of expired ammunition, including escalating the required troop-contributing countries' approvals through the United Nations Headquarters. After July 2024, an additional 34 of 126 tons of unserviceable ammunition were destroyed. As action by the Mission was ongoing, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

47. Further, the Mission Support Centre informed OIOS that the military units did not adhere to performance timelines indicated in the logistics support plan. The Mission Support Centre staff, responsible for the implementation of the logistics support plan, informed OIOS that there was a differing interpretation of cease of operations between the civilian and military components. Whilst the Mission Support Centre expected the military to stop all activities at the cease of operations and pack their equipment and ammunition, the military understood that the protection of civilians' mandate does not cease until departure from the Mission area, contributing to delays in closing bases. To mitigate such challenges and ensure compliance with disengagement schedules, there was a need for consultations between military (including troop-contributing countries) and civilian components to provide definitive clarity on operational timelines and respective responsibilities. MONUSCO advised joint military-civilian assessments were being carried out, and consultations with the GoDRC were underway to determine criteria for future disengagement schedules, including the geographic scope and functions. In view of the above, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

## **D. Communication with stakeholders**

### The Mission had implemented an effective communication strategy with its stakeholders

48. MONUSCO was required to adopt a proactive approach to strategic communications to support and raise awareness of the implementation of its mandate. This would create conditions conducive to the smooth, responsible and sustainable reconfiguration of the Mission's presence.

49. MONUSCO developed and implemented an effective communication strategy to harmonize the flow of information to national and international stakeholders, including Mission staff, UNCT, GoDRC and the Congolese population.

- At the onset of the withdrawal in January 2024, the Mission conducted a joint press conference with the Head of Mission and the GoDRC Foreign Minister in attendance.
- During the disengagement period from January to June 2024, the Mission held six joint media press conferences and stakeouts with the GoDRC at the provincial and national levels. A review of the media coverage showed that important milestones were covered in the press statements. A ONE-UN brief that was published in May 2024 about the disengagement and transition in South Kivu in an African media outlet.
- The Mission had monthly interactions with the media about the disengagement process to debunk misinformation and disinformation. Key messages about the disengagement process were also

shared with journalists, produced on social media explainers and posted on MONUSCO's website and social platforms.

- The South Kivu handover ceremony of 25 June 2024 was widely covered in the local and international media and was attended by senior Mission and national and provincial government officials.

50. The United Nations partner agencies informed OIOS that there was effective communication with the GoDRC and the agencies in South Kivu. The partner agencies had access to MONUSCO through the field office at Bukavu, and there were regular meetings to discuss and resolve emerging issues and risks. This was further corroborated by the GoDRC representative in South Kivu who informed OIOS that there was effective communication at both the provincial and national level engagements.

51. Senior management also informed OIOS that MONUSCO was in the process of identifying a neutral international non-governmental organization to take over the operations of Radio Okapi, a radio station established by MONUSCO in South Kivu. This would contribute to sustaining communication channels and MONUSCO legacy in the region.

#### **IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

52. 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 implementation of the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	C/ O <sup>3</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>4</sup>
1	MONUSCO should ensure that the lessons learned include challenges faced in the process of withdrawal and transfer of responsibilities, such as ensuring continuity of the Provincial Integrated Transition Team's functioning for prompt transitioning of mandated tasks and sharing it with the Department of Operational Support for future closure activities.	Important	O	Evidence of finalized report on the lessons learned (that includes transition and mission support disengagement activities) and submission to the Department of Operational Support.	31 December 2024
2	MONUSCO should, in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (GoDRC): (a) fast-track the resource mobilisation efforts to support the Government roadmap and United Nations support plan for South Kivu; and (b) initiate discussions with GoDRC and United Nations partner agencies on resource mobilisation options for subsequent disengagement phases.	Important	O	Evidence of substantial mobilization of resources for Government roadmap and United Nations support plan, and initiation of resources mobilization plans for North Kivu and Ituri provinces.	30 June 2025
3	MONUSCO should undertake high-level engagement with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the national and provincial levels and operationalize the United Nations support plan to ensure a seamless transition of the protection of civilian mandate.	Important	O	Evidence of regular engagement with Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and operationalization of the United Nations support plan.	30 June 2025
4	MONUSCO, in coordination with the United Nations Country Team, should develop and implement a comprehensive capacity-building	Important	O	Evidence of development and implementation of capacity building programme on protection of	30 June 2025

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

<sup>4</sup> Date provided by MONUSCO in response to recommendations.

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Audit of implementation of the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	C/ O <sup>3</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>4</sup>
	programme for Congolese authorities and local governance structures, focusing on civilian protection and the management of transferred resources and military installations to ensure the sustainability of local military presence.			civilians and management of transferred resources.	



# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**



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**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

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**Date: 20 December 2024**

Ref.: SRSO.DMS.MONUSCO-2024-01443

**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  
the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the  
Democratic Republic of the Congo

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bintou Keita".

**Subject: Mission comments on the recommendations in the Draft Report**  
**Objet: on the audit of the Implementation of the Comprehensive**  
**Disengagement Plan in MONUSCO (Assignment No. AP2023-620-**  
**03)**

1. Your interoffice memorandum dated 03 December 2024 (Ref: OIOS-2024-02243) forwarding the Draft Report on the subject audit is acknowledged with thanks.
2. Thank you for giving the Mission the opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations in the report. Attached please find Appendix I with the Mission's comments, for your consideration.
3. Thank you for your continued support of Mission operations.

Best regards.

cc: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General for OIOS  
Ms. Nicoleta Verestiuc, Acting Director of Mission Support, MONUSCO  
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## Management Response

## Audit of the implementation of the Comprehensive Disengagement Plan by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	MONUSCO should ensure that the lessons learned include challenges faced in the process of withdrawal and transfer of responsibilities, such as ensuring continuity of the Provincial Integrated Transition Team's functioning for prompt transitioning of mandated tasks and share it with the Department of Operational Support for future closure activities.	Important	Yes	Director of Mission Support	31 December 2024	The report on the lessons learned, including challenges faced in the process of withdrawal and transfer of responsibilities, has been finalized. It will be shared with the Department of Operational Support for future closure activities.
2	MONUSCO should, in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (GoDRC): (a) fast track the resource mobilisation efforts to support the Government roadmap and United Nations support plan for South Kivu; and (b) initiate discussions with GoDRC and United Nations partner agencies on resource mobilisation options for subsequent disengagement phases.	Important	Yes	DSRSG RC/HC	30 June 2025	(a) MONUSCO and the United Nations Country Team established a joint resource mobilization working group in May 2024. Efforts are ongoing to mobilize resources for the transition, with over 75% of required funds already identified for the UN Support Plan and 50% identified for the Government's roadmap. (b) Efforts are ongoing to support early and long-term resource mobilisation for the United Nations

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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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						system for the transition in North Kivu and Ituri. Resource requirements will be identified through the work of the Provincial Integrated Transition Teams in both provinces.
3	MONUSCO should undertake high-level engagement with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the national and provincial levels and operationalize the United Nations support plan to ensure a seamless transition of the protection of civilian mandate.	Important	Yes	DSRSG RC/HC	30 June 2025	MONUSCO is regularly engaging with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Country Team to implement the transition, with a focus on the protection of civilians.
4	MONUSCO, in coordination with the United Nations Country Team, should develop and implement a comprehensive capacity-building programme for Congolese authorities and local governance structures, focusing on civilian protection and the management of transferred resources and military installations to ensure the sustainability of local military presence.	Important	Yes	DSRSG RC/HC	30 June 2025	This recommendation was already enacted by the Mission and is reflected in the new approach to transition and disengagement currently under development with the Congolese authorities.
5	MONUSCO should facilitate consultation between military (including troop-contributing countries) and civilian	Important	No	Chief of Staff	N/A	While the Mission agrees with the principle of consultations, it will be difficult to implement / close it as

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	components to provide definitive clarity on operational timelines and respective responsibilities to ensure compliance with disengagement schedules.					<p>there are no operational timelines established.</p> <p>Joint military-civilian assessments are carried out (“new approach to disengagement”) and consultations with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are underway to determine criteria, including the geographic scope and functions, for future disengagement schedules.</p> <p>Consultations with TCCs are done at UNHQ level and therefore cannot be facilitated by the Mission.</p>