



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2020/001

Audit of military patrolling in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

The Mission established command and control structures and guidelines for patrolling operations but needed to enhance their monitoring, reporting and records management

**11 February 2020
Assignment No. AP2019-637-06**

Audit of military patrolling 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 military patrolling 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 patrols undertaken by the MINUSCA Force component. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2019 and included a review of: planning of patrols; execution and monitoring of patrols; and reporting, evaluation and records management of patrol activities.

MINUSCA established command and control structures and guidelines for patrolling operations but needed to enhance their monitoring, reporting and records management.

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

- Develop standard sector patrol planning procedures and templates, and provide adequate guidance to sector planning officers to enhance sector level patrol planning;
- Ensure its sector headquarters conduct an initial operational readiness assessment of all battalion units;
- Develop an action plan to implement the electronic Unite Aware system to provide real time monitoring of patrol activities;
- Improve reliability of patrol numbers being reported, and define reportable patrols to be included in its operational and budget performance reports; and
- Improve data capturing and records archiving relating to patrolling operations by providing training on use of the SharePoint system and transferring all relevant documents to SharePoint.

MINUSCA accepted the recommendations and has initiated action to implement them.

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Audit of military patrolling 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 military patrolling in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).
2. Military patrolling is a core peacekeeping task and one of several activities of the MINUSCA Force to support the Mission in implementing its mandate. The MINUSCA Force is responsible for conducting proactive and robust patrols to: deter and respond to threats to the local population and maintain a secure environment; collect information; promote a visible presence of the United Nations in the Mission area; and establish rapport, build confidence and trust of the local population as part of the Mission's strategic efforts to implement its mandate. Under the overall direction of the MINUSCA Force Commander, 13 infantry battalions conduct patrolling operations in their designated areas under the operational control of three sector commanders (East, Centre and West) and the Joint Task Force Bangui (JTFB) commander.
3. The military personnel strength of MINUSCA as at 14 March 2019 was 11,624 (165 military observers, 302 military staff officers and 11,157 military contingent personnel) deployed across the three sectors and JTFB command, including four integrated bases (Obo, Bria, Kaga Bandoro and Bouar), 24 permanent operating bases and 33 temporary operating bases. MINUSCA had allocated a total budget of \$364.7 million and \$412.2 million for 2017/18 and 2018/19, respectively for the military component of the Mission.
4. Comments provided by MINUSCA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

5. The objective of the audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of patrols undertaken by the MINUSCA Force component.
6. This audit was included in the 2019 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the operational risk that ineffective military patrolling can have on the achievement of Mission's mandate.
7. OIOS conducted this audit from June to September 2019. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2019. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks areas in military patrolling operations, which included: planning of patrols; execution and monitoring of patrols; and reporting, evaluation and records management of patrol activities.
8. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel, (b) reviews of relevant documentation, (c) analytical reviews of data, and (d) field visits to three sector headquarters and JTFB and 6 of the 13 battalions.
9. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Planning of patrols

Further guidance was needed to enhance sector level patrol planning

10. The Force Commander had established an adequate command and control mechanism and was providing necessary guidance to military personnel in headquarters, sectors and battalions to allow them to plan their patrols effectively. This consisted of a patrolling directive issued on 7 January 2016 instructing commanders of sector headquarters and to battalion units to review operational needs and determine appropriate number and types of patrols to conduct within their area of responsibility. The Force Commander's various instructions during daily meetings with senior officers of the Force (called "the Force Commander's Daily Briefing") as well as weekly fragmentation orders (Fragos) issued by the Force and sector headquarters provided guidance to those responsible for patrolling activities to ensure patrolling was focused on high-risk and priority areas.

11. OIOS interviews with commanders and planning officers confirmed that sectors and battalions were aware of patrol objectives such as showing MINUSCA's presence, gathering intelligence about armed groups and dismantling illegal check points to ensure freedom of movement, while duly taking into consideration, situational awareness and threat assessments.

12. Nevertheless, the patrol planning process at the three sectors and JTFB was inconsistent. For example: (a) weekly Fragos issued by sector east headquarters did not include the tasks of its two battalion units responsible for covering four locations; and (b) weekly patrol plans issued by sector centre did not include patrols by a battalion unit deployed since July 2018. Also, sectors west and centre issued weekly Fragos and patrol plans to their subordinate units, but sector east and JTFB issued only Fragos, entrusting concerned battalions to decide on the number of patrols and the areas to cover. OIOS noted that sector west patrol planning and reporting templates were sufficiently comprehensive, and if adopted by other sectors, could improve the overall planning process. The issuance of standard procedures would also ensure consistency in planning between sectors as well as provide the necessary guidance to newly deployed planning officers, considering troop rotation policy.

(1) MINUSCA should enhance sector level patrol planning by developing standard procedures and templates for sectors and providing adequate guidance to sector planning officers prior to their deployment to sectors.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that Force headquarters would order all sectors and JTFB to issue weekly patrol plans, extending the current planning and reporting procedures of sector west to all their subordinate units. Force headquarters patrolling directive would be updated with required templates, while keeping in view the operational environment dictating course correction and impromptu changes, the Force Commander's guidance being retained as a permanent feature for course corrections and betterment to effect changes in the plan, and avoidance of over-concentration of entire planning at Force headquarters. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of a copy of standard patrol planning procedures and related templates and evidence of guidance provided to sector planning officers prior to their deployment to the sectors.

Need to improve operational readiness assessment of units involved in patrolling

13. To ensure effective patrolling operations and safeguarding of patrol teams, the Force Commander is required to periodically assess readiness of all subordinate units and address any identified gaps. An

initial comprehensive operational readiness assessment (ORA) should be conducted within 2 to 3 months of a unit's arrival and a comprehensive ORA again during the remaining 9 to 10 months of the tour of duty.

14. The required initial ORAs had not been conducted for any of the battalions. This was because sector headquarters were not aware of the ORA requirement set by the Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and a Force Commander's directive on the same requirement that was issued in April 2018. Force headquarters had also not followed up with sectors to ensure the initial ORAs were being done. As a result, the Force leadership missed the opportunity to identify in a timely manner issues impacting the effectiveness of patrols. For example, some of the comprehensive ORAs conducted identified safety and security issues such as weapons needing maintenance that could have been resolved sooner had the initial ORAs been conducted. As of the audit date, the Force has either conducted or scheduled to conduct comprehensive ORAs for all 13 battalion units during their tour of duty.

(2) MINUSCA should monitor completion of initial operational readiness assessments of all battalion units within two to three months of their deployment.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that Force headquarters had already circulated the Force Commander's directives on streamlining the ORA process on 29 July 2019 which required initial ORAs to be conducted within two months of a unit's arrival in the Mission area. Implementation of these directives would be ensured. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that initial ORAs are being conducted for all new battalions.

B. Execution and monitoring of patrols

Patrol teams complied with patrol and safety procedures

15. OIOS visits to six battalions observed that patrols were conducted as per the approved task orders, and patrol team leaders were conducting pre-briefings and checking the adequacy of operational equipment and safety gear prior to departure. For each patrol, there were also quick reaction teams and medical support on standby to intervene if needed. Post-patrol briefings were conducted and patrol reports including photographic evidence of places visited, interactions with community members, and illegal checkpoints dismantled were submitted to sector headquarters and JTFB.

16. OIOS observed that battalions maintained the rules of engagement aide memoir (blue card) that was translated into their languages as required. The battalions were also actively utilizing community liaison assistants to assist patrol teams to better communicate with the local population to gather information on threats and movement of armed groups. OIOS concluded that patrol teams generally adhered to operational and safety procedures for conducting patrols.

Need to improve real-time monitoring of patrols

17. To better monitor ongoing patrols and enable appropriate response in the event of a serious security situation, in March 2019, the Force Chief of Staff issued a Frago to military staff officers to launch a situational awareness programme for patrol planning including the use of an electronic Unite Aware system, which links ongoing patrols with patrol plans and enables real-time visibility and tracking of ongoing patrols by Force headquarters. This programme was being piloted by DPO before being rolled out to other missions.

18. Access to Unite Aware had been granted to 116 military staff officers and 81 officers had been trained on the patrol management tool. However, at the time of the audit, the programme was not fully

implemented, mainly because many of those trained on the system had left the Mission due to yearly rotation. Therefore, there was need for Force headquarters to develop a plan to fully implement Unite Aware, taking into consideration the challenges faced due to the rotation policy of troops.

(3) MINUSCA should develop an action plan to implement the Unite Aware system to enable real-time monitoring of patrol activities, taking into consideration the frequent rotation of military personnel.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that preparatory work was ongoing to use Unite Aware and patrol management tool. Force headquarters expressed the need to extract specific patrol statistics for the Force Commander's weekly assessment. The objective remained to shift from paperwork to Unite Aware with the use of the patrol management tool in all sectors and taskforces. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of an action plan to fully implement Unite Aware.

C. Reporting, evaluation and records management

There was a need to improve reporting of patrol statistics

19. Battalions are required to report patrol statistics and significant incidents and events observed during patrolling exercises in their daily and weekly situation reports through sector headquarters to Force headquarters.

20. Battalion patrol teams, following patrolling exercises, prepared and submitted both daily and weekly situation reports to Force headquarters. A review of a sample of these reports noted that they adequately reported the patrol activities conducted, provided information on the general security situation in the area patrolled and included details of incidents, with photographic evidence attached. However, as military staff officers of Force headquarters were manually consolidating the patrol numbers that were reported by different battalion units, often in a PowerPoint presentation, the statistics being reported to the Force Commander were not always reliable, and resulted in inconsistent reporting of patrolling activities. For example, in May 2019, OIOS recalculation of the figures received noted that there were discrepancies: (a) the number of short range patrols reported by Force headquarters was 4,996, 5 per cent or 260 more than that reported by sectors; and (b) the number of night patrols reported by Force headquarters was 4,406, 4 per cent or 175 more than that reported by sectors.

21. Further, military personnel responsible for planning and reporting on patrols did not maintain adequate portfolio of evidence to support the number of patrols conducted. For instance, for the period 2017/18: (a) against the planned patrols of 7,800, 124,068 were conducted; and (b) against the planned number of armed escorts of 11,300, 3,679 were conducted. The significant differences were attributed to lack of a clear definition of what constituted a patrol for budget performance reporting. For example, some battalion units counted departure and return of a patrol team as a patrol, while others counted each departure, segments during the patrolling exercise, and the return as a patrol. Also, due to lack of standardized procedures and guidelines, the frequent rotation of military staff officers impacted on the Mission's ability to consistently maintain the portfolio of evidence. Lack of reliable data on patrolling may adversely affect the ability to evaluate battalion units' patrol performance and their effectiveness as well as decisions on changes to patrol types and locations.

(4) MINUSCA should: (a) improve reliability of patrol numbers reported by compiling them through an appropriate standard template and maintaining a portfolio of evidence to support the numbers; and (b) define reportable patrols to be included in its operational and budget performance reports.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that Operations Unit/Military Operation Centre would develop appropriate and adapted spreadsheet for recording of the patrols carried out in the whole area of operations, which would be updated from all the weekly patrol assessment reports issued by sector and task force headquarters. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that an appropriate template for compiling the number of patrols conducted by battalions has been implemented; a portfolio of evidence is being maintained; and reportable patrols included in its operational and budget performance reports have been clearly defined.

Need to enhance records management

22. Effective records management enables preservation of institutional memory and protects sensitive information from being inappropriately accessed and disseminated.

23. The Force Operations Unit and personnel involved in patrol planning and reporting did not maintain, in a consistent manner, all records and documents in a centralized repository system. It should be noted that the current COSMOS repository system was scheduled to be gradually replaced by SharePoint from December 2019. Pertinent documents, such as daily situation reports, weekly Fragos, patrol plans and assessment reports were kept in individuals' official emails and computer hard drives without adequate security controls and back-up to a centralized system. Also, due to lack of proper handover during rotation of officers, documents relating to the 2017/18 patrols, which were stored on the computers of departed officers, could not be retrieved. As at 30 November 2019, the Force component's folder in the COSMOS included limited information and was not well organized with information properly classified and archived where necessary, to effectively manage patrol records and transfer them to SharePoint. This impacted effective sharing of information relating to lessons learned, challenges faced during planning and reporting of patrols and best patrol planning practices among Force personnel. Also, there was a lack of assurance that sensitive information had been adequately safeguarded from unauthorized access.

(5) MINUSCA should improve capturing and archiving of data relating to patrolling operations by: (a) training all military staff officers on the use of the SharePoint system and systematic record organization and classification; and (b) transferring all relevant documents to SharePoint.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that data migration of Force headquarters' shared drive to COSMOS was underway. COSMOS was, however, being phased out and would be replaced by SharePoint. The spreadsheet recording the patrols would thus be saved in SharePoint. Relevant staff officers would be trained in due course on the use of SharePoint. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that training to military personnel on data management and use of SharePoint has been conducted, and that all data pertaining to patrolling activities have been transferred to SharePoint.

Mission planned to conduct self-evaluation of patrolling activities

24. MINUSCA is required to conduct self-evaluation of activities to assess their effectiveness, continued relevance and progress towards the achievement of its objectives.

25. MINUSCA had not conducted a self-evaluation of patrolling activities during the audit period; however, the Mission was implementing the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System (CPAS) to assess performance across all areas of the Mission including the Force. CPAS is evidence based and links activities to outcomes and impact displayed on real-time dashboards, which are accessible at all levels. The Strategic Planning Unit had coordinated the first three phases of the requirements: (a) mapping the context

(based on the mandate); (b) defining the results to be achieved; and (c) defining the evidence of the changes (indicators). The Mission informed that it intended to conduct self-evaluations as the next part of this process. Based on the actions being taken by the Mission, no recommendation at this stage has been made.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

26. 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.

(Signed) Eleanor T. Burns
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Audit of military patrolling 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 enhance sector level patrol planning by developing standard procedures and templates for sectors and providing adequate guidance to sector planning officers prior to their deployment to sectors.	Important	O	Receipt of a copy of standard patrol planning procedures and related templates and evidence of guidance provided to sector planning officers prior to their deployment to the sectors.	31 March 2020
2	MINUSCA should monitor completion of initial operational readiness assessments of all battalion units within two to three months of their deployment.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that initial operational readiness assessments are being conducted for all new battalions.	30 June 2020
3	MINUSCA should develop an action plan to implement the Unite Aware system to enable real-time monitoring of patrol activities, taking into consideration the frequent rotation of military personnel.	Important	O	Receipt of an action plan to fully implement Unite Aware.	31 March 2020
4	MINUSCA should: (a) improve reliability of patrol numbers reported by compiling them through an appropriate standard template and maintaining a portfolio of evidence to support the numbers; and (b) define reportable patrols to be included in its operational and budget performance reports.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that an appropriate template for compiling the number of patrols conducted by battalions has been implemented; a portfolio of evidence is being maintained; and reportable patrols included in its operational and budget performance reports have been clearly defined.	29 February 2020
5	MINUSCA should improve capturing and archiving of data relating to patrolling operations by: (a) training all military staff officers on the use of the SharePoint system and systematic record	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that training to military personnel on data management and use of SharePoint has been conducted, and that all data pertaining to patrolling activities have been transferred to SharePoint.	31 July 2020

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

³ C = closed, O = open

⁴ Date provided by MINUSCA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of military patrolling 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
	organization and classification; and (b) transferring all relevant documents to SharePoint.				

APPENDIX I

Management Response

United Nations



Nations Unies

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated
Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

MINUSCA

Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies
pour la Stabilisation en République centrafricaine

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Mr. Daeyoung Park
A: Chief, Peacekeeping Audit Service,
Internal Audit Division,
OIOS

DATE: 9 January 2020

REFERENCE: MINUSCA/OSRSG/004/2020

FROM: Mankeur Ndiaye
DE: Special Representative of the Secretary-General,
MINUSCA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Ndiaye'.

A larger handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mankeur Ndiaye'.

SUBJECT: **Management Response on the Draft Report on an audit of military patrolling in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (Assignment No. AP2019/637/06)**

With reference to your memorandum of 22 December 2019 (OIOS/2019/637/06/04), on the above captioned-subject matter, please find attached MINUSCA's response (Appendix I) for your consideration.

Management Response

Audit of military patrolling in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	MINUSCA should enhance sector level patrol planning by developing standard procedures and templates for sectors and providing adequate guidance to sector planning officers prior to their deployment.	Important	Yes	Chief U3 (Operations) FHQ and Chief G3 (Operations) of all the Sectors and JTFB (Joint Task Force Bangui)	31 Jan 20	<p>Each Sector and TF (Task Force) (Joint TF Bangui and TF Bambari) will be ordered to issue a weekly patrol plan to all their subordinate units. Sector West Headquarters' (SWHQ) current patrol planning and reporting procedures can easily be extended to other sectors and TF (TF) HQs. FHQ patrolling directive will be updated accordingly with required templates attached. However, following needs to be kept in view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operational environment will always dictate course corrections and impromptu changes in the plan. • In a dynamic environment, a patrol plan cannot be considered a sacrosanct document, but rather allow for flexibility. • FC (Force Commander)'s guidance will remain a permanent feature for course corrections and improvement to effect changes in the plan. • Over concentration of entire planning (down to lower level) at FHQ amounts to wresting initiative / latitude from the subordinate Headquarters/ units.

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

Management Response

Audit of military patrolling in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
2	MINUSCA should monitor completion of initial operational readiness assessments of all battalion units within two to three months of their deployment.	Important	Yes	Chief Evaluation of FHQ and Respective Chief G7 (Training) of Sector HQ and JTFB	2 months after battalion units' arrival	MINUSCA FHQ has already circulated FC's Directives on streamlining the ORA (Operational Readiness Assessment) process (Directives to Streamline Performance Evaluation and ORA for MINUSCA Forces, Dated 29 July 2019) where it is mentioned that, initial ORA to be conducted by Sector/JTFB HQ within 02 months of unit's arrival in mission area. Implementation of this directives will be ensured.
3	MINUSCA should develop an action plan to implement an electronic system (known as "the Mission common operational picture") to provide real-time monitoring of patrol activities, taking into consideration frequent rotation of military personnel.	Important	Yes	MOC (Military Operations Center) FHQ and Sector HQ G3	31 March 2020	Preparatory work is ongoing in order to use Unite Aware (which has replaced the "Mission common operational picture") and the Patrol Management tool. FHQ already expressed the need to extract specific patrol statistics for the FC's weekly assessment. The objective remains to shift from paper work to Unite Aware with the use of the Patrol Management tool in all Sectors and TFs.
4	MINUSCA should: (a) improve reliability of patrol numbers reported by compiling them through an appropriate spreadsheet-based standard template and maintaining a portfolio of evidence to support the numbers; and (b) define reportable patrols to be included in its operational and budget performance reports.	Important	Yes	Chief U3 FHQ and Chief G3 Sector HQ	29 Feb 2020	U3/MOC to develop appropriate and adapted spreadsheet for the recording of the patrols carried out in the whole area of operations. The spread-sheet will be updated from all the weekly patrol assessment reports issued by sector and TF HQs.

Management Response

Audit of military patrolling in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
5	MINUSCA should improve data capturing and archiving records relating to patrolling operations by; (a) training all military staff officers on the use of the COSMOS repository system and systematic record organization and classification and (b) transferring all relevant documents to COSMOS.	Important	Yes	Chief MOC and Chief Infoman (Information Management) at FHQ	31 Jul 20	The migration of FHQ share drive data to COSMOS is underway for all FHQ cells including U3. Cosmos is, however, being phased out and has been replaced by SharePoint. The spreadsheet recording the patrols will thus be saved in SharePoint. Relevant Staff Officers will be trained in due course on the use of SharePoint. However, this recommendation will take considerable time for implementation.