



## **INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION**

### **REPORT 2021/062**

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#### **Audit of the implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers by the Department of Peace Operations**

**The Department needed to develop a  
framework that incorporates measures to  
change leadership mindset and establish  
accountability to strengthen the security of  
United Nations peacekeepers**

**15 December 2021**

**Assignment No. AP2019-600-03**

# **Audit of the implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers by the Department of Peace Operations**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO). The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan. The audit covered the period from 1 December 2017 to 30 November 2020 and included a review of: (a) peacekeepers' security framework; (b) governance mechanisms; (c) implementation of the Action Plan; and (d) monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework for the Action Plan.

While steady progress has been made in implementing the Action Plan, DPO needed to develop a revised framework that incorporates measures to change leadership mindset. It was also important for DPO to harmonize the definition of threats to United Nations peacekeepers to support the development of related early warning indicators to facilitate better decision-making and response actions in the field. An updated Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy with an overarching integrated force protection policy would be beneficial in clarifying respective responsibilities, accountability, and capacity of concerned Secretariat entities in performing functions in this area. Furthermore, there was a need for a monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness in implementing the Action Plan.

OIOS made eight recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, DPO needed to:

- Develop a revised framework for the security of United Nations peacekeepers that incorporates measures to change leadership mindset in responding to security issues and details roles and responsibilities of Headquarters and field missions for engagement at the political, operational, and tactical levels;
- Expand the terms of reference of the Implementation Support Team (IST) to broaden its membership composition, as appropriate, and specify the quorum and frequency of its meetings;
- Harmonize the definition of threats to United Nations peacekeepers and support the development of related early warning indicators by field missions to facilitate better decision-making and response actions in the field;
- Develop procedures and guidelines to operationalize the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy;
- Develop and promulgate the overarching integrated force protection policy;
- Develop a strategy for sustained political and financial advocacy to ensure accountability for serious crimes against peacekeepers;
- Establish a monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework to facilitate assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan; and
- Obtain regular feedback from the military and police components of the high-risk missions to assess the effectiveness of IST to support and guide field missions in implementing the Action Plan.

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

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# Audit of the implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers by the Department of Peace Operations

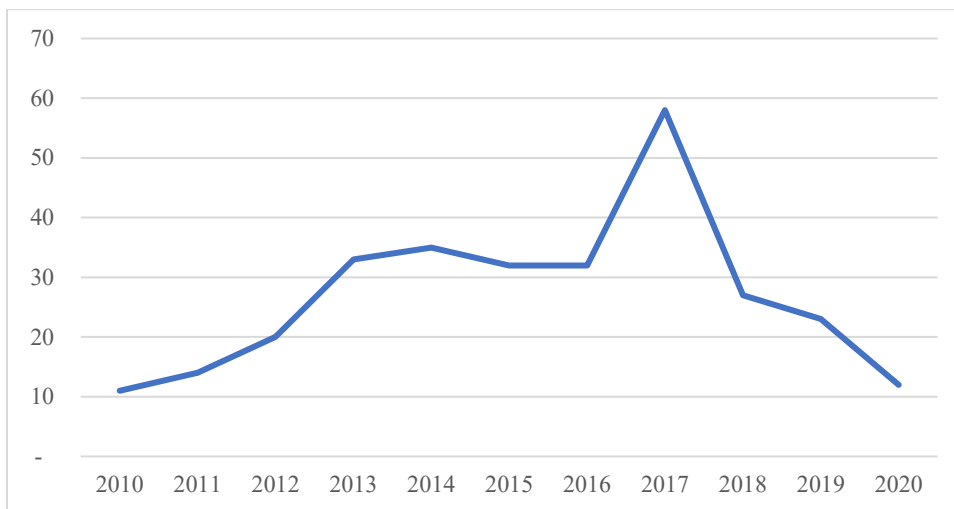
## I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO).

2. As at 30 November 2020, there were 13 active United Nations peacekeeping operations, with 122 countries contributing 73,281 military personnel and 94 countries contributing 9,015 police personnel. In addition, there were 12,622 civilian staff and 1,358 United Nations Volunteers in peacekeeping missions.

3. Since the deployment of the first United Nations peacekeeping mission in 1948 and up to 31 December 2019, there have been 943 fatalities of United Nations peacekeepers due to malicious acts alone. With 56 fatalities due to malicious acts, 2017 was the deadliest single year on record since 2010 as seen in Chart 1.

**Chart 1: Military/police fatalities by malicious acts**



Source: Based on information at [Fatalities | United Nations Peacekeeping](#), downloaded 2 June 2021

4. In addition, United Nations peacekeepers have suffered fatalities due to accidents, illnesses, self-inflicted injuries as well as undetermined and unknown causes. Security Council resolution 2378 dated 20 September 2017 underscored the importance of the safety and security of peacekeepers in the field and the need for the Secretary-General and troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs) to work together to ensure that all peacekeepers in the field are willing, capable, and equipped to implement their mandate effectively and safely.

5. In 2017, the then Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) launched the Improving Security Peacekeeping project at a cost of \$202,000 to improve the security of United Nations peacekeepers. This project, funded from the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund, supported the December 2017 report by Lieutenant General dos Santos Cruz (the Cruz report) on improving the security of United Nations peacekeepers. The report raised 18 issues and recommendations in four broad areas in which the United Nations and Member States needed to take action to reduce fatalities, namely: (a) changing

mindsets; (b) improving capacity; (c) achieving a threat sensitive mission footprint; and (d) enhancing accountability.

6. Initially developed in January 2018, the objective of the Action Plan was to improve security of United Nations peacekeepers based on the Cruz report. The Action Plan was being implemented first in the then five highest-risk missions: the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)<sup>1</sup>. DPO developed an Action Plan Implementation Matrix to monitor completion of actions required from concerned stakeholders to address the issues and recommendations raised in the Cruz report.

7. In March 2018, the Secretary-General launched Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiatives to refocus peacekeeping with more targeted mandates to: (a) make operations stronger and safer; (b) mobilize support for political solutions; and (c) better equip and train forces. The Cruz report was one of ongoing areas of work that informed the A4P initiatives, which aims to fulfill 45 mutually agreed commitments<sup>2</sup> in eight areas: (a) politics; (b) women, peace, and security; (c) protection; (d) safety and security; (e) performance and accountability; (f) peacebuilding and sustaining peace; (g) partnerships; and (h) conduct of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations.

8. Effective 1 January 2019, the United Nations Secretariat peace and security pillar was restructured resulting in the creation of DPO and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) to provide direction, management, and support for peacekeeping and special political missions. The implementation of the Action Plan is led by DPO in consultation with other United Nations departments, offices, and field missions. A summary of the fourth iteration of the Action Plan as of February 2020 is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Key elements of the Action Plan to improve the security of United Nations Peacekeepers**

No.	Security focus areas	Goals	Actions
1.	Force and police generation	Generate and deploy mission capable and fully verified contingents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorandum of understanding/letter of assist/statement of unit requirement</li> <li>• Caveats</li> <li>• Verification and generation and adjustment of capabilities</li> </ul>
2.	Operational performance	<p>Improve situational awareness and generate actionable peacekeeping-intelligence.</p> <p>Strengthen performance of uniformed components.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration</li> <li>• Peacekeeping intelligence-led operations</li> <li>• Outreach and engagement</li> <li>• Pre-deployment training</li> </ul>
3.	Base defense and force protection	Have well protected operational bases and strengthen force protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the operational environment</li> <li>• Defence plans</li> <li>• Technology solutions/systems</li> <li>• Re-adjust mission footprint/deployments</li> <li>• Defence stores and enabling capacity</li> <li>• Force protection standards</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> UNAMID completed its mandate on 31 December 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Commitments made by Member States, the Secretariat, and international and regional organizations.

No.	Security focus areas	Goals	Actions
4.	Integrated trauma care/duty of care	Reduce health risks and enhance duty of care.  Save lives of injured peacekeepers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health-risk management</li> <li>• Duty of care</li> <li>• First aid and casualty evacuation (CASEVAC)</li> </ul>
5.	Performance and accountability	Authority, command, and control lines are clearly established and adhered to.  Prevent attacks and end impunity for crimes against peacekeepers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise policy and initiate implementation</li> <li>• Mechanisms for integrated planning</li> <li>• Report on impunity and accountability</li> <li>• Finalize Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)</li> <li>• Host countries report on investigations/prosecutions</li> <li>• Mission political engagement</li> <li>• T/PCCs engagement</li> <li>• Host countries to become parties to the 1994 Convention of Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel</li> </ul>

Source: un.org/A4P

9. The Implementation Support Team (IST) in DPO supports implementation of the Action Plan at United Nations Headquarters, with the Director, Office of Peacekeeping Strategic Partnerships (OPSP) and the Deputy Military Advisor, Office of Military Affairs (OMA) as co-chairs. Other organizational units involved in implementing the Action Plan include the Police Division in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions as well as the Division of Planning, Evaluation and Training (DPET) in DPO. The Action Plan implementation is also coordinated with: (i) the nine divisions of the DPO-DPPA political-operational structure and the Office of the Director for the Coordination of Shared Services, (ii) United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), (iii) the Department of Operational Support (DOS), and (iv) the Department of Safety and Security (DSS). Operationally, individual peacekeeping missions are at the forefront as they perform their mandated tasks amidst the nationals in the countries to which they are deployed.

10. Comments provided by DPO are incorporated in italics.

## II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

11. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of the United Nations peacekeepers.

12. This audit was included in the risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the importance of strengthening the security of United Nations peacekeepers.

13. OIOS conducted this audit from January to December 2020. The audit covered the period from 1 December 2017 to 30 November 2020. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks areas in: (a) peacekeepers' security framework; (b) governance mechanisms; (c) implementation of the Action Plan; and (d) monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework for the Action Plan.

14. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel; (b) reviews of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of data; and (d) administration of questionnaires to the military/police components of the five high-risk field missions on the direction and support provided by Headquarters.

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

### III. AUDIT RESULTS

#### A. Peacekeepers' security framework

##### DPO needed to develop a revised framework that outlines the approach to address all factors impacting security of United Nations peacekeepers

16. As summarized in Table 1, DPO aimed to strengthen United Nations peacekeepers' security by generating and deploying capable contingents, improving situational awareness, protecting operational bases, improving trauma care and developing guidelines for performance and accountability. However, these areas did not cover two additional factors highlighted in the Cruz report to reduce peacekeepers' fatalities, namely: changing mindsets and leadership.

17. The Cruz report had concluded that a leadership deficit was one of the main problems that prevented the United Nations from being able to adapt to the new mindset required for protecting peacekeepers and to take action to reduce and prevent fatalities and injuries. The Action Plan had initially identified measures to address changing mindsets and leadership, including incorporating accountability for decision-making; situational awareness and crisis management; and holding mission leadership accountable on outcomes requiring integrated planning, coordination, and execution. However, these were not being monitored because the necessary tools had not been developed as part of the Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework.

18. Additionally, the fourth iteration of the Action Plan and its corresponding implementation matrix no longer included political engagement as one of the focus areas to protect the security of peacekeepers. According to the Cruz report, United Nations peacekeeping needed to be robust not only through its military, police, and civilian personnel in the field, but also in its political engagement. The goal is to prevent hostile acts against peacekeepers through dialogue as a critical process of collective accountability. Measures in the Action Plan needed to be reinforced with political engagement at the national, regional, and international level to achieve this. Member States commitments for political engagement and accountability are central to the security of peacekeepers, contributing to the successful implementation of peacekeeping mandates. In this regard, the roles and responsibilities of Headquarters and field missions in analyzing political strategy and engagement to determine linkages to security problems needed to be clarified.

19. Consequently, DPO needed to develop a revised framework that outlines the approach and accountability for engagement at the political, operational, and tactical levels to persuasively change leadership mindset and focus on all factors that impacted the security of United Nations peacekeepers. Once developed, such a framework would ensure that the Action Plan comprehensively addresses the recommendations raised in the Cruz report and those included in the A4P initiatives to reduce fatalities and establish accountability for their occurrence.

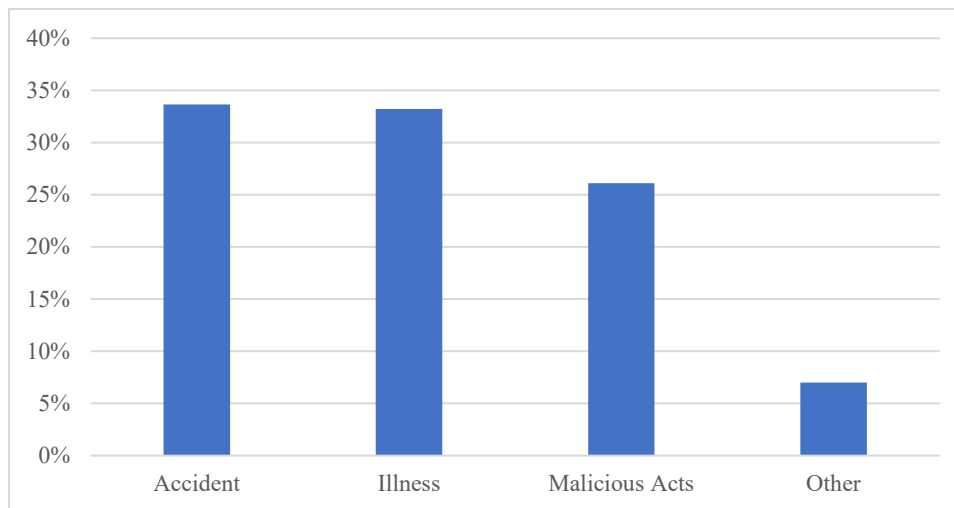
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| <p><b>(1) DPO should develop a revised framework for the security of United Nations peacekeepers to: (a) incorporate measures to change leadership mindset in responding to security issues; and (b) establish accountability by detailing the roles and responsibilities of Headquarters and field missions for engagement at the political, operational, and tactical levels.</b></p> |
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*DPO accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it would develop a revised framework that includes enhanced measures to change leadership mindset and establish accountability for the security of United Nations peacekeepers. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of the revised framework.*

The Secretariat was taking separate action to address safety of peacekeepers.

20. The Action Plan mainly focused on responding to malicious acts. As shown in Chart 2, fatalities among peacekeepers between 1948 and 2020 were due to three main causes: (a) accidents (34 per cent); (b) illnesses (33 per cent); and (c) malicious acts (26 per cent).

**Chart 2: Peacekeeping Operations Fatalities 1948 to 2020**



Source: Based on information at [Fatalities | United Nations Peacekeeping](#), downloaded 2 June 2021

21. A review of the Notification of Casualties System from 1 January 2015 to 30 April 2021 noted 124 fatalities due to accidents involving civilian, military and police personnel. Almost 67 per cent of all accident fatalities occurred in the five highest-risk missions. These included fatalities due to vehicle accidents, training in demining and accidental discharge of firearms. For the same period, 333 fatalities occurred due to illnesses. The Action Plan was not explicit in developing strategies for reducing fatalities from accidents, illnesses, and other causes, as safety considerations did not fall within its purview. DPO informed OIOS that it was addressing safety and health issues together with DOS and DSS under the umbrella of A4P and A4P+, which outlined key priorities for 2021-2023.

## **B. Governance mechanisms**

### Governance mechanisms needed to support the security framework

22. The Cruz report stated that it was essential to establish a senior governance body to oversee implementation of its recommendations and proposals. Accordingly, DPO established two governance mechanisms for the Action Plan: (a) IST; and (b) the United Nations Working Group on Accountability for Serious Crimes against Peacekeepers.



(a) Implementation Support Team

23. IST was established on 4 January 2018 to coordinate activities at Headquarters and to support field-led efforts to implement recommendations in the Cruz report and operationalize and implement the Action Plan. It also chairs the Working Group on Accountability for Serious Crimes against Peacekeepers.

24. The core composition of IST consists of OMA, Police Division (PD), DPET, DOS and OPSP, as well as the Department of Global Communications, the Security Focal Point, and as needed the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Focal Point, the Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health (DHMOSH), the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre, and UNMAS. The Team met 12 times in 2018 including two briefings to T/PCCs, and three times in 2019. While they did not meet in 2020, they had held four meetings by June 2021. The meetings were attended by relevant stakeholders, including the Under-Secretaries-General (USGs) of DPO and DOS (before the reform DPKO and Department of Field Support) and senior leadership of the five highest-risk missions. The meetings discussed the status of ongoing activities such as updates on priorities in the Action Plan, OMA activities and feedback on the issue of impunity for hostile acts against United Nations peacekeepers, CASEVAC stress testing, OPSP field mission reviews, and the implementation support workshops at the Regional Service Centre Entebbe.

25. The terms of reference (TOR) of IST only covered casualties caused by malicious acts against peacekeepers and did not include other causes of fatalities such as accidents and illnesses. They also did not address all aspects of the Cruz report (e.g., changing mindsets and leadership). Additionally, as the TOR were developed prior to the implementation of the Secretary-General's reforms effective 1 January 2019, organizational units such as the Office of DPPA USG and DPPA-DPO regional-political operational structure are not represented in the IST. The frequency and quorum of its meetings were also not established.

**(2) DPO should utilize the framework for the security of United Nations peacekeepers to revise the terms of reference of the Implementation Support Team to broaden its membership composition, as appropriate, and specify the quorum and frequency of its meetings.**

*DPO accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it would produce revised IST TOR, subject to the approval of relevant partner departments. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of the revised IST TOR broadening its membership, as appropriate, and specifying the quorum and frequency of its meetings.*

(b) United Nations Working Group on Accountability for Serious Crimes against Peacekeepers

26. The United Nations Working Group on Accountability for Serious Crimes against Peacekeepers was established on 10 April 2019 to facilitate the exchange of information and the coordination of activities for ensuring accountability for such crimes. The Working Group is chaired by IST and includes representation from MINUSCA, MINUSMA and MONUSCO, the relevant country desk offices in DPO-DPPA, OLA, DSS and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

27. In 2019, the Working Group facilitated the drafting of standard operating procedures (SOP) on the prevention, investigation and prosecution of serious crimes committed against United Nations personnel in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The SOP outlined key modalities and responsibilities of the United Nations in its support of national and other relevant authorities to facilitate the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of related cases by competent law enforcement, prosecutorial or judicial authorities.

28. Each United Nations peace operation was responsible for developing and implementing a specific strategy and procedure in these areas in consultation with Headquarters. The roles of DPO, DPPA, DSS and DOS were to facilitate cooperation with national and international courts by providing information or documents for their investigation and prosecution of serious crimes. The SOP was finalized in December 2020.

29. The minutes of meetings of the Working Group reflected updates from field missions on the referral of cases to national authorities and their progress status. OIOS concluded that the Working Group was functioning as intended.

## **C. Implementation of the Action Plan**

### Workshops supporting the implementation of the Action Plan were effective

30. To facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan, IST conducted three workshops at the Regional Service Centre Entebbe in March and October 2018 and May 2019. No meeting was led in 2020, although a workshop is planned for later 2021. Inputs from the field missions, IST meetings, as well as the priorities highlighted at briefings, conferences and high-level meetings with Member States served as the basis for developing the agenda for the implementation support workshops.

31. Staff from Headquarters as well as from the five highest-risk missions attended the workshops and presented their priorities, which included peacekeeping-intelligence capacity, strengthened CASEVAC and enhanced training on performance. The purpose of the workshops was to: (a) take stock of progress of the Action Plan in improving security of peacekeepers; (b) reiterate mid-term commitments; (c) participate in hands-on interaction to take away specific actionable to-do points; and (d) interact on a professional and intellectual level to get a perspective of current dimensions of peacekeeping. OIOS concluded that DPO effectively used the workshops as an initial support platform to operationalize the implementation of the Action Plan at Headquarters and in the high-risk peacekeeping missions.

### While DPO was effective in implementing the Action Plan, some areas could be improved

32. To assess the effectiveness of implementation of the Action Plan, OIOS selected four focus security areas for detailed review: operational performance, base defense and force protection, integrated trauma/duty of care, and performance and accountability. OIOS observed the following:

#### **Operational performance**

##### Need to develop categories of early warning indicators

33. Military components in missions were responsible for carrying out threat assessments, developing early warning indicators and documenting reports for OMA leadership to review, including annual mission threat assessments and peacekeeping-intelligence reports. Joint mission analysis centres also produced weekly threat assessments to inform mission leadership of current threats. Footprints and deployment of forces at the mission level were revised based on the results of these threat assessments. Recommendations to address the threats were discussed at platforms such as the Protection Working Groups or the Senior Management Groups (at the provincial and national levels).

34. However, while the Action Plan Implementation Matrix stated that Headquarters along with field missions would improve and standardize early warning indicators, a standardized set of documented indicators had not been developed. Although threats are unique to each mission, e.g., protection of civilians

(PoCs), security, criminal activities etc., there are underlying commonalities. OMA and PD were required to categorize these broad themes and together with field missions develop a common set of indicators that could be standardized across field missions for tactical, operational, and strategic decision-making.

**(3) DPO should harmonize the definition of threats to peacekeepers and support the development of related early warning indicators by field missions, to facilitate better decision-making and response actions in the field.**

*DPO accepted recommendation 3. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of documentation on a harmonized definition of threats to peacekeepers and related early warning indicators.*

#### DPO needed to update the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy

35. In May 2019, DPO issued an overarching Peacekeeping-Intelligence (PKI) Policy covering whole of mission peacekeeping-intelligence related issues. It included generic directions on the Mission Peacekeeping-Intelligence Coordination Mechanism and the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Cycle. Additionally, the Military Peacekeeping-Intelligence Handbook, issued in May 2019 focused on the overarching principles, processes and parameters to manage military peacekeeping-intelligence within peacekeeping missions.

36. The PKI Policy also provides that peacekeeping-intelligence should lead to situational awareness, common operational picture, early warning, and better security. This implies that the end users of peacekeeping-intelligence would be both uniformed and civilian personnel at the tactical level. However, the Policy was a high-level document and did not specify the outputs needed by tactical end users and the required structures for disseminating information at the operational level. This was important to strengthen the security requirements of peacekeepers. There was therefore a need for guidance on how the Policy would be operationalized and implemented.

37. Also, DPO considered that the police component, as they engage with nationals, traditional and religious leaders and interact with women and youth networks, were a potential source of peacekeeping-intelligence which joint operations centres and joint mission analysis centres could use. For example, MINUSCA, through the use of new technologies (e.g., aerial unmanned surveillance systems) was able to survey and control some specific areas to assess ongoing incidents or activities. The Intelligence, Statistics, Analysis and Reporting Unit directly under the Deputy Police Commissioner of MONUSCO was dedicated to peacekeeping-intelligence analysis. In UNAMID the former police component collected information related to criminality and inter-communal conflict.

**(4) DPO should develop procedures and guidelines to operationalize the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy, including defining outputs for operational users and the required intelligence structures and sources needed to strengthen United Nations missions' security.**

*DPO accepted recommendation 4 and stated that procedures and guidelines necessary to operationalize the peacekeeping-intelligence policy defining expected products, structure and sources, had either been or were being developed. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of the procedures and guidelines to operationalize the PKI Policy.*

#### Other elements of operational performance were adequately implemented

38. Military planning process: The Concept of Operations Development Process (CONOPS DP) Handbook was developed to replace the United Nations Military Planning Process guide for peacekeeping operations, which had been in force since November 2009. In September 2020, the CONOPS DP had been

synchronized with the United Nations Integrated Assessment Process and designed to guide OMA Military Planning Officers to develop Military CONOPS and other strategic and operational plans. However, due to the ongoing pandemic, the CONOPS DP approval process had been delayed.

39. Pre-deployment training process: With the establishment of the OMA Military Performance Task Force (MPET) in November 2019, efforts were directed to validate military skills of troops as part of pre-deployment visits. MPET aimed to initiate contact with TCCs at least three months prior to the start of a pre-deployment visit. Likewise, PD had reviewed and issued guidance and procedures through the SOP for Assessment of Operational Capability of Formed Police Units (FPU) (May 2019), SOP on Assessment for Mission Service (September 2019), and Administrative Guidelines of Specialized Police Teams (September 2019). Additionally, public safety training modules including on PoCs were being developed as part of the United Nations Police (UNPOL) training architecture.

40. Crisis management guidelines: Field missions were required to document their crisis management guidelines. Additionally, OMA had developed and approved in July 2019, the military handbook on Command Post Exercise. The handbook aimed at providing information that contributed to understanding the functioning of Force Headquarters in crisis situations and included organization, command and control, tasking, management and working of military component activities in the field. The police components utilized two SOPs for crisis response in support of peace missions: Headquarters' arrangements in Support of Crisis Response at the Field Level (September 2017); and Headquarters' Crisis Response in Support of Peacekeeping Operations (December 2016). Furthermore, missions had issued directives, such as the UNAMID Police Directive on the Use of Force for FPU issued on 25 September 2017 and UNAMID Police Commissioner's Directive on Police Event Management.

### **Base defence and force protection**

#### DPO needed an overarching integrated force protection policy

41. Under the base defence and force protection commitment, DPO was in the process of developing a Force Protection Policy and counter-improvised explosive device methodology. Between January and May 2020, the United Nations Military Engineer Unit and Counter Explosive Threat Search and Detect Manual and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Specialized Training Materials were approved. The guidelines on Force Protection had been documented and were with the Office of the USG DPO pending review and approval.

42. There were, however, gaps in integrated force protection guidelines as they did not specify the functions of the various entities, e.g., military, police and DSS, in providing security. There was a need for an overarching policy clarifying the roles and responsibilities, accountability, and capacity of concerned Secretariat entities. OMA stated that work on such a policy document had commenced, with an estimated completion date of June 2021. PD was also a part of the working group developing this policy. The policy additionally needed to clarify the logistics and defense stores capabilities of smaller T/PCCs bases to ensure timely replenishment of required stock. Military capability studies had noted issues related to expired ammunition and outdated sandbags (base protection) that put these bases at risk.

<p><b>(5) DPO should, in collaboration with relevant departments, develop and promulgate United Nations integrated camp defense guidance clarifying the responsibility, accountability, and capacity of concerned Secretariat entities in performing their related mandated functions.</b></p>
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*DPO accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it was completing force protection guidelines. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of the United Nations integrated camp defense guidance.*

### **Integrated trauma/duty of care**

#### Field mission health risk assessments were conducted, and the casualty evacuation policy issued

43. DPO conducted field mission health risk assessments under the integrated trauma care/duty of care commitment. The purpose of the assessments was to comprehensively review the health risks and available health services in field missions. The audit selected the activity, ‘finalize health-risk assessments in all high-risk missions and develop action points on identified gaps’ for detailed review. The audit results showed that health risk assessments were conducted by MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNMISS with assistance from DHMOSH. An assessment was not carried out in UNAMID due to the prevailing security situation at the time and the downsizing of the Mission. The assessments summarized key findings and priority risks and identified risk owners responsible for addressing field mission health risks.

44. Furthermore, under the same activity, a policy on Casualty Evacuation in the Field was issued in March 2020. Its purpose was to provide policy direction on the management of CASEVAC across United Nations field missions. The policy adopted a patient-centered approach, where timeliness and speed of evacuation were important. The policy was approved by the USGs of DOS, DPO, DPPA and DSS.

### **Performance and accountability**

#### DPO needed a strategy for sustained political and financial advocacy to ensure accountability

45. On 21 September 2018, the Security Council adopted resolution 2436 underscoring the link between performance for mandate implementation and accountability for the security of uniformed and civilian peacekeeping personnel. Further, in the 2018 Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, more than 150 Member States condemned “in the strongest terms all acts of violence against United Nations personnel, as well as any attempts to commit such acts, which may constitute war crimes” and “committed to take all appropriate measures to bring to justice perpetrators of criminal acts against United Nations personnel”.

46. In its 20 March 2020 report A/74/19 to the General Assembly, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations encouraged cooperation between the Working Group on Accountability for Serious Crimes against Peacekeepers and Member States to drive progress on combating impunity. Accordingly, a meeting of the Working Group with Member States was held on 20 October 2020 that recognized the need for sustained political advocacy to ensure accountability. A key objective of the advocacy was to mobilize political and financial support from Member States to build the capacities of national host countries to investigate and prosecute cases. Additional consideration was also needed to mobilize adequate human resources and programmatic funding in peacekeeping operations; establish a Working Group of interested Member States; nominate experts to assist national authorities; and submit reports to the regulatory bodies on the progress for accountability. DPO needed to implement measures to achieve this objective.

**(6) DPO should develop a strategy for sustained political and financial advocacy to ensure accountability for serious crimes against peacekeepers.**

*DPO accepted recommendation 6. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of a strategy for political and financial advocacy to ensure accountability for serious crimes against peacekeepers.*

## **D. Action Plan monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework**

### Action Plan monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework needed to be formalized

47. The fourth iteration of the Action Plan implementation matrix, dated February 2020, included 93 issues and 167 completing actions for the five focus areas (see Table 1). Responsibility for the completing actions were assigned uniquely or jointly as follows: 65 to OMA, 90 to PD, 125 to field missions, 58 to DOS, 28 to DPET and 25 to DSS. There was a need for DPO to develop a formal monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework covering the ongoing work described below on the implementation of the Action Plan.

#### (a) Issue completion dates needed to be set

48. An analysis of the implementation status of the Action Plan as of February 2020 (latest available data) showed that there were 60 completing actions with less than 50 per cent implementation rate, 36 actions with 50 per cent implementation rate and 71 actions with greater than 50 per cent implementation rate.

49. While the Matrix indicated percentage completion against the individual actions, it was not evident which department, division and/or office had contributed to this progress. Furthermore, target dates for completion of the various actions had not been specified; therefore, it was not clear if the implementation had met the planned expectations. Assigning target dates for actions to be completed by each entity would enable IST to determine any areas of implementation delays, and to where, if required, resources needed to be reassigned.

50. In the meantime, OMA had developed matrices to monitor its progress against the IST Action Plan Implementation Matrix and PD maintained a matrix noting progress of field missions for police components completing actions. However, the peacekeeping missions had not developed any mechanisms to monitor progress against actions assigned to them. Instead, the missions provided either oral feedback to IST during their meetings, or updates via emails that IST would use to update the implementation matrix. However, these were infrequent and outdated. Although IST stated that it was in regular contact with field missions via email, video teleconference, etc., it was important for the Team to accurately document and update deliverables reported by the various entities for tracking and monitoring purposes. OPSP, OMA and PD agreed that all implementing entities would periodically report their progress against the Action Plan Implementation Matrix.

#### (b) A formal reporting mechanism needed to be established

51. No formal mechanisms had been established to periodically report to all concerned stakeholders of peace operations on the progress made in the implementation of the Action Plan, although DPO has undertaken significant activities to address the issues and recommendations raised in the Cruz report as well as in the five security focus areas. There was therefore a need to prepare periodic progress reports on the implementation of the Action Plan highlighting improvements in the security of United Nations peacekeepers.

#### (c) OMA conducted military capability studies in high-risk peacekeeping missions

52. The military capability study (MCS) is the basic Headquarters review process of military components in field missions. During 2018 and 2019, OMA conducted nine MCS missions: five in 2018 and four in 2019 in four of the five high-risk missions namely, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, UNMISS and

MONUSCO. The MCS missions were a combined effort of OMA, field missions, integrated operational teams, DOS, PD, and the active participation of the Force Headquarters. No MCS was conducted in 2020 due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions.

53. A review of the MCS mission reports showed that comprehensive studies had been undertaken and recommendations made on areas such as: military strategic framework, deployment, troops to task and maneuver, command, control and coordination, military capabilities including force protection, night vision capabilities, mobility, and fire power. There were also recommendations on strategic communications and community outreach, logistics support, aviation, medical, signals, transport, and mission specific training. OMA followed up with missions to monitor implementation of its recommendations.

(d) OPSP reviews needed to verify implementation of the Action Plan by field missions

54. OPSP conducted reviews of peacekeeping missions to identify possible gaps that impacted mandate delivery, operational issues that affected the security of uniformed personnel, and welfare provisions and support services affecting uniformed personnel. During 2018 and 2019, OPSP reviewed eight field missions: MONUSCO, MINUSMA, MINUSCA, UNMISS, MINURSO, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, and the United Nations Disengagement Force. The reviews raised critical issues as illustrated below.

- MINUSMA: Base defense measures were inadequately integrated and coordinated between internal and external entities/stakeholders, and the prevalence of clustered military camps within the super camps with each focusing on protecting themselves pointed to serious gaps in comprehensive protection of all elements deployed within the super camp. Also, the Mission's inability to evacuate the wounded on a couple of occasions had created a truly palpable sense of distrust within the uniformed component, and a full and immediate review of the CASEVAC chain was needed.
- UNMISS: some TCCs lacked adequate night vision capability, without which they were unable to effectively monitor the perimeter at night.

55. Although OPSP followed up on the implementation of its recommendations by field missions, there was a need for OPSP to verify the progress the missions had indicated in their feedback, as the Action Plan had also identified similar shortcomings. OPSP agreed that its upcoming reviews would include this verification. Furthermore, there was a need to conduct joint OPSP, OMA, and PD assessments as appropriate to address any gaps in the security of United Nations peacekeepers. This will provide a platform for addressing any cross-cutting/joint issues or gaps not identified by individual reviews.

(e) The Action Plan needed to incorporate assessment and evaluation results of police components

56. Code cable 0754 disseminated the new SOP on FPUs and established performance assessment and evaluation teams (PAETs) to monitor and evaluate the roles of missions in the internal assessment of FPUs. Between July 2019 and March 2020, PD deployed PAETs to MINUSCA, UNMISS, MINUSMA and MONUSCO to assess and evaluate police components in these missions. The evaluation included an assessment of the administration, performance, and management of individual police officers and the police component as a whole given their implications on the mission mandate. The results included issues such as:

- UNMISS: Police tasks related to PoCs needed to be complemented with a preventive early warning mechanism and contingency planning for police operations within PoC sites. There was also a need to issue a directive to define, consolidate and distinguish command and authority amongst the

Deputy Police Commissioner, Chief of Operations, PoC coordinators, and FPU coordinators and establish clear dual reporting lines.

- MINUSMA: FPUs needed to be encouraged to intensify community led policing, develop mechanisms to gather information, and conduct awareness and dissemination sessions on the United Nations mandate with the national police and the Gendarmerie.
- MONUSCO: The strength of FPUs needed to be reinforced to reach the authorized strength.

57. While PD has been following up with missions on implementing its recommendations, there remained a number of recommendations whose implementation was ongoing and needed to be incorporated into the Action Plan as appropriate.

58. Overall, DPO needed a monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework that incorporates:

- End dates for each of the completing actions in the Implementation Matrix;
- Frequency of follow-up of progress by field missions to implement evaluation and assessment recommendations of OPSP, OMA and PD;
- Periodic joint verifications and assessments by OPSP, OMA, PD and DPET of field missions' implementation of the Action Plan, including sharing lessons learned and best practices; and
- Periodic progress reports to all concerned stakeholders of peace operations, as necessary, on the implementation status of the Action Plan highlighting improvements in the security of United Nations peacekeepers.

**(7) DPO should establish a comprehensive monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework to facilitate assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan to improve the security of United Nations peacekeepers.**

*DPO accepted recommendation 7 noting that a process that included direct engagement of missions, verification visits to missions, and semi-annual meetings with IST and high-risk missions was ongoing. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of a monitoring, reporting, and evaluation framework to facilitate assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan.*

DPO needed to obtain feedback from field missions to assess its effectiveness

59. To determine the level of support provided by IST to field missions to implement the Action Plan, OIOS shared a questionnaire with the military and police components of the five highest-risk field missions and received responses from three of the military components. The others did not respond due to operational challenges and competing priorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

60. One military component stated that the support received from the Headquarters IST had been instrumental in implementing measures that helped reduce the risk of fatalities. There had been regular exchanges with OPSP, OMA and PD and overall, the development of the Action Plan Implementation Matrix had helped to direct action to relevant mission components. However, additional IST oversight and guidance was needed on the integration between its pillars for a successful implementation of the Action Plan. The component suggested that IST could also enhance the integration of the mission's intelligence bodies by holding periodic formal meetings; streamline CASEVAC procedures and delegate more authority to the Force in this domain; and support/push for establishment of tactical operations centers in all sectors.



61. A second military component stated that the Force was engaged with mission focal points and offices at Headquarters, as applicable. Additionally, the Force had contacted the relevant mission's A4P working group to ensure the Force addressed any action plan requirements with which it could assist. It was also working well with the mission to improve: situational awareness/actionable intelligence, base and individual force protection, and CASEVAC operations.

62. The third military component stated that the manuals and SOPs, including on peacekeeping-intelligence and casualty and medical evacuation issued by Headquarters were useful guiding documents for establishing priorities and formulating directives to regulate operational activities of mission components. However, the military's pre-induction training was lacking and IST, in coordination with Headquarters, needed to ensure pre-induction training of all units. A special focus on first aid training and voice procedures for radio communications was also required.

63. IST stated that some of the concerns raised by the military components e.g., integration of pillars including the intelligence bodies and mission level CASEVAC SOPs, needed to be addressed at the mission level. Nevertheless, it agreed to obtain regular feedback from the field missions to strengthen its support and to address their concerns.

**(8) DPO should obtain regular feedback from the high-risk missions to assess the effectiveness of the Implementation Support Team at Headquarters in supporting and guiding field missions in implementing the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers**

*DPO accepted recommendation 8 and stated that it would consider integrating the submission of regular feedback by missions on the effectiveness of Headquarters IST assistance in the overall reporting and monitoring mechanism to be established pursuant to recommendation 7. Recommendation 8 remains open pending notification of the mechanism established to obtain feedback from field missions on the effectiveness of IST in supporting the implementation of the Action Plan.*

#### **IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

64. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of DPO, DPPA, DOS 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 implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers by the Department of Peace Operations

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>3</sup> / Important <sup>4</sup>	C/ O <sup>5</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>6</sup>
1	DPO should develop a revised framework for the security of United Nations peacekeepers to: (a) incorporate measures to change leadership mindset in responding to security issues; and (b) establish accountability by detailing the roles and responsibilities of Headquarters and field missions for engagement at the political, operational, and tactical levels.	Important	O	Receipt of a revised framework to enhance measures to change leadership mindset and establish accountability for the security of United Nations peacekeepers.	31 July 2022
2	DPO should utilize the framework for the security of United Nations peacekeepers to revise the terms of reference of the Implementation Support Team to broaden its membership composition, as appropriate, and specify the quorum and frequency of its meetings.	Important	O	Receipt of the revised IST TOR broadening its membership, as appropriate, and specifying the quorum and frequency of its meetings.	31 July 2022
3	DPO should harmonize the definition of threats to peacekeepers and support the development of related early warning indicators by field missions, to facilitate better decision-making and response actions in the field.	Important	O	Receipt of documentation on a harmonized definition of threats to peacekeepers and related early warning indicators.	31 December 2022
4	DPO should develop procedures and guidelines to operationalize the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy, including defining outputs for operational users and the required intelligence structures and sources needed to strengthen United Nations missions' security.	Important	O	Receipt of the procedures and guidelines to operationalize the PKI Policy.	31 December 2022

<sup>3</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>4</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>5</sup> Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

<sup>6</sup> Date provided by the Department of Peace Operations in response to recommendations.

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Audit of implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers by the  
Department of Peace Operations**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>3</sup> / Important <sup>4</sup>	C/ O <sup>5</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>6</sup>
5	DPO should, in collaboration with relevant departments, develop and promulgate United Nations integrated camp defense guidance clarifying the responsibility, accountability, and capacity of concerned Secretariat entities in performing their related mandated functions.	Important	O	Receipt of the United Nations integrated camp defence guidance.	31 December 2022
6	DPO should develop a strategy for sustained political and financial advocacy to ensure accountability for serious crimes against peacekeepers.	Important	O	Receipt of a strategy for political and financial advocacy to ensure accountability for serious crimes against peacekeepers.	31 March 2022
7	DPO should establish a comprehensive monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework to facilitate assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan to improve the security of United Nations peacekeepers.	Important	O	Receipt of a monitoring, reporting, and evaluation framework to facilitate assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan.	30 June 2022
8	DPO should obtain regular feedback from the high-risk missions to assess the effectiveness of the Implementation Support Team at Headquarters in supporting and guiding field missions in implementing the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers.	Important	O	Notification of the mechanism established to obtain feedback from field missions on the effectiveness of IST in supporting the implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers.	30 June 2022

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**

## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Audit of implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers by the Department of Peace Operations

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	DPO should revise the framework for the security of United Nations peacekeepers to: (a) incorporate measures to change leadership mindset in responding to security issues; and (b) establish accountability by detailing the roles and responsibilities of Headquarters and field missions for engagement at the political, operational, and tactical levels.	Important	Y	Director, OPSP	31 July 2022	DPO will develop a revised framework that includes enhanced measures to change leadership mindset and establishes accountability for the security of United Nations peacekeepers.
2	DPO should: (a) utilize the framework for the security of United Nations peacekeepers to expand the terms of reference of the Implementation Support Team (IST) to include responsibility for addressing fatalities among peacekeepers; and (b) broaden the IST membership composition, as appropriate, specifying the quorum and frequency of its meetings.	Important	Y	Director, OPSP	31 July 2022	DPO will produce revised IST TORs, which will be subject to the approval of relevant partner departments.
3	DPO should harmonize the definition of threats to peacekeepers and support the development of related early warning indicators by field missions, to facilitate better decision-making and response actions in the field.	Important	Y	Chief, Peacekeeping- Intelligence Coordination Team	31 December 2022	
4	DPO should develop procedures and guidelines to operationalize the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy, including defining outputs for operational	Important	Y	Chief, Peacekeeping- Intelligence	31 December 2022	The procedures and guidelines necessary to operationalize the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy have been developed or are under

<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.

## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Audit of implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers by the Department of Peace Operations

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	users and the required intelligence structures and sources needed to strengthen United Nations missions' security.			Coordination Team		development and define expected products, structure and sources.
5	DPO, in collaboration with relevant departments, should develop and promulgate UN integrated camp defense guidance clarifying the responsibility, accountability, and capacity of concerned Secretariat entities in performing their related mandated functions.	Important	Y	Focal Point for Security, ODCSS	31 December 2022	DPO is separately completing Force Protection guidelines.
6	DPO should develop a strategy for sustained political and financial advocacy to ensure accountability for serious crimes against peacekeepers.	Important	Y	Director, OPSP	31 March 2022	
7	DPO should establish a comprehensive monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework to facilitate assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan to improve the security of United Nations peacekeepers.	Important	Y	Director, OPSP	30 June 2022	DPO notes that there is an ongoing process, which includes direct engagement of Missions, verification visits to Mission and semi-annual meetings with IST and high-risk missions.
8	DPO should obtain regular feedback from high-risk missions to assess the effectiveness of the Implementation Support Team at Headquarters in supporting and guiding field missions in implementing the Action Plan to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers.	Important	Y	Director, OPSP	30 June 2022	DPO will consider integrating the submission of regular feedback by mission on the effectiveness of HQ IST assistance in the overall reporting and monitoring mechanism to be established pursuant to recommendation 7.