



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2021/001

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

While the Mission promoted shared values and expectations of conduct through awareness raising and training, and developed a misconduct risk register, it needed to improve its misconduct prevention efforts, timely record all reports of alleged misconduct, and follow up on long outstanding allegations

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Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of measures implemented by MINUSCA to manage conduct and discipline in the Mission. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2018 to 31 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.

MINUSCA promoted shared values and expectations of conduct through awareness raising and training and developed a misconduct risk register based on the results of risk assessment visits, historical data and trends on misconduct allegations; and vetted all newly onboarded personnel. MINUSCA established community-based complaints mechanisms in sectors and provided capacity building in areas such as counselling and information on services available to assist individuals with needs directly arising from an incident of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse by Mission personnel. However, misconduct prevention efforts needed strengthening to ensure all misconduct risk mitigation measures are fully implemented, and all personnel complete mandatory training. MINUSCA also needed to timely record all reports of alleged misconduct and follow up on long outstanding allegations.

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

- Establish effective measures, including accountability through the performance management system, to ensure completion of mandatory training by all staff.
- Strengthen misconduct prevention efforts by: (a) periodically evaluating the impact of its training and awareness raising activities; and (b) establishing a mechanism to ensure that all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training.
- Strengthen its misconduct risk management by: (a) adequately planning risk assessment site visits and joint patrols to all Mission locations; and (b) developing and implementing a mechanism to monitor the status of recommendations arising from misconduct risk assessments.
- Implement adequate and effective welfare and recreation facilities in uniformed personnel camps to strengthen misconduct prevention efforts.
- Take action to ensure: (a) all allegations of misconduct received by the Conduct and Discipline Team are captured in the Misconduct Tracking System for effective and timely assessment; and (b) a fully functional and reliable hotline system is in place and systematically reviewed for valid cases of possible misconduct.
- Implement a monitoring system to track outstanding allegations for appropriate follow up action.

MINUSCA 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 the Central African Republic

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 the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

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 for 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 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. 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. MINUSCA CDT is headed by a Chief at the D-1 level and is supported by a Section Chief at the P-5 level, eight international, three national staff and five United Nations volunteers. The CDT has presence

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

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

in four field offices in Boaur, Bria, Bangassou and Kagabandoro. The CDT budgets for 2018/19 and 2019/20 were \$3.07 million, and \$3.5 million, respectively.

6. Comments provided by MINUSCA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of measures implemented by MINUSCA 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?

8. This audit was included in the 2020 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 the 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.

9. OIOS conducted this audit from August 2020 to June 2021. The audit was paused for a period due to COVID-19 pandemic and absences from the Mission. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2018 to 31 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.

10. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel, (b) review of relevant documentation, (c) analytical review of cases extracted from the Misconduct Tracking System (MTS); (d) testing of a judgemental sample of misconduct cases recorded in MTS; and (e) staff surveys conducted as part of the OIOS evaluation of the United Nations accountability system and the OIOS evaluation of organizational culture in peacekeeping operations.

11. 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 and periodically evaluate impact of training activities

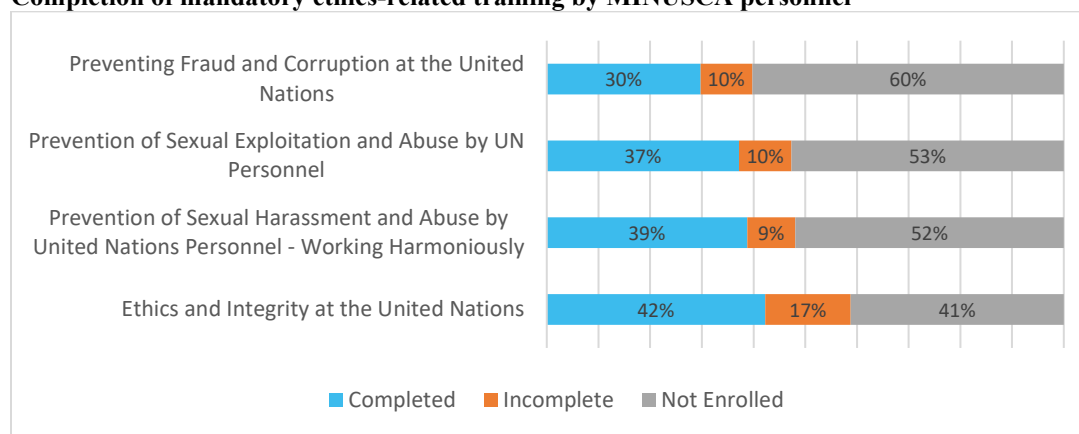
12. The Secretary-General made a commitment towards creating a culture of prevention through pursuing initiatives designed to reconnect all personnel to the core values of the United Nations. The Mission is required to create an environment that promotes ethical conduct, and all personnel are expected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

13. One of the ways the Mission communicates and promotes shared values and expectations of conduct is through awareness-raising and training. As part of its awareness raising efforts, MINUSCA CDT in cooperation with the Strategic Communication and Public Information (SCPI) Section designed, procured and disseminated sensitization materials for both internal and external outreach. These included posters and videos, vehicle stickers with the Organization’s zero tolerance policy and misconduct reporting hotline information. CDT also collaborated with SCPI to update its website with anti-SEA messages and engaged the Field Technology Service (FTS) on the use of CDT designed anti-SEA messages as screensavers on staff computers.

14. 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. On average, 37 per cent of staff had completed these courses as of 6 August 2021, as shown in Figure 1. Completion rates were lower at the senior management level, with 17 per cent of staff at the D-2 and above having completed the courses.

Figure 1

Completion of mandatory ethics-related training by MINUSCA personnel



Source: Management dashboard mandatory training data (accessed on 6 August 2021)

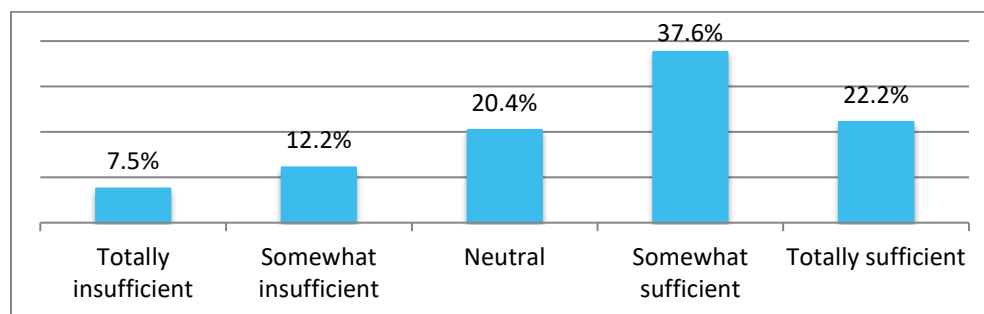
15. During the audit period, CDT conducted eight ad-hoc briefing and training sessions for various personnel categories mainly on SEA awareness and prevention, United Nations standards of conduct for peacekeeping personnel, and disciplinary procedures. CDT also provided training on conduct and discipline matters during the mandatory induction sessions organized by the Integrated Mission Training Centre (IMTC). However, the Mission had not implemented a system to ensure all new arrivals attended these sessions, making it difficult to track and identify those who had not participated. OIOS estimated that only 36 per cent of civilian and uniformed personnel newly deployed to the Mission during the audit period had attended the mandatory induction. The shortfall in numbers may be because responsible managers (civilian, police and military) were not regularly informing CDT about newly deployed personnel, although they had agreed to provide such information. This would have enabled CDT to be better informed and to consider providing additional outreach and awareness raising activities.

16. The recent OIOS surveys³ showed that about two-thirds of MINUSCA staff believed that standards on ethics and integrity have been extremely or somewhat effectively communicated, while about a third

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.

were either neutral or believed that they were communicated somewhat or extremely ineffectively. About two-thirds of staff believed that training surrounding ethical standards and integrity has been totally or somewhat sufficient, while about 40 per cent were either neutral or thought it was somewhat or totally insufficient (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Staff perception of the degree to which ethics and integrity training has been sufficient



Source: Management dashboard mandatory training data

17. The Mission, therefore, needed to evaluate the effectiveness of its training and awareness raising efforts aimed at misconduct prevention to determine any additional action that may be required. For example, OIOS observed that limited time was allocated to the conduct and discipline session during the mandatory induction sessions, meaning all key matters were not covered in sufficient detail, thus impacting its effectiveness. CDT explained that it had no control over these sessions, and only made its presentations when invited by IMTC. CDT envisaged contracting a consultant to assist with reviewing its training activities, including supporting the design and execution of impact assessments, but this was yet to be done.

- (1) MINUSCA should establish effective measures, including accountability through the performance management system, to ensure completion of mandatory training by all staff.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that a mission broadcast would be sent requesting persons who have not completed the mandatory training to do so by end of March 2022. CDT would monitor the list of all staff and their status of completion of all training courses and communicate with staff who have not completed them.

- (2) MINUSCA should strengthen the misconduct prevention efforts by: (a) periodically evaluating the impact of its training and awareness raising activities; and (b) establishing a mechanism to ensure that all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it would implement surveys for each training session and an annual training and awareness-raising perception survey to evaluate and thus modify the training programme accordingly. CDT would cooperate with the Human Resources Section and other custodians of information to explore ways of capturing data on arrival of new personnel to the Mission, and work with FTS to set up a tracking system to ensure they are timely identified and trained.

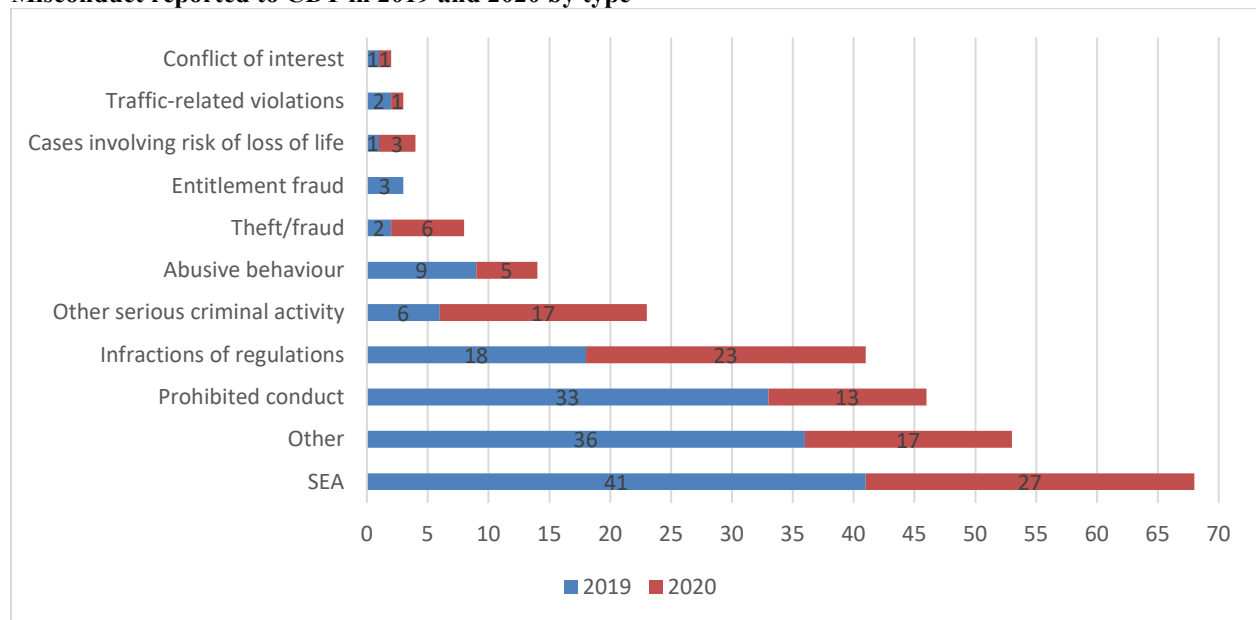
Need to strengthen misconduct risk management

18. 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.

19. MINUSCA established a misconduct risk register based on the results of risk assessment visits, historical data and trends on misconduct allegations (with examples of trends shown in Figure 3), as well as input from Mission management. The risk register, however, had last been updated in August 2019, and hence was not current.

Figure 3
Misconduct reported to CDT in 2019 and 2020 by type



Source: Misconduct Tracking System

20. During the audit period, CDT conducted 127 (75 per cent) of 170 planned risk assessments covering 31 of the 35 temporary and permanent operating bases, which were assessed as high-risk locations. Among the four operating bases where CDT did not carry-out risk assessments (Bedaka, Bozele, Gagoulou and Benanko) serious misconduct allegations had been previously reported. CDT explained that these locations were not covered, as the Mission decided for CDT to carry out risk assessment visits jointly with the Force Headquarters Training Unit for better coordination and logistics. However, due to a shortfall in resources, visits to these locations were deferred.

21. In the risk register, the Mission had identified key drivers, key controls, and risk mitigation measures, such as regular induction and refresher training on SEA and other misconduct, more systematic risk assessment visits after new deployment to high-risk locations, and strengthened follow-up on implementation of recommendations, and increased awareness-raising of the local population on misconduct reporting. However, while MINUSCA identified adequate mitigation measures, there was no system for tracking and monitoring implementation of recommendations from the CDT risk assessment visits. Moreover, CDT did not inform the Director of Mission Support of the results of the risk assessments, although some of the recommendations required action from the Mission Support Division. As a result, the implementation status of recommendations in each location was not known. These recommendations included the need to: (a) establish adequate welfare facilities and health and sanitary conditions including effective leave policies to strengthen troops' morale; (b) construct appropriate perimeter fencing to limit access to the people in the area and thus deter fraternization; and (c) monitor movement of troops out of camps particularly at night and better enforce established curfew hours.

- (3) MINUSCA should strengthen its misconduct risk management by: (a) adequately planning risk assessment site visits; and (b) developing and implementing a mechanism to monitor the status of recommendations arising from misconduct risk assessments.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that although risk assessment visits were scheduled based on priority areas and misconduct trends, the completion of all planned visits and adequate tracking has been challenging. To improve the gaps, the Mission would recruit a P-5 Conduct and Discipline Officer with risk management responsibility and form risk management working groups in sectors. The Risk Management and Compliance Unit will review and ensure implementation of recommendations from risk assessments. Ultimately the outcomes of the risk assessment visits would be channeled into the MINUSCA SEA and misconduct risk assessment framework and mapping exercise to serve as the basis to inform decision-making by management for various activities.

Mission personnel were vetted prior to recruitment

22. To prevent individuals who have previously engaged in any form of substantiated misconduct from being rehired, the Mission conducted mandatory vetting of candidates prior to onboarding. A review of 40 of 248 new international and national staff that onboarded during the audit period indicated that all international staff were vetted by DMSPC/ALD. MINUSCA Human Resources Section vetted all national staff prior to onboarding. The CDS report of 7 May 2021 on the vetting of military and police contingents' personnel for past misconducts showed that out of 28,617 military and 3,663 police personnel, 26,966 and 1,655, respectively, had been cleared by the time of their deployment to MINUSCA. The remaining personnel had not yet been deployed as they were still being reviewed by CDS. OIOS concluded that MINUSCA had implemented adequate controls to vet personnel.

Need to enhance welfare and recreation facilities for uniformed personnel

23. Provision of welfare and recreation 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 strengthen the morale and discipline of United Nations personnel and play an important role in misconduct prevention.

24. MINUSCA had established welfare committees in Bangui and its 11 field offices. All welfare committees prepared welfare and recreation plans and cost estimates for each activity, as well as expense/activity reports to account for funds received. CDT was contributing to the planning of welfare activities and provided input to committees' decisions. Welfare and recreation facilities for civilians as documented in CDT annual reports to CDS were adequate and included: basic sanitary infrastructures such as toilets and showers, communication facilities, sports facilities and Post Exchange shops in Bangui and some sector headquarters. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, MINUSCA welfare committees organized cultural and social events, including happy hours and discounted group tours to countries in the region, sport events, counseling, and psychosocial support, and established fresh fruits and vegetable markets within civilian camps. These activities were paused at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to limit the spread of the virus among MINUSCA personnel and as of November 2021 had not yet resumed. However, in the meantime, MINUSCA constructed a welfare village, which was awaiting opening at the log base in Bangui to cater for civilian staff welfare.

25. The welfare and recreation facilities in most military contingents and formed police units' camps, which were operating under self-sustainment, were the responsibility of the troop/police contributing countries (T/PCCs). However, these were found to be inadequate or non-existent. A review of 77 out of 127 risk

assessment reports for military contingents and formed police units' camps prepared by CDT noted that 48 of these camps were not equipped with adequate welfare and recreation facilities, such as well constructed toilets and water points, internet, and sports facilities. OIOS, in its report 2020/046, dated 1 December 2020, has previously identified the need to improve self-sustainment capacities, such as provision of internet access for troops and furniture for recreation areas.

26. The Mission needs to take action to address the current situation, particularly as absence of adequate welfare and recreation facilities has been identified as a major risk factor that contributed to reported inappropriate behavior, misconduct and cases of SEA by uniformed personnel in MINUSCA.

(4) MINUSCA should ensure the implementation of adequate and effective welfare and recreation facilities in uniformed personnel camps to strengthen misconduct prevention efforts.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Mission would activate a senior level working group to review and address important concerns of inadequate welfare and recreational facilities for all uniformed personnel. The group in coordination with the risk management working group and other relevant sections will review reports, results of visits conducted, and action taken. The group will also be responsible for devising measures for corrective action against contingents non-compliant with the terms set forth in the self-sustainment subcategory of welfare in the memoranda of understandings with the United Nations.

B. Enforcement of standards of conduct

Mechanisms for reporting and recording misconduct needed strengthening

27. 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 to report alleged misconduct to the officials whose responsibility is to take appropriate action. All reporting of allegations of misconduct should be centrally captured for prompt assessment, referral for investigation and timely follow-up.

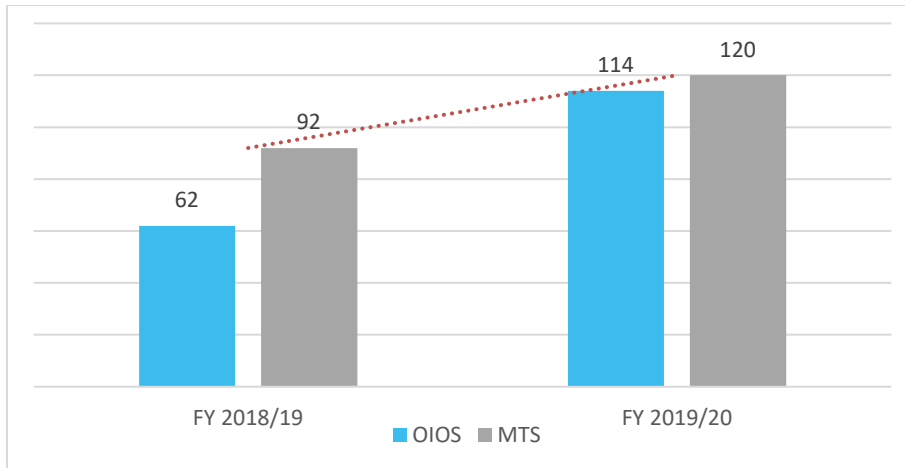
28. Results of the 2019 Staff Engagement Survey indicated that most staff (86 per cent) in MINUSCA know what to do and whom to approach to report unethical behavior or wrongdoing. Channels to report allegations of misconduct in MINUSCA included: (a) the SRSG, (b) heads of field offices, (c) CDT and its field offices, and (d) OIOS. The Mission also has SEA focal points, a community-based complaint mechanism, a 24/7 hotline, an email helpline and private meeting rooms at its headquarters in Bangui and four field offices to receive and record complaints.

29. However, some of the mechanisms for reporting misconduct were not effectively operating. The designated email address generated an automatic response, but there was no follow up within 24 hours as indicated in the automated message. Calls to the CDT hotline were directed to voicemail. While all unattended calls were converted to email for subsequent review by CDT, 2,879 emails (converted calls) had remained unread as of 1 July 2021. CDT explained that it was inundated with calls, some of which may be blank or irrelevant. However, CDT neither requested for additional resources to assist in handling the large volume of calls nor instituted interim measures to attend to all unread emails.

30. The number of misconduct allegations reported to CDT and OIOS increased in the period under review, which could be due to existence of multiple reporting mechanisms that encourage reports of wrongdoing. As suggested by Figure 4, MINUSCA CDT has recorded more complaints than OIOS. This

may be because some cases get reported directly to OIOS and subsequently reconciled with CDT, while other minor allegations, such as those related to unruly behavior and traffic violations are handled by the Mission directly and may not have a case reference for OIOS.

Figure 4
Number of misconduct cases recorded by CDT and OIOS from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020



Source: OIOS Case Management System and MTS

31. A review of a sample of 52 out of 252 misconduct cases showed that CDT collected the facts related to each allegation in the prescribed forms, assessed the quality of information, categorized, recorded and uploaded the supporting documentation (incident reports and complaint assessment forms, referrals to OIOS, note verbales to and from concerned T/PCC, and investigation reports) in MTS, and referred them to appropriate investigative entities for further action. All cases were assigned MTS numbers and all mandatory fields were populated. To safeguard information, CDS centrally managed access to MTS. OIOS verified that only authorized MINUSCA staff were given access.

32. However, the assessment forms used by CDT were not pre-numbered, which would be a good quality check to ensure completeness of data entered in MTS. Additionally, analysis of MTS data showed that 73 per cent of serious misconduct cases and 55 per cent of other misconduct cases were not opened within the required seven days. On average, it took 86 and 92 days to record serious misconduct and other misconduct cases in MTS, respectively. The delays were mostly attributable to gathering of additional information from complainants, inaccurate categorization of misconduct at incident reporting stage, and limited staffing resources. Some delays were partly due to the complainants' reluctance to provide complete and timely information.

33. Without a complete record of instances of possible wrongdoing, 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.

(5) MINUSCA should ensure: (a) all allegations of misconduct received by the Conduct and Discipline Team are captured in the Misconduct Tracking System for effective and timely assessment; and (b) a fully functional and reliable hotline system is in place and systematically reviewed for valid cases of possible misconduct.

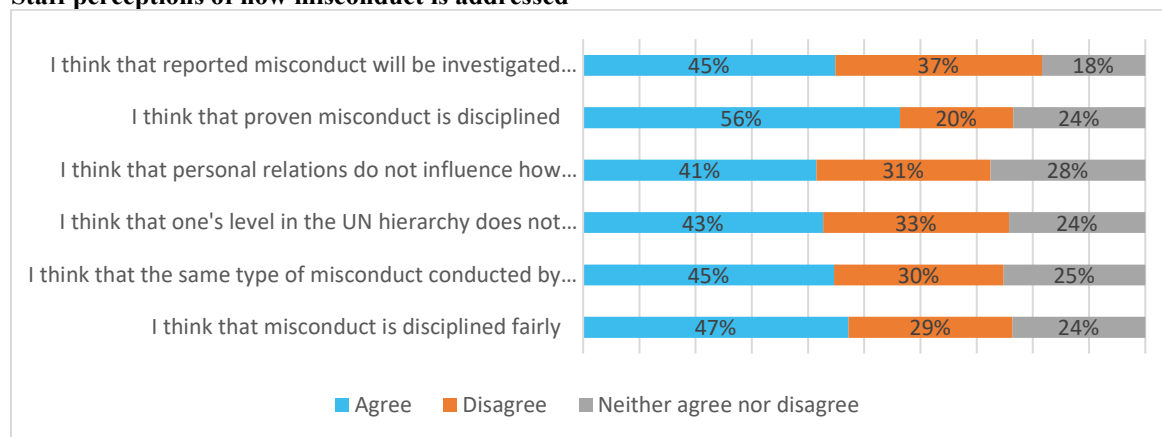
MINUSCA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that a core function of the enforcement prong of CDT's mandate is the provision of safe, confidential and reliable complaints reception mechanism and efficient management of cases until closure, which while always done, had room for improvement of its efficiency. Augmented staffing with the recruitment of a P-4 Conduct and Discipline Officer responsible for case management would add manpower and expertise to implement CDT's enforcement mandate. With assistance from FTS, it would restructure the complaints reception system including a technical review of the hotline dispatch and response system with a view to improving response to complainants and record keeping of all calls and emails.

Need to timely address alleged misconduct

34. Knowing that misconduct is disciplined fairly and consistently re-enforces the culture of accountability for wrongdoing and strengthens staff morale. Proper and timely assessment of alleged wrongdoing is critical to demonstrating the Mission's overall commitment to create a culture of "zero-tolerance" to misconduct.

35. The OIOS evaluation of organizational 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 5, only 56 per cent of MINUSCA staff who responded to the OIOS accountability survey believed that proven misconduct is disciplined, while 47 per cent believed that misconduct is disciplined fairly. These figures are low considering the importance of addressing misconduct timely.

Figure 5
Staff perceptions of how misconduct is addressed



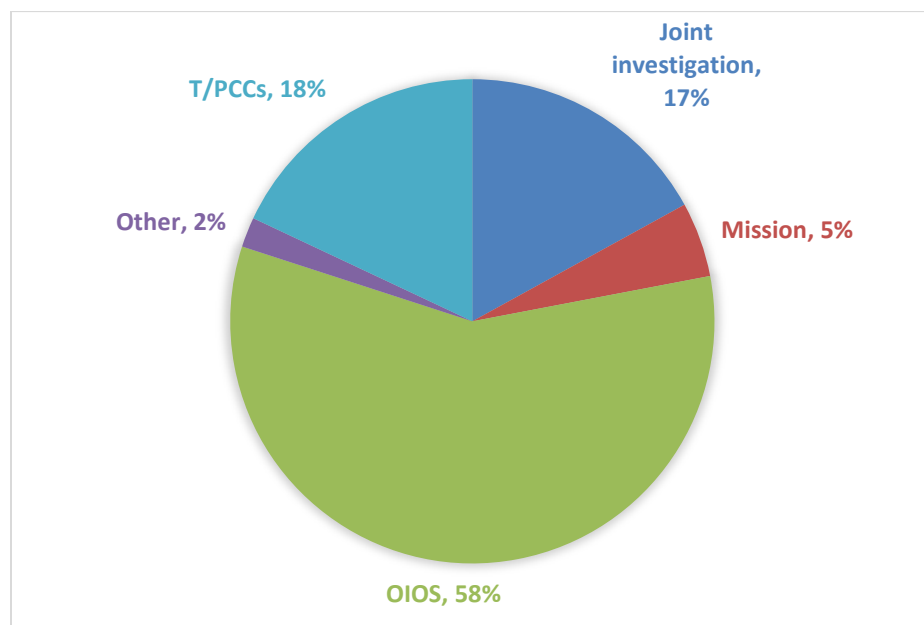
Source: Staff accountability survey – MINUSCA specific results

36. 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 MINUSCA staff representatives as well as the Mission-specific results of the OIOS evaluation highlighted that there were low levels of trust in the accountability systems for misconduct, making references to the absence of disciplinary measures. Of the MINUSCA personnel who indicated on the OIOS accountability survey that they had reported misconduct during the last two years, 93 per cent had not been updated on the results of their report. Therefore, to help dispel such perceptions, MINUSCA 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.

37. The Mission was tracking cases, in particular SEA cases, that accounted for about one third of all cases recorded by the Mission. CDT was providing monthly briefing reports to the SRSG, and as seen in Figure 6, more than half (58 per cent) of the SEA cases were being investigated by OIOS. A further 18 per cent were being jointly investigated by the Mission and T/PCCs, and a similar number were under investigation by T/PCCs. Four per cent did not have a specific investigative body indicated in MTS. As of 1 July 2021, there were 64 open SEA cases of which 16 (25 per cent) had been open for more than two years. To expedite resolution of investigations, CDT representatives participated in two pre-deployment visits to discuss timely completion of investigations with the concerned T/PCCs. Although these visits addressed the need to expedite the investigations, such visits were not consistently done and remained interim measures only.

Figure 6
Pending sexual exploitation and abuse cases as of 1 July 2021



Source: MTS statistics

38. However, CDT was not sufficiently active in following-up on misconduct cases other than SEA and such as criminal acts, fraud, theft, abuse of authority, traffic and curfew violations. As of 1 July 2021, of the 110 open cases of serious and other misconduct (other than SEA), more than a fifth (21 per cent) had been open for more than two years. For such cases, MTS did not capture details about the investigative entities. CDT were also delayed in following up with the investigative entities (OIOS, Special Investigations Unit, Force Provost Marshall and Police Investigative Units) and delays occurred in reviewing investigation reports and preparation of closure reports in MTS.

- (6) **MINUSCA should implement a monitoring system to track outstanding allegations of misconduct for appropriate follow up action.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the existing monitoring system would be strengthened with additional planned resources to augment the case management team. In addition to the annual quality assurance exercise, the case management unit would use the new case management

dashboard to support easy follow-up on cases that require action. Also, bi-monthly case management meetings would be conducted resulting in updated tracking tables, reports and minutes of meetings.

C. Remedial action

MINUSCA deployed a dedicated Senior Victims' Rights Officer to enhance assistance to victims of SEA

39. 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.

40. CDT regularly participated in the network of the United Nations Country Team to implement a victim assistance mechanism. This included meetings of the Prevention of SEA (PSEA) Task Force and the Gender-based violence and Child Protection sub-cluster. The CDT representative contributed to the discussions during these meetings. CDT also reported quarterly to CDS on the number of identified SEA victims and those who received assistance as shown in Table 1 and updated the Victims Assistance Tracking System with information on referrals for assistance, assistance provided and information on service providers.

41. CDT participated in the mapping exercise led by the United Nations Population Fund and the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate to identify services available in the country to victims of SEA. The mapping exercise showed that dedicated and specialized services were absent or only provided on an ad-hoc basis due to limited human and financial resources, particularly in legal assistance, livelihood support and provision of safety and protection. To advocate for increased funding, MINUSCA presented at the SEA Victims Trust Fund Review Committee to explain the critical situation in the country. Based on these interactions, the Mission obtained funding for a project implemented by an International non-governmental organization, which included assistance to victims of SEA; supporting and reinforcing community-based protection mechanisms; and raising community awareness on SEA risks, gender-based violence, and services and referral systems to support victims. However, this was insufficient to facilitate timely, comprehensive and accessible services for victims, particularly in remote and rural areas.

42. To augment this area of work, in June 2021, a dedicated Senior Victims' Rights Officer was deployed in MINUSCA, who will be primarily responsible for advocating for resources to enhance assistance to victims of SEA.

Table 1
Assistance provided to SEA victims in 2019 and 2020

Type of Assistance	Number of victims assisted in 2019	Number of victims assisted in 2020
Medical assistance	39	46
Psychological assistance	39	46
Legal assistance	1	1
Material assistance	0	46
Vocational training	1	0
Other	39	0
Total	119	139

Source: MINUSCA CDT annual reports

Community awareness raising activities were limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic

43. Targeted awareness-raising and external communications 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 affected persons to bring forward cases of misconduct.

44. The Mission established community-based complaints mechanisms in all sectors, and for those participating, provided capacity building in areas such as counselling and information on the services available to victims. During the period, CDT conducted SEA-related outreach activities to the local community. Specifically, CDT conducted field visits to 21 locations, during which a total of: (a) 43 capacity building training sessions to members of community-based complaint mechanisms were held; (b) 61 focus group discussions on SEA were organized; and (c) 21 public mass campaigns on SEA were held. The Mission also provided telephones and sensitization materials to community leaders for further outreach to the most vulnerable in remote locations.

45. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic outreach activities on PSEA and victim assistance were limited to awareness campaigns via text messages and dissemination of information through radio spots. Consequently, CDT did not fully implement all its planned awareness-raising activities, including planned training sessions to build the capacity of community-based complaint mechanisms, hold focus group discussions on SEA, and conduct public mass campaigns in 7 of the 28 planned locations. CDT informed that these locations would be prioritized for PSEA awareness-raising projects in the next cycle. Considering the constraints imposed by COVID-19 and that plans are being implemented to conduct further outreach awareness activities, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

46. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of MINUSCA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁴ / Important ⁵	C/ O ⁶	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁷
1	MINUSCA should establish effective measures, including accountability through the performance management system, to ensure completion of mandatory training by all staff.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of completion of mandatory training by all staff.	31 March 2022
2	MINUSCA should strengthen the misconduct prevention efforts by: (a) periodically evaluating the impact of its training and awareness raising activities; and (b) establishing a mechanism to ensure that all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training.	Important	O	Receipt of: (i) results of the impact assessment for the training programmes; and (ii) evidence of the implementation of the tracking mechanism to ensure all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training.	30 November 2022
3	MINUSCA should strengthen its misconduct risk management by: (a) adequately planning risk assessment site visits; and (b) developing and implementing a mechanism to monitor the status of recommendations arising from misconduct risk assessments	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of: (i) completion of planned risk assessment visits; and (ii) implementation of database and tracking system and recommendations arising from misconduct risk assessments.	30 June 2022
4	MINUSCA should ensure the implementation of adequate and effective welfare and recreation facilities in uniformed personnel camps to strengthen misconduct prevention efforts.	Important	O	Receipt of the outcome of the review by the senior level working group and evidence of corrective action taken by the Mission where contingents are non-compliant with the terms of the self-sustainment subcategory of welfare.	31 August 2022
5	MINUSCA should take action to ensure: (a) all allegations of misconduct received by the Conduct and Discipline Team are captured in the Misconduct Tracking System for effective and timely assessment; and (b) a fully functional and reliable hotline system is in place and systematically reviewed for valid cases of possible misconduct.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence: (i) that all allegations of misconduct are timely captured in the case management system; and (ii) of completion of the effective restructuring of the complaints reception system including technical review of the hotline dispatch and response system.	31 July 2022
6	MINUSCA should implement a monitoring system to track outstanding allegations of misconduct for appropriate follow up action.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of implementation of structured bi-monthly case management meetings and use of the case management dashboard to follow up on cases that require	30 June 2022

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

				action at the mission level, indicating that outstanding allegations are adequately tracked.	
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⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁷ Date provided by MINUSCA in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Ms Eleanor T. Burns
A: Director Internal Audit Division
OIOS

DATE: 31 December 2021

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

REFERENCE:  MINUSCA/OSRSG/260/2021

SUBJECT: **MINUSCA's Management Response on the Draft report on an audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (Assignment No. AP2020-637-04)**
OBJET:

1. With reference to your email addressed Tuesday 15 December 2021 on the above captioned subject, kindly find attached MINUSCA's Management Response on the Draft report on an audit of conduct and discipline activities in MINUSCA.
2. I take this opportunity to express our general agreement with the findings and recommendations and, thank you and your staff for cooperation during the audit.

Annex (1): MINUSCA's Management Response on the Draft report on an audit of conduct and discipline activities in MINUSCA

Management Response

Audit of the effectiveness of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	MINUSCA should establish effective measures, including accountability through the performance management system, to ensure completion of mandatory training by all staff.	Important	Yes	IMTC and CDT	Broadcast by February 2022 March 2022 - CDT's compilation of the list of non- compliant personnel and commencement of follow-up	1. A mission broadcast will be sent requesting persons who have not completed the mandatory CDT related trainings to do so by a certain end of March 2022. 2. CDT's access to the management dashboard or other Inspira-managed database extract list of all staff, status of the completion of training courses. Thereafter CDT rolls out a tracking to communicate with all staff who have not complied.
2	MINUSCA should strengthen the misconduct prevention efforts by: (a) periodically evaluating the impact of its training and awareness raising activities; and (b) establishing a mechanism to ensure that all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training.	Important	Yes	Team leader, training pillar and all Conduct and Discipline Officers conducting training	Immediate use of training assessment forms June 2022 for the completion of the design of the survey	1. Use of end of training assessment and feedback forms, which will provide basis for trainers to modify training. The design of both a paper and electronic feedback form will also enhance and implement a training evaluation survey to be used at the end of each training session. This evaluation feed back to be used by all trainers by March 2022 latest

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 the effectiveness of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
				FTS, IMTC, HR, Force and Police HR and CDT	November 2022, launch of first annual survey Coordination meetings to commence by February 2022 Completion of the tracking tool by July 2022	2. An annual staff/UN personnel training and awareness-raising perception survey 3. It is imperative that an improved tracking mechanism be established to inform CDT of all new comers to the mission, so that mandatory induction trainings can be arranged for 100% of new comers. In this regard, MINUSCA CDT will again discuss with Human Resources, and other custodians of relevant information to jointly explore / brainstorm on automatic notifications to CDT on the arrival of all new comers to the Mission. An option of also directly including CDT in the FSS Check-in module 4. To develop in close cooperation with FTS, a tracking system of automatic notification, so that CDT can plan include these persons in their training and track participation.
3	MINUSCA should strengthen its misconduct risk management by: (a) adequately planning risk assessment site visits; and (b) developing and implementing a mechanism to monitor the	Important	YES	1. Chief, Conduct and Discipline Team	1. Recruitment of P5 completed by April 2022.	Risk assessment visits have always been scheduled based on priority areas, trends of misconduct and implicated personnel or contingents, but the challenge has been completing

Management Response

Audit of the effectiveness of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	status of recommendations arising from misconduct risk assessments.			2. P5 Conduct and Discipline Officer responsible for the risk management portfolio and 3. the Mission's Risk and Compliance Unit	2. Formation of regional/sector Risk management groups: by March 2022 3. Completion of sectors' quarterly risk assessment visits: April/May 2022 4. Formation of revised MINUSCA risk management group: deadline March 2022 5. Database and tracking system to monitor all recommendations are tracked until satisfactorily implemented: deadline for transfer of all recommendations	all planed visits and an adequate mechanism for tracking the implementation of all the recommendations. To improve on these gaps: 1. Completion of the recruitment of the P5 Conduct and Discipline Officer. 2. Formation of Sector risk management working groups (to include HoFo, military FPs, C&D officer, representatives of AFP, others as necessary), development of their TOR and development of quarterly risk assessment plans. Further, at strategic and central level, the Mission will be strengthening a coordination mechanism (A UN or MINUSCA risk management working group including Agencies, Mission support, Police, Military, CDT, Risk Management Unit, etc) and with Risk Management and Compliance Unit in the lead, will be responsible for reviewing and ensuring implementation of recommendations from assessments.

Management Response

Audit of the effectiveness of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
					in a central database: June 2022	<p>It would be necessary, with close coordination with the Mission Risk and Compliance Unit, to ensure accurate reporting through improved databasing of risk assessment activities, a design of a tracking and reporting tool on the status of the recommendations and an integrated updating on the SEA and other misconduct matrices and risks.</p> <p>Generally, the ultimate goal is for the outcomes of these risk assessment visits to be channeled into the MINUSCA SEA and misconduct risk assessment framework and mapping exercise, with which would be updated and be the basis to inform decision making by management for various activities.</p>
4	MINUSCA should ensure the implementation of adequate and effective welfare and recreation facilities in uniformed personnel camps to strengthen misconduct prevention efforts.	Important	YES	SRSB/ DMS / Chief CDT / Force Commander / Police Commissioner	<p>1. SRSB's creation of the Group and its TOR: deadline April 2022</p> <p>2. First meeting of the group and development of a</p>	<p>The Mission will activate a senior level working group to review and address the important concerns of inadequate welfare and recreational facilities for all TCCs.</p> <p>The following will be prioritized 1. Activation of the group and development of the Group's workplan</p>

Management Response

Audit of the effectiveness of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
					workplan: no later than June 2022 3. Implementation of the workplan, with priority focus on high risk TCC/PCC's - requiring urgent intervention measures based on its risk profiles: commencement of workplan no later than August 2022	2. In coordination with the Mission's Risk Management Working Group, Contingent Owned Equipment and Staff Welfare Committee, among other key stakeholders/relevant actors, reports will be reviewed, visits conducted, and appropriate action taken. Quarterly reports shared with UNHQ and depending on any corrective action taken by the Mission (Mission's direct provision of adequate welfare support, a mechanism to be explored for recovering funds from TCC). Reference is made to A/62/663 , A/63/675 , A/75/121 and Department of Support's SOP on Welfare and Recreation which empowers the Working Group to monitor, report and devise measures for corrective action against contingents non-compliant with the terms set forth in the self-sustainment subcategory of welfare in the Model Memorandum of Understanding, between the UN and the TCC / PCC.
5	MINUSCA should take action to ensure: (a) all allegations of misconduct received	Important	Yes	Chief, Conduct and	1. Recruitment of needed personnel	As part of the enforcement prong of CDT's mandate implementation, its

Management Response

Audit of the effectiveness of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	by the Conduct and Discipline Team are captured in the Misconduct Tracking System for effective and timely assessment; and (b) a fully functional and reliable hotline system is in place and systematically reviewed for valid cases of possible misconduct.			Discipline and Team Leader, Case Management Unit with technical support of FTS	<p>for case management, priority of P4 officer: completed by February 2022.</p> <p>2. Assigning resources responsible for incoming complaints from multiple sources: Chief CDT by no later than June 2022</p> <p>3. CDT/FTS review of the hotline: no later than July 2022.</p> <p>4. Create a tracking database of all incoming complaints from hotline and emails: no later than April 2022</p>	<p>core function entails the provision of safe, confidential and reliable complaints reception mechanism and efficient management of cases until closure. This was always done, but with room for improving efficiency and a plan to augment staffing, te below will be prioritized to enhance cthe enforcement aspect of the CDT:</p> <p>1. Recruitment of P4, Conduct and Discipline Officer responsible for case management. This will add manpower and expertise.</p> <p>2. Restructuring of the complaints reception system, including realignment of resources internally if available (if not available, sourcing of additional personnel externally) to receive, monitor multiple sources and misconduct reporting media, record and tabulate all credible complaints.</p> <p>3. Restructuring of the complaints mechanism also includes technical review of the hotline dispatch and response system (consultation with the FTS experts) with a view to improving response to complainants</p>

Management Response

Audit of the effectiveness of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						and record keeping of all calls and emails.
6	MINUSCA should implement a monitoring system to track outstanding allegations of misconduct for appropriate follow up action.	Important	yes	Chief CDT, Conduct and Team Leader, Case management unit and Reports officer.	Structured bi- monthly (twice in a month) case management meetings: to commence by February 2022 Use of case management dashboard - immediately	<p>A monitoring system exists, but will be strengthened with the current plan for recruitment of additional human resource to augment the Team.</p> <p>The existing mechanism to track outstanding allegations and status of complaints, is the annual quality assurance exercise. The plan to improve monitoring and tracking outstanding allegations of misconduct for appropriate follow up action, in addition to the annual quality assurance exercise will be:</p> <p>1. Case management Unit's consistent use of DMSPC newly launched Power BI reporting tool – the case management dashboard which gives a comprehensive view of the status of all open complaints, and status of each allegation. This gives visualization on status of all complaints and supports easy follow-up on cases that require action at the CDT or the mission level. These</p>

Management Response

Audit of the effectiveness of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>reporting tools and data will be used as foundational documents in bi-monthly (twice a month) case management meetings.</p> <p>2. Bi-monthly case management meetings, resulting in updated case management tracking tables / reports and minutes of meetings, as documentary proof of ongoing reviews of open cases.</p> <p>3. Continued annual quality assurance exercise.</p>