



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2021/055

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

The Conduct and Discipline Team needed to improve misconduct risk management, ensure that all civilian and uniformed personnel are regularly trained, and follow up on long outstanding allegations

**23 November 2021
Assignment No. AP2020-641-03**

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of measures implemented by MINUSMA to manage conduct and discipline in the Mission. The audit covered the period from July 2018 to December 2020 and included a review of the three-pronged strategy for addressing conduct and discipline issues in peace operations namely: (a) prevention of misconduct, (b) enforcement of standards of conduct, and (c) remedial action.

The Conduct and Discipline Team needed to improve misconduct risk management, ensure that all civilian and uniformed personnel are regularly trained, and follow up on long outstanding allegations.

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

- Periodically evaluate the impact of its training and awareness raising activities; and reconcile the list of attendees of induction trainings with those deployed to the Mission to ensure all newly onboarded personnel are trained;
- Maintain an up-to-date schedule of risk assessment site visits to locations with deployed United Nations personnel, review the risk assessment reports for appropriate guidance and corrective action, and monitor status of recommendations from risk assessment visits to ensure timely implementation;
- Task the Conduct and Discipline Team to play an advisory role on welfare committees and get them to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the activities undertaken;
- Maintain a complete record of all complaints received by the Conduct and Discipline Team in the Misconduct Tracking System to ensure effective and timely assessment and follow-up on all reported allegations; and
- Implement a monitoring system to track long outstanding allegations for appropriate follow up.

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

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Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

2. Core values and principles to be upheld by staff members are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, whereby every staff member is called upon to uphold “the highest levels of efficiency, competence and integrity.” The Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service¹ delineate fundamental values and principles and establish the highest standards of conduct which is an obligation for all personnel. The United Nations field personnel are also guided as to their conduct by the policy on “Accountability for Conduct and Discipline in Field Missions”² that focuses on how they are to be held accountable for misconduct and lack of discipline.

3. The Secretariat’s commitment to ensuring that all United Nations personnel, whether civilian, police, or military, are accountable for their conduct while in the service of a United Nations field mission was reinforced in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, launched jointly with Member States. Strengthening the conduct of peacekeeping operations and personnel is a core part of this initiative. The United Nations has a three-pronged strategy to address misconduct: prevention of misconduct, enforcement of United Nations standards of conduct, and remedial action. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) is responsible for enforcing United Nations policies on conduct in peacekeeping missions and special political missions and works closely with the Departments of Peace Operations and Peacebuilding and Political Affairs. The Under-Secretary-General, DMSPC oversees the conduct and discipline function for all field missions. The Conduct and Discipline Service (CDS) of the Administrative Law Division (ALD), provides overall direction for conduct and discipline issues.

4. Misconduct refers to the violations of the United Nations standards of conduct (under the Charter, the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, or other relevant administrative issuances or policy documents developed for specific categories of personnel); or failure to observe the Standards of Conduct expected of an international civil servant. There are two categories of misconduct: (i) serious misconduct; and (ii) misconduct. Serious misconduct includes sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), serious and complex fraud, abuse of authority, conflict of interest, all cases involving risk of loss of life, serious criminal acts, gross mismanagement, and waste of substantial resources.

5. The Mission’s Conduct and Discipline Team (CDT) serves as the principal advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for all matters related to conduct and discipline, including SEA involving all categories of personnel. The CDT is responsible for providing guidance and technical advice to the Mission on issues relating to conduct and discipline; assisting the Mission in developing strategies to prevent, identify and respond effectively to misconduct; and ensuring that all United Nations policies, procedures and guidelines on addressing misconduct are adequately disseminated to personnel in the Mission.

6. MINUSMA CDT is headed by a Chief at the D-1 level who reports to the SRSG. CDT has eight approved positions comprising six international staff, one National Professional Officer and one United

¹ <https://icsc.un.org/Resources/General/Publications/standardsE.pdf>

² <https://conduct.unmissions.org/documents-standards>

Nations Volunteer (UNV). The CDT budgets for 2018/19, 2019/20, and 2020/21 were \$1,374,056, \$1,274,056, and \$1,576,551, respectively.

7. Comments provided by MINUSMA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of measures implemented by MINUSMA to manage conduct and discipline in the Mission. The audit focused on the three-pronged strategy for addressing conduct and discipline issues in peace operations and addressed three main audit questions:

- a) To what extent has the Mission established adequate measures to prevent misconduct?
- b) To what extent has the Mission established effective mechanisms for reporting, recording and timely addressing cases of misconduct?
- c) To what extent has the Mission taken adequate remedial action in cases of substantiated misconduct?

9. This audit was included in the 2021 risk-based work plan of OIOS because of the immediate and detrimental consequences of some misconduct types on the victims and other stakeholders. It was also due to high operational and reputational consequences that conduct and discipline matters may bear to the United Nations as well as the importance of ethical behaviour, professional and personal conduct of all civilian and uniformed personnel to the overall organizational culture in motivating staff to deliver their best effort.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from January to June 2021. The audit covered the period from July 2018 to December 2020. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks areas, which included: prevention of misconduct, enforcement of standards of conduct, and remedial action.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) interview with key personnel, (b) review of relevant documentation, (c) analytical review of data, (d) analysis of 47 risk assessment reports, 10 quarterly reports on conduct and discipline; analytical review of all 128 misconduct cases in the Misconduct Tracking System (MTS), (e) sample testing of 30 cases recorded in the MTS as of 31 December 2020 using random sampling approach, and (f) review of welfare activities in seven MINUSMA camps.

12. The audit team relied on data extracted from MTS by the Mission CDT which were reconciled with the records of the Mission Security Investigation Unit and OIOS-Investigation Division.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Prevention of misconduct

Need to ensure induction training for all newly onboarded personnel

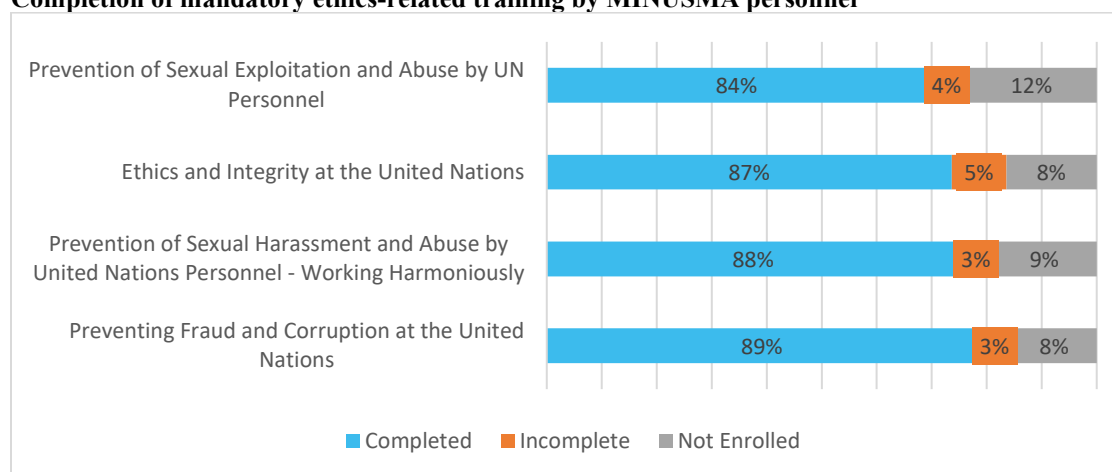
14. The Secretary-General made a commitment towards creating a culture of prevention through pursuing initiatives designed to reconnect all personnel to the core values of the United Nations. The Mission is required to create an environment that promotes ethical conduct, and all personnel are expected to adhere to the highest standards of behavior.

15. One of the ways the Mission communicates and promotes shared values and expectations of conduct is through awareness raising and training. As part of awareness raising efforts, MINUSMA CDT posted several materials on the Mission’s intranet, and developed and disseminated videos, brochures and pamphlets during personnel induction trainings to create awareness on prevention and reporting of SEA. In addition, the SRSG and senior management held eight townhall meetings where staff were sensitized on conduct and discipline issues.

16. There are four mandatory training courses for staff at all levels, which relate to ethics and integrity. The completion rates of mandatory courses are published on the management dashboards and are included in the senior managers' compacts. On average, 87 per cent of staff had completed all four ethics and integrity related mandatory courses as of 28 July 2021. However, completion rates were low at the senior management level, where less than half (47 per cent) of staff at D-2 and above level completed these courses.

Figure 1

Completion of mandatory ethics-related training by MINUSMA personnel



Source: Management dashboard mandatory training data (accessed on 28 July 2021)

17. Further, the MINUSMA Integrated Mission Training Centre and CDT officers jointly conduct a mandatory induction training aimed at improving the awareness of MINUSMA personnel. The training included topics related to mission specific regulations and rules, relevant national laws, protection of the host country public from SEA, how to report allegations of misconduct and the investigative process. A review of the Mission’s training records for the period from July 2018 to December 2020 indicated that all 1,595 police personnel deployed attended the mandatory conduct and discipline induction training. However, 71 per cent of civilian international and national staff, UNVs, and international and national contractors and nearly 50 per cent of military personnel newly deployed in the Mission did not attend the mandatory induction.

18. This was because although the Human Resources Section, Police and Force provide monthly to CDT a list of civilian, police, and military personnel deployed to the Mission, CDT did not have a process in place to reconcile the mandatory induction training attendance list with the list of newly onboarded personnel. Such a process would have identified those not attending this important training for follow-up purposes.

19. Moreover, the Mission has not yet evaluated the effectiveness of its training and awareness raising efforts aimed at misconduct prevention. The recent OIOS surveys³ showed a need for MINUSMA to improve its organizational environment and set the right “tone at the top” for ethical conduct. Slightly more than half of respondents to the accountability survey agreed that MINUSMA senior managers are a United Nations role model in words and actions; and about the same proportion of respondents agreed that MINUSMA managers set a culture of accountability in their units. Also, about two-thirds of MINUSMA staff who responded to the accountability survey believed that standards on ethics and integrity have been effectively communicated, while the rest were either neutral or believed that they were communicated somewhat or extremely ineffectively. Sixty-two per cent of staff believed that training surrounding ethical standards and integrity has been sufficient, while more than 37 per cent were either neutral or thought it was somewhat or totally insufficient.

Figure 2
Staff perception of how effectively the standards on ethics and integrity are communicated
 (percentage)

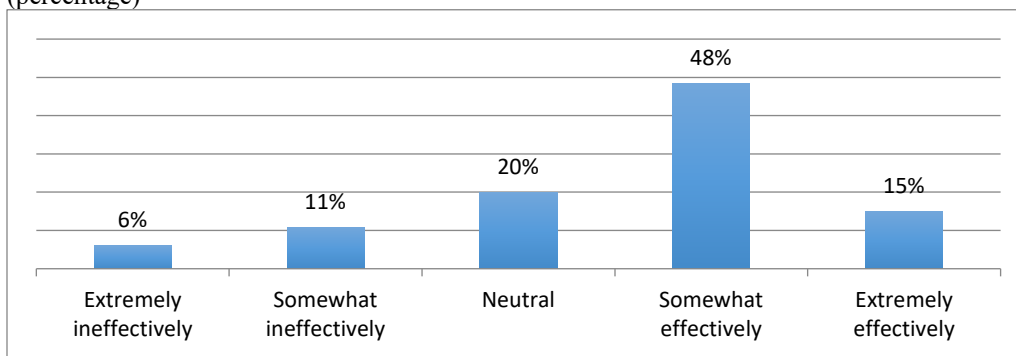
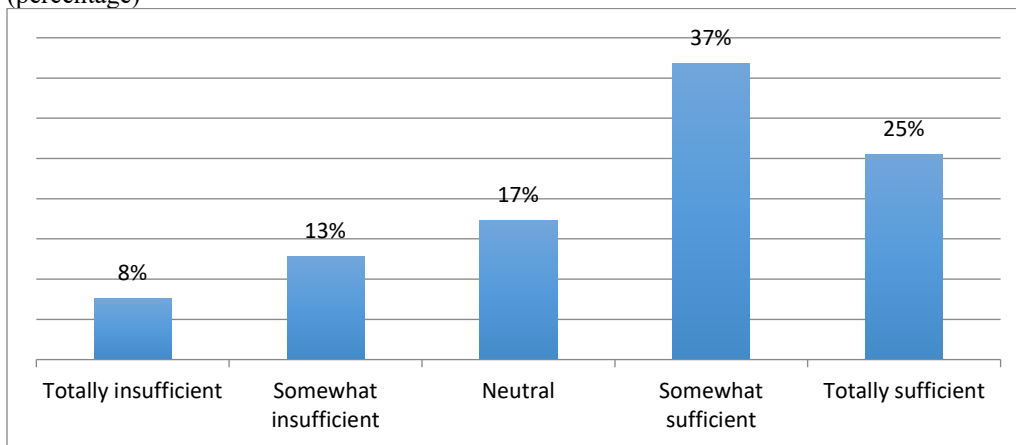


Figure 3
Staff perception of the degree to which ethics and integrity training has been sufficient
 (percentage)



20. The Chief CDT explained that the Mission was developing a conduct and discipline communication strategy that would include guidance on the requirement to evaluate the impact of training

³ Staff surveys were conducted as part of the OIOS Evaluation of the United Nations accountability system and the OIOS Evaluation of organizational culture in peacekeeping operations (A/75/83). These surveys were administered online and included an assessment of adequacy of communication on ethics and integrity; perception of personnel of the Mission’s leadership commitment to ethical values and standards of conduct; and of handling conduct and discipline matters.

and awareness raising activities in MINUSMA. Also, the Mission developed an action plan to address issues raised in United Nations Secretariat staff engagement survey and the OIOS evaluation report⁴ in areas of ethics, trust and integrity, career and development, staff wellbeing, innovation, gender, diversity and inclusivity, and performance management. The Mission expects to fully implement planned actions by 31 December 2021, including quarterly monitoring, analysis, and reporting of trends in abuse of authority cases.

(1) MINUSMA should strengthen the misconduct prevention efforts by: (a) periodically evaluating the impact of its training and awareness raising activities; and (b) reconciling the list of attendees of induction trainings with the list of personnel deployed to the Mission to ensure that all newly onboarded personnel are trained.

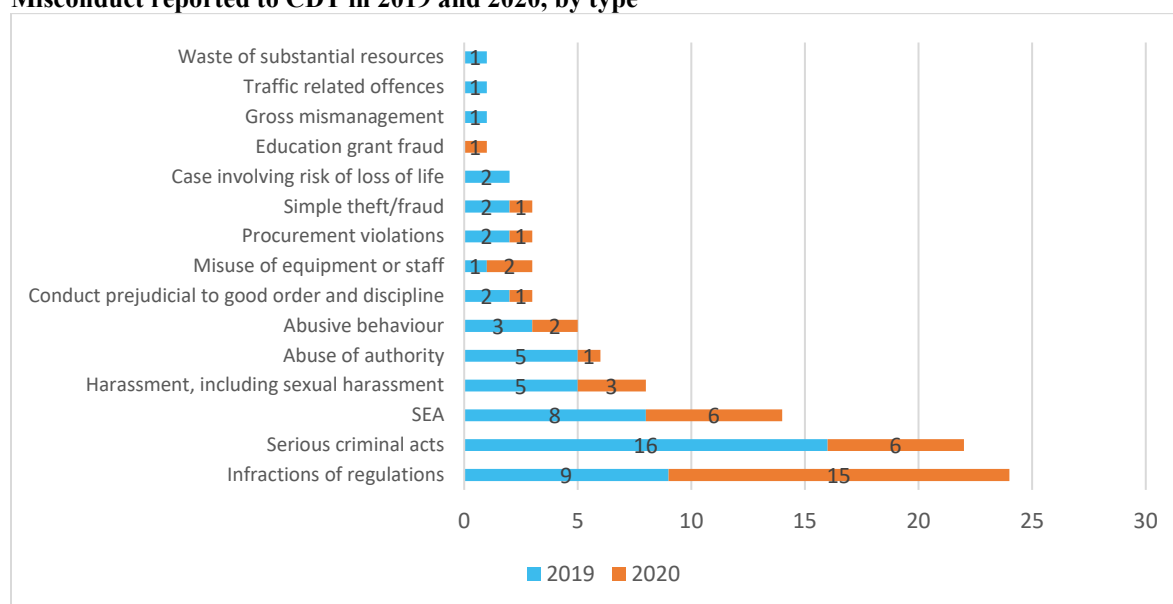
MINUSMA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Mission’s personnel would be surveyed at least once a year to ensure training is evaluated and CDT would reconcile lists of attendees with the lists of civilian and uniformed personnel deployed to the Mission for appropriate actions. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that a survey to evaluate training had been conducted and all newly deployed personnel have attended the mandatory induction training.

Need to strengthen misconduct risk management

21. Effective prevention activities constitute a solid foundation for ensuring that all personnel deployed in field missions maintain the highest standards of conduct and integrity. An important way of preventing misconduct is identifying risks before misconduct occurs. Missions are expected to develop risk management plans, which should look at the level of risk, and specific risk factors, linked to possible misconduct by their personnel, with particular emphasis on SEA.

22. The Mission developed a misconduct risk register in 2019 based on historical data and trends on misconduct allegations, and input from Mission management.

Figure 4
Misconduct reported to CDT in 2019 and 2020, by type



⁴ Evaluation of the organizational culture in peacekeeping operations (A/75/803)

23. This risk register was last updated in July 2020 to include COVID-19 and human rights-related risks, such as unwittingly contributing to human trafficking for sexual exploitation. The risk register identified risks of misconduct associated with different categories of Mission personnel along with risk mitigation measures. As part of the Mission's prevention efforts, CDT conducted 47 risk assessment visits during the audit period to identify risks of misconduct. This included field visits to five regional headquarters and other locations where MINUSMA personnel were deployed.

24. OIOS reviewed all 47 risk assessment reports and observed that in 15 of them, while CDT developed mitigation measures for identified risks, it did not assess their likelihood and impact. CDT could also not readily provide the status of 45 recommendations made to mitigate identified risks following site visits, as no system was in place to monitor their implementation. Further, in 30 of 47 site visits no risks were reported despite an increase in the number of conduct and discipline cases in these locations. During the period from July 2018 to December 2020, 102 cases were reported and processed by CDT for these locations, 12 of which were SEA. The remaining two risk assessment reports were properly completed.

25. Risk assessments were not carried out in 21 of 51 camps where a total of 5,710 troops/police personnel were deployed, even though at these locations, CDT had previously processed 26 misconduct cases, including six SEA cases.

26. The above was due to insufficient planning and oversight of the risk management process. While the Chief of CDT had prepared a new risk assessment report template, it was not properly used by CDT, and there was no evidence that the prepared risk assessment reports were appropriately reviewed. The CDT Chief attributed these challenges to the lack of resources to cope with increased operational requirements of contingents and uncertain security situations in the north of Mali, as well as evolving challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, CDT had not developed a schedule of risk assessment visits taking into consideration existing challenges, including staffing constraints.

(2) MINUSMA should strengthen the misconduct risk management process by: (a) maintaining an up-to-date schedule of risk assessment site visits to all regional offices and Mission locations with deployed United Nations personnel; (b) reviewing the risk assessment reports for providing appropriate guidance and suggesting corrective actions; and (c) monitoring status of recommendations from risk assessment visits to ensure timely implementation.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Chief CDT would supervise the risk assessment process by maintaining an up-to-date schedule of risk assessment site visits and ensure that the Team assesses the risks of all regional offices and permanent camps. Also, CDT would monitor the status of recommendations from risk assessment visits for appropriate follow-up. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: (a) conduct and discipline risks of all regional offices and permanent camps are assessed by CDT and adequately reviewed by the Chief CDT; and (b) the Mission implements recommendations from risk assessment visits in a timely manner.

Mission personnel were vetted prior to recruitment

27. The United Nations seeks to ensure that only individuals with the highest standards of integrity, competence and efficiency are hired. To prevent individuals who have previously engaged in any form of substantiated misconduct from being rehired, the Mission conducts mandatory vetting clearance of candidates prior to onboarding. A review of recruitment records of 60 out of 687 new staff members onboarded by the Mission during the period July 2018 to December 2020, comprising civilians (international, national and UNV), military and police positions indicated that all were vetted by DMSPC/ALD prior to onboarding. At the request of MINUSMA, ALD centrally vetted the newly recruited

staff and confirmed to the Mission the absence of prior record of misconduct. OIOS concluded that MINUSMA had implemented adequate controls to vet candidates.

Need to strengthen oversight of staff welfare activities

28. Provision of welfare and recreation activities for mission personnel is important in promoting adequate working and living conditions for staff often deployed in hardship environments and under stressful post-conflict conditions. Welfare and recreation activities strengthen the morale and discipline of United Nations personnel and play an important role in misconduct prevention.

29. The welfare programme was allocated funds of \$366,200 and \$392,200 for 2019/20 and 2020/21, respectively. Additionally, in 2019/20, the Welfare Unit self-generated \$418,920 in revenues. Discussions with welfare officers and inspection of 15 out of 51 contingent camps indicated that MINUSMA had established seven welfare committees at its Headquarters in Bamako and six regional offices in Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu, Tessalit, Menaka and Kidal. The recreational facilities provided by the Mission included gyms and fitness centres, and television with cable satellite connection at selected common areas.

30. However, the adequacy of welfare activities was impacted by long delays in re-establishing welfare committees following expiration of their one-year term. Also, existing welfare committees did not hold meetings between July 2018 to December 2020. The lack of meetings was attributed to challenges in establishing a quorum for the meetings. Consequently, six regional offices had no welfare activities between November 2019 to December 2020, although some impromptu activities were organized by the Welfare Unit, including tree planting events to contribute to the restoration of ecosystems and combating climate change.

31. CDT was also not involved in its advisory capacity on welfare and recreation matters to align activities to help achieve the misconduct prevention goals of CDT. Therefore, this could be improved by CDT taking an advisory role on welfare committees.

32. Additionally, Mission leadership had not evaluated the effectiveness of the Mission's welfare initiatives in improving the conduct and discipline of Mission personnel. Such an evaluation, however, was difficult due to the absence of: (a) annual welfare committees work plans based on staff needs assessment; (b) reports prepared by the Welfare Unit on activities undertaken; and (c) information on facilities available and details of any improvement or maintenance of living conditions of Mission personnel.

(3) MINUSMA should improve its welfare activities by: (a) tasking the Conduct and Discipline Team to attend welfare committee meetings on an advisory capacity; (b) developing and implementing annual welfare work plans, based on personnel needs; and (c) periodically evaluating welfare activities for lessons learned and adjustment if necessary.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that CDT had already appointed a representative in the Welfare Committee and developed annual work plans for welfare activities. Also, the Mission would bi-annually evaluate the effectiveness of the welfare activities. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that improvements have been made to the welfare activities that are available to all Mission personnel.

B. Enforcement of standards of conduct

Need to ensure all allegations reported to CDT are recorded

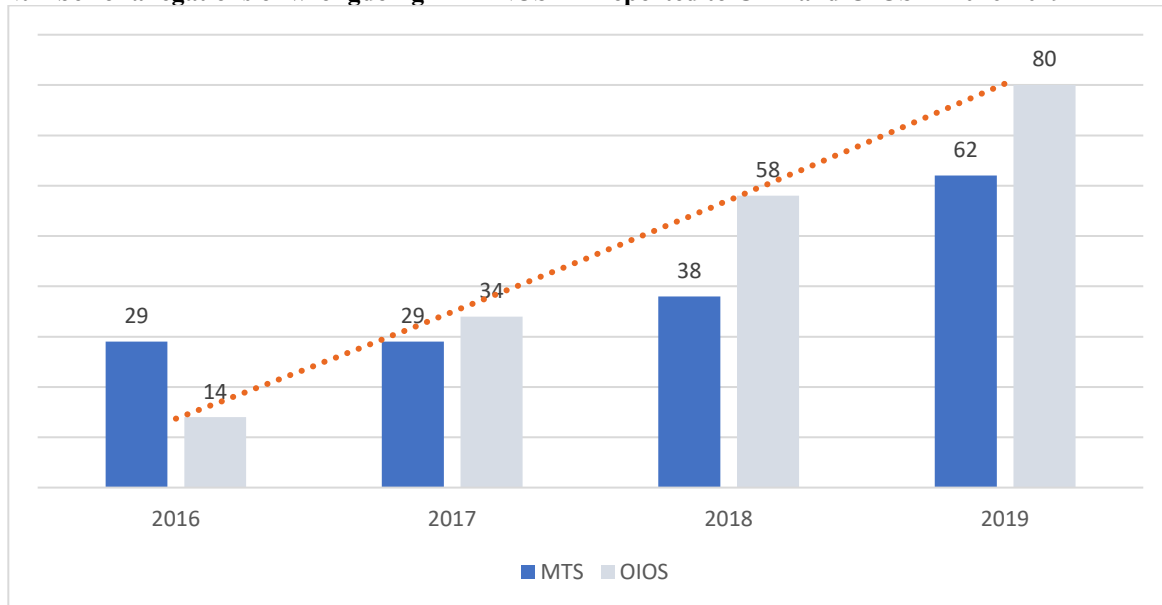
33. The functions of reporting and analysing misconduct have been identified as high-priority activities by the Secretary-General and Member States as they are critical to strengthened accountability in the overall handling of misconduct. It is the duty of all United Nations personnel, whether they are civilian, military and police, to report misconduct to officials whose responsibility is to take appropriate action. All reporting of allegations of misconduct in the Mission should be centrally captured for prompt assessment, referral for investigation and timely follow-up.

34. Results of the 2019 Staff Engagement Survey indicated that most staff (87 per cent) in MINUSMA know what to do and whom to approach to report unethical behavior or wrongdoing. Interviews with personnel and physical observation of the CDT office in Bamako showed that CDT had a safe setup for receiving complaints with a private soundproof room for confidential interviews. OIOS verified that a functioning email address and a hotline were maintained 24/7 with immediate response when called.

35. There has been an increase in the number of misconduct cases reported to the CDT and OIOS from 2016 to 2019. However, as suggested by the below data, OIOS has recorded more complaints than the MINUSMA CDT. This may be due to multiple reporting mechanisms as some cases get reported directly to OIOS and CDT updates its database upon receipt of a report from OIOS. Moreover, cases of fraud (e.g., fuel fraud) can generate multiple case reference numbers for OIOS but only one for MINUSMA.

Figure 5

Number of allegations of wrongdoing in MINUSMA reported to CDT and OIOS in 2016-2019



Source: OIOS Case Management System and MTS statistics

36. The above could also be because CDT did not maintain a register to record all complaints received. The Chief CDT explained that there was no need to record certain allegations considered as non-misconduct related since they had either been resolved amicably or referred to concerned managers. However, in OIOS' view, complete recording of all complaints received by CDT is needed to ensure that all reported allegations are duly assessed and addressed. Additionally, the assessment forms used by CDT were not prenumbered to ensure that all allegations assessed by the team were entered in MTS.

37. Without a complete record of possible wrongdoing instances, the Mission’s risk management activities may not be fully effective, as historical trends may be inaccurate or incomplete. The organizational culture may also be negatively impacted, contributing to staff perception that allegations are not considered promptly and thoroughly.

(4) MINUSMA should maintain a complete record of all complaints received by the Conduct and Discipline Team in the Misconduct Tracking System to ensure effective and timely assessment and follow-up on all reported allegations.

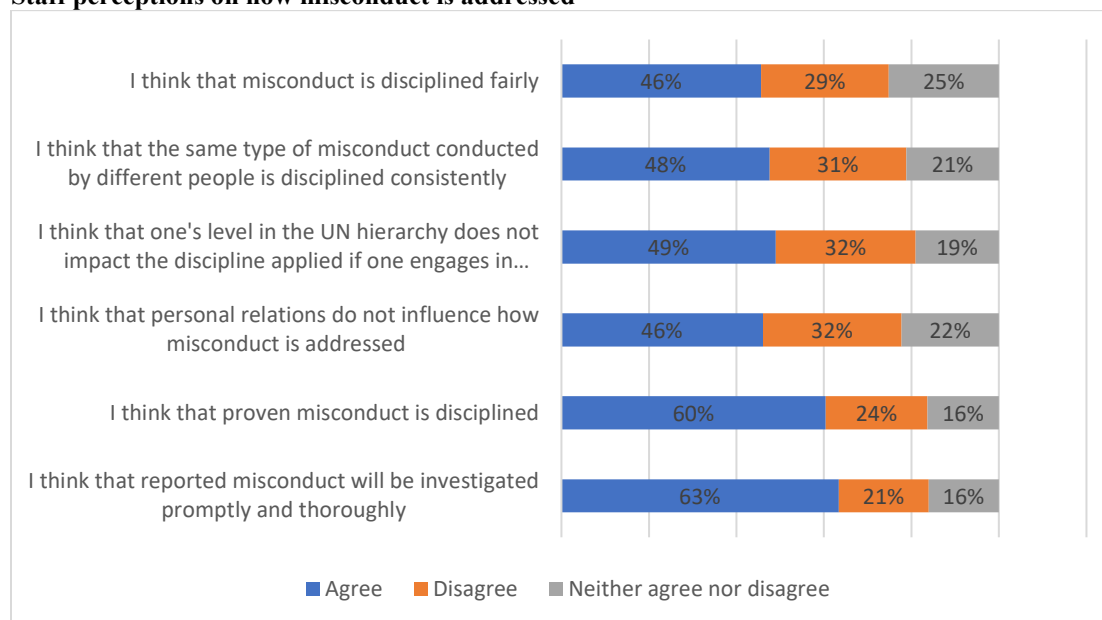
MINUSMA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that CDT would maintain a register to record all allegations and reports received by the Team. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that a register is being maintained to record all allegations and reports and actions initiated by CDT to address them.

Need to timely address wrongdoing

38. Knowing that misconduct is disciplined fairly and consistently re-enforces the culture of accountability for wrongdoing and strengthens staff morale. Timely and proper assessment of alleged wrongdoing is critical to demonstrating the Mission’s overall commitment to create a culture of “zero-tolerance” to misconduct.

39. As indicated above, the OIOS evaluation of the organization culture in peacekeeping operations showed that there was a perception by personnel at various levels that a “culture of impunity” was widespread, as senior leaders and managers did not sufficiently enforce accountability for performance and misconduct. As shown in Figure 6, at MINUSMA, only 60 per cent of staff who responded to the OIOS accountability survey believed that proven misconduct is disciplined, while only 46 per cent believed that misconduct is disciplined fairly, and that personal relations do not influence how misconduct is addressed. These figures are low considering the importance that misconduct is addressed in a timely manner.

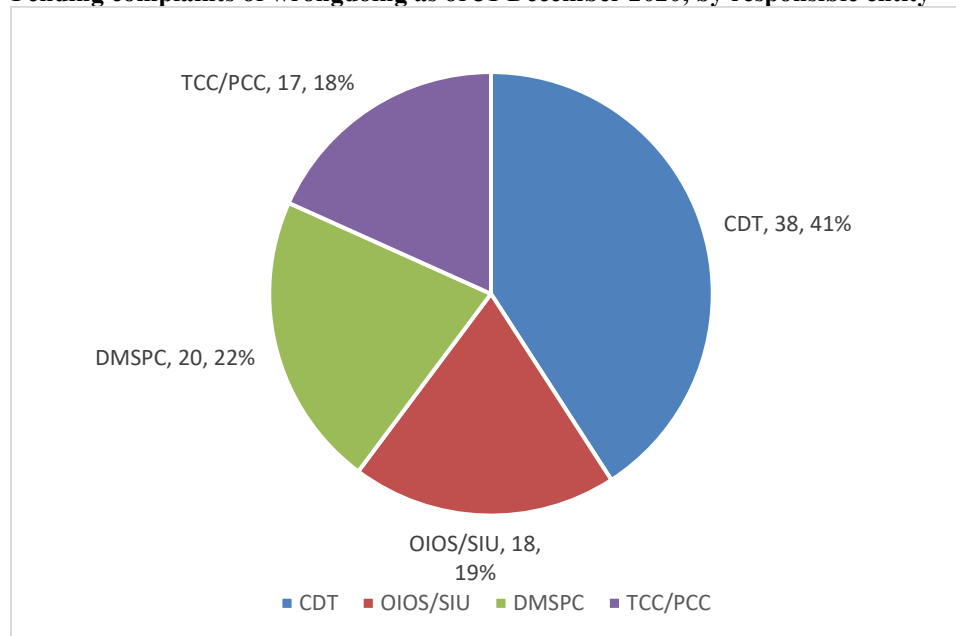
Figure 6
Staff perceptions on how misconduct is addressed



40. Above perceptions could be partly because under the existing policy, except in cases of prohibited conduct, staff members and third parties are not entitled to information on the investigation or action taken on the case, such as those involving fraud and corruption, theft and misappropriation. However, this may not have been well communicated as interviews with MINUSMA staff representatives as well as the Mission-specific results of the IED evaluation highlighted that there were low levels of trust in the accountability systems for misconduct, making references to the absence of disciplinary measures. Moreover, of the MINUSMA personnel who indicated on the OIOS accountability survey that they had reported misconduct during the last two years, 90 per cent had not been updated on the results of their report. Therefore, to help dispel such perceptions, MINUSMA could have a more proactive communications strategy to raise awareness of what can (and cannot) be communicated in relation to reports of wrongdoing, including reminding staff that a Compendium of Disciplinary Measures: Practice of the Secretary-General is circulated annually. This provides information on the most common examples of misconduct and their disciplinary consequences.

41. The time taken to assess complaints and complete investigations, while often valid, may be another factor contributing to the staff perception, although 63 per cent of respondents to the accountability survey believed that reported misconduct will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. During the audit period, CDT received 128 misconduct allegations of which 93 (56 serious cases and 37 other forms of misconduct) were pending as of 31 December 2020. Nearly 80 per cent of these cases were outstanding for more than one year. Analysis of these open allegations showed that 38 cases were pending CDT actions, such as review of reports of investigative bodies for appropriate action. Another 55 cases were awaiting actions from troop/police contributing countries, investigative bodies (OIOS and Security Investigation Unit (SIU)), and DMSPC, as shown in figure 7.

Figure 7
Pending complaints of wrongdoing as of 31 December 2020, by responsible entity



Source: MINUSMA Misconduct Tracking System

42. CDT established and implemented a standard operating procedure to process reported allegations. Analysis of all 128 allegations showed that 17 cases were not classified appropriately. CDT explained that this was because the cases did not relate to misconduct upon further review. CDT took corrective action when this was brought to their attention by OIOS, and therefore no recommendation was made.

43. Thirty-five cases were closed after appropriate follow-up action, and closure notices were prepared, which contained a brief description of the case, action taken and final disposition. A review of a sample of 30 cases showed that:

- CDT did not upload all required information for 18 cases. Missing documents included complaint assessment forms, receipt dates of complaints, details of the subjects and description of the cases, and communication with investigative bodies.
- Assessment of two allegations related to possession of illegal narcotics and physical assault cases, took on average 40 days, compared to the 7 days benchmark for processing established by CDS/OHR/DMSPC.
- For nine cases, including two SEA cases, CDT delayed referring to OIOS from 16 to 188 days.
- While 75 per cent of the 47 investigation reports (from SIU, Board of Inquiry) were reviewed timely by CDT for appropriate action, nearly a quarter of reports had not yet been reviewed after more than one year.

44. While citing resource constraints, this was also because of an insufficient follow-up mechanism with the complainants to properly assess allegations, as well as the timely review of reports of investigative bodies for appropriate action. As a result, cases remained open for prolonged periods delaying corrective action on allegations.

(5) MINUSMA should implement a monitoring system to track long outstanding allegations for appropriate follow up action.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the Conduct and Discipline Team would deploy the new case management tracking system to track all long outstanding allegations for appropriate follow-up. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that long outstanding allegations are being tracked for appropriate follow-up.

C. Remedial action

The victim assistance mechanism was adequate

45. The United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel calls for the United Nations system to provide, in a coordinated manner, assistance to individuals with needs directly arising from an incident of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse. Such assistance can be, for example, medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and immediate material needs such as food, clothing, and safe shelter.

46. CDT participated in the network of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to implement a victim assistance mechanism. The UNCT comprising MINUSMA, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, international non-governmental organizations and other national partners had established a Protection from SEA (PSEA) Task Force. The CDT representative attended all 11 meetings held during the audit period. The meetings included discussion of challenges in the implementation of the victim assistance mechanism, such as funding for legal services for victims. The Task Force managed this challenge by establishing partnerships with legal professionals in Mali who were willing to provide pro bono services.

47. The Mission had an up-to-date mapping of services and assistance available to SEA victims in Mali. Further, CDT developed a victim assistance tracking tool for consolidating information on SEA victims with information on specific forms of assistance provided to each victim. According to the data from the tracking tool, the Mission assisted 4 out of 13 recorded SEA victims from July 2018 to April 2021. Nine victims declined assistance from the Mission without explanation. Services provided included: medical and psychosocial assistance, pre- and post-natal care for the mother of a child conceived out of SEA and counselling. The services started within a period of one month from the date of receipt of initial information by MINUSMA.

48. OIOS concluded that MINUSMA, in collaboration with the UNCT, had established an adequate victim assistance mechanism.

The Mission conducted adequate community awareness raising activities

49. Targeted awareness raising and external communication activities help to inform the general population about the United Nations standards of conduct, reporting misconduct, and assistance available to victims. Community-based complaints mechanisms, which missions are required to establish, enable the people of the country to bring forward cases of misconduct.

50. During the audit period, CDT provided conduct and discipline related workshops to 136 Malian groups covering 76 communities, 4 non-governmental organizations, 27 religious communities, 11 schools and 18 other groups, including women groups. The main objectives of the workshops were to raise awareness about the Mission's conduct and discipline mandate; SEA prevention and reporting mechanisms; and assistance available to victims. During these interactions, CDT distributed materials, such as pamphlets and brochures containing conduct and discipline messages and CDT hotline phone numbers.

51. Also, CDT in collaboration with MINUSMA Radio (Radio MIKADO) launched radio programmes to discuss prevention of SEA, implementation of the United Nations three-pronged strategy on conduct and discipline; mechanisms available for reporting misconduct; community-based complaints mechanism; and the process and content of remedial action. Radio MIKADO was operated from Bamako and provided wide coverage in the country. Its conduct and discipline awareness programme aired once a week in French and the national language and addressed the concerns of the audience.

52. Additionally, the PSEA network led by CDT and United Nations Population Fund in Mali nominated 117 national volunteers as members of the community-based complaints mechanism in all towns in Mali, especially where MINUSMA does not have presence, to report SEA cases. The awareness raising activities were geared towards sensitizing and encouraging Malians to report any observed acts of misconduct by United Nations personnel. During the audit period, two SEA cases were reported to CDT through the community-based complaints mechanism. OIOS concluded that MINUSMA had implemented adequate community awareness raising activities.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

53. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of MINUSMA 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 conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁵ / Important ⁶	C/ O ⁷	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁸
1	MINUSMA should strengthen the misconduct prevention efforts by: (a) periodically evaluating the impact of its training and awareness raising activities; and (b) reconciling the list of attendees of induction trainings with the list of personnel deployed to the Mission to ensure that all newly onboarded personnel are trained.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that a survey to evaluate training had been conducted and all newly deployed personnel have attended the mandatory induction training.	30 June 2022
2	MINUSMA should strengthen the misconduct risk management process by: (a) maintaining an up-to-date schedule of risk assessment site visits to all regional offices and Mission locations with deployed United Nations personnel; (b) reviewing the risk assessment reports for providing appropriate guidance and suggesting corrective actions; and (c) monitoring status of recommendations from risk assessment visits to ensure timely implementation.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that: (a) conduct and discipline risks of all regional offices and permanent camps are assessed by CDT and adequately reviewed by the Chief CDT; and (b) the Mission implements recommendations from risk assessment visits in a timely manner.	31 January 2022
3	MINUSMA should improve its welfare activities by: (a) tasking the Conduct and Discipline Team to attend welfare committee meetings on an advisory capacity; (b) developing and implementing annual welfare work plans, based on personnel needs; and (c) periodically evaluating welfare activities for lessons learned and adjustment if necessary.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that improvements have been made to the welfare activities that are available to all Mission personnel and periodically evaluated for adjustment if necessary.	30 June 2022
4	MINUSMA should maintain a complete recording of all complaints received by the Conduct and Discipline Team in the Misconduct Tracking System	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of a register to record all allegations and reports and actions initiated by CDT to address them.	31 March 2022

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁸ Date provided by MINUSMA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

	to ensure effective and timely assessment and follow-up on all reported allegations.				
5	MINUSMA should implement a monitoring system to track long outstanding allegations for appropriate follow up action.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that long outstanding allegations are being tracked for appropriate follow-up.	31 December 2021


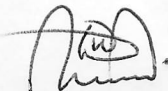
APPENDIX I

Management Response

FACSIMILE

09 November 2021

Reference: MINUSMA/OCOS/2021/008

TO: Ms. Eleanor T. Burns Director, Internal Audit Division OIOS	FROM: ^{For/} Claudia Banz Chief of Staff 
Attn: Mr. Seydou Sirpe Chief Resident Auditor Bamako	
FAX #: TEL #:	FAX #: TEL #: Email: MINUSMA-mars@un.org
SUBJECT: Draft report of the audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (Assignment No: AP2020/641/03)	
Total number of transmitted pages including this page: 4	
<p><i>Reference OIOS interoffice memorandum OIOS 2021-01573, dated 26 October 2021.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In reply to the referenced correspondence, please find attached MINUSMA's Management comments and action plan for the implementation of the audit recommendations, as presented in the subject report.2. With the goal of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the mission's operations, Management commits to fully and timely addressing all areas warranting attention which are detailed in the findings and recommendations. <p>Best regards.</p>	
Prepared by: Mr. Ron M. Kamwendo, Chief, Risk Management & Compliance Unit, Office of the Chief of Staff (OCOS) 	

Management Response

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1.	MINUSMA should strengthen the misconduct prevention efforts by: (a) periodically evaluating the impact of its training and awareness raising activities; and (b) reconciling the list of attendees of induction trainings with the list of personnel deployed to the Mission to ensure that all newly onboarded personnel are trained.	Important	Yes	Chief, Regional Conduct and Discipline Team	31 March 2022 30 June 2022	The Mission concurs with the recommendations and is making efforts to strengthen the misconduct prevention efforts through the following actions: a) A survey will be sent to ensure that training is evaluated by CDT at least once a year. b) Reconciliations of the Conduct and Discipline (CDT) lists of attendees with the lists of civilian and uniformed personnel deployed to the Mission as submitted by the Force, Human Resources, and UNPOL to ensure that all newly onboard personnel received induction training based on the invitation given to them by MINUSMA Integrated Mission Training Center
2.	MINUSMA should strengthen the misconduct risk management process by: (a) maintaining an up-to-date schedule of risk assessment site visits to all regional offices and Mission locations with deployed United Nations personnel; (b)	Important	Yes	Chief, Regional Conduct and Discipline Team	31 January 2022	The Mission agrees with the recommendations. The following measures have been put in place to strengthen the misconduct risk management process:

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 conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	reviewing the risk assessment reports for providing appropriate guidance and suggesting corrective actions; and (c) monitoring status of recommendations from risk assessment visits to ensure timely implementation.					<p>a) Maintenance of an up-to-date schedule of risk assessment site visits to all regional offices.</p> <p>b) Review of risk assessment reports for appropriate guidance and corrective actions: The Chief CDT will review risk assessment reports and take risk management actions for permanent Camps, excluding Temporarily Operational Base (TOB).</p> <p>c) Regular monitoring of the status of recommendations from risk assessment visits to ensure timely implementation.</p>
3.	MINUSMA should improve its welfare activities by: (a) tasking the Conduct and Discipline Team to attend welfare committee meetings on an advisory capacity; (b) developing and implementing annual welfare work plans, based on personnel needs; and (c) periodically evaluating welfare activities for lessons learned and adjustment if necessary.	Important	Yes	<p>Chief, Regional Conduct and Discipline Team</p> <p>Chief, Welfare Unit</p>	<p>Partially completed. (b and c on course)</p> <p>30 June 2022</p>	<p>MINUSMA concurs with the recommendations. The CDT has already appointed its representatives to serve as members of the Staff Welfare Committees. On 28 October 2021 Welfare Unit submitted revised Welfare and Recreation Committee (WRC) memberships to the Director of Mission Support for signature. The seven committees now include the appointed CDT representatives. Evidence shall be provided to the Resident Auditors. Annual workplans for welfare activities have been developed and</p>

Management Response

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						shall be presented to the Resident Auditors. Bi-annually, the Welfare Unit shall send out surveys to personnel to evaluate its activities.
4.	MINUSMA should maintain a complete recording of all complaints received by the Conduct and Discipline Team in the Misconduct Tracking System to ensure effective and timely assessment and follow-up on all reported allegations.	Important	Yes	Chief, Regional Conduct and Discipline Team	31 March 2022	The Mission concurs with the recommendation. CDT records all complaints in the Case Management Tracking System. A decision has since been made to open a file register for all allegations and reports.
5.	MINUSMA should implement a monitoring system to track long outstanding allegations for appropriate follow up action.	Important	Yes	Chief, Regional Conduct and Discipline Team	31 December 2021	The Mission concurs with the recommendation. CDT mechanisms will rely on the new Case Management Tracking System to track all long outstanding allegations for appropriate follow-up.