



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2023/074

Audit of field office operations in support of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

UNMISS needed to facilitate the field offices' work planning process, improve coordination for integrated activities, and review logistics support for contractor supplies to the field offices

**20 December 2023
Assignment No. AP2022-633-08**

Audit of field office operations in support of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of field office operations in support of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the management of field office operations in support of the UNMISS mandate. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 January 2023 and included field office work planning, coordination and implementation of mandated activities and support for field office operations.

The priority objectives of field offices were aligned with the Mission's mandate and strategic vision and field offices reported monthly on progress made in their implementation, to senior management at the Mission Headquarters in Juba. Nonetheless, the planning process at field offices lacked sufficient consultation among various stakeholders, and information sharing was not always effective, hindering good coordination of integrated activities. There was also a lack of consistent engagement between the chiefs of substantive sections and heads of field offices to enhance the coherence of strategic and operational priorities. Additionally, the Mission continued to provide free transportation of contractor supplies to field offices on United Nations flights, a practice initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic but continued without reassessing the ongoing need.

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

- Hold consultation sessions involving the Strategic Planning Unit, field offices and heads of sections to facilitate the field office work planning process;
- Reinforce procedures for consistent information sharing by all Mission components through the field-integrated operations centres;
- Incorporate simulation exercises in field office planning meetings, and promote the regular use of handover notes to assist team members to step in for subject matter experts who are absent during integrated activities;
- Establish forums to facilitate regular interaction between heads of field offices and chiefs of substantive sections for effective coordination of operational priorities;
- Prioritize the adoption of the iNeed portal in Kuajok and Rumbek field offices and issue guidelines for users to maintain updated profiles and use the portal effectively; and
- Reassess the need to provide free transportation for all contractor supplies to field offices on United Nations flights.

UNMISS accepted all recommendations and has initiated actions to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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Audit of field office operations in support of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of field office operations in support of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS).

2. The United Nations Security Council resolutions (SCR) 2567 (2021), 2625 (2022) and 2677 (2023) authorized UNMISS to implement its mandate, which includes: (a) protection of civilians, (b) creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, (c) supporting the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the peace process, and (d) monitoring, investigating and reporting on human rights violations.

3. SCR 2567 (2021) also established a three-year strategic vision for UNMISS from 2021 to 2024. The strategic priorities include preventing a resurgence of civil war in South Sudan, building durable peace at the local and national levels, and supporting inclusive and accountable governance, leading to free, fair, and peaceful elections in alignment with the Revitalized Agreement. The vision encompasses critical tasks to advance the peace process, maintain national and sub-national stability, and support progress on key security, institutional and political benchmarks with the broader aim to solidify peace gains and pave the way for free and fair elections.

4. To respond effectively to the dynamic operating environment in the Mission area, UNMISS established a decentralized management structure since its inception in July 2011, with a Mission headquarters (MHQ) in Juba and field offices in the 10 States of the Republic of South Sudan, as shown in table 1. The Juba Field Office is co-located with MHQ in Juba. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) oversees the implementation of the Mission's mandate and strategic vision, with a Head of Field Office (HOFO) at the D-1 or P-5 level overseeing each of the 10 field offices. HOFOs report to the SRSG through the Mission's Chief of Staff and are supported by personnel from the civilian, police, and military components.

Table 1
UNMISS field office locations

State	Field Office
Northern Bahr-El-Ghazal State	Aweil
Unity State	Bentiu
Jonglei State	Bor
Central Equatoria State	Juba
Warrap State	Kuajok
Upper Nile State	Malakal
Lakes State	Rumbek
Western Equatoria State	Torit
Western Bahr-El-Ghazal State	Wau
Eastern Equatoria State	Yambio

Source: UNMISS

5. The field offices were responsible for carrying out and coordinating all mandated tasks of the Mission at field level. HOFOs provide strategic guidance, oversight and coordinate the work of all Mission components, including police and military. They have supervisory authority over all civilian component (substantive, support and security). Field office police coordinators and senior military liaison officers in

field offices oversee the activities of the police and military officers, respectively, seconded to UNMISS as individual experts on mission. They keep HOFOs informed about their activities and plans and are tasked by their respective Police and Force headquarters in MHQ. In addition, UNMISS Force has six sectors (Juba, South, East, West, North and Unity) covering the ten field offices. Sector commanders, reporting to the Force Commander, are responsible for military operations in field offices and coordinating their activities with the HOFO.

6. Field offices prepared daily, weekly, and monthly reports from the HOFOs' front offices to update senior management in MHQ on their priorities, plans and activities. Similarly, the field office police coordinators and senior military liaison officers provided daily, weekly, and monthly reports to their senior managers in Police and Force headquarters, respectively. Also, HOFOs met at least monthly with the Deputy SRSG Political to discuss political developments and with the Chief of Staff on other operational priorities. The Field Support Office under the Chief of Staff represents the field offices in relevant cross-cutting meetings in MHQ, provides operational support, and coordinates inter-field office cooperation and communication.

7. The UNMISS approved budget was \$1.12 billion each for 2021/22 and 2022/23. As of 30 June 2023, UNMISS had 18,022 personnel deployed across the 10 field office locations, including 2,673 civilian, 13,915 military and 1,434 police personnel.

8. Comments provided by UNMISS are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

9. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the management of field office operations in support of the UNMISS mandate.

10. This audit was included in the 2022 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the importance of effective field office operations in achieving the UNMISS mandate.

11. OIOS conducted this audit from February to August 2023, covering the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 January 2023. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in field office operations, including work planning process, coordination and implementation of mandated activities, and support for field office operations.

12. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with heads of field offices, administrative officers, and other key personnel in civilian, police and military components of the Mission; (b) a review of documents and reports relevant to field office operations; (c) analytical review of support service requests data (including 9,933 request for engineering and 86,812 request for technology-related support from all field offices) and access denial incidents, and logistics data; and (d) physical observation of meetings, facilities and support services to staff during visits to 5 of the 10 field offices namely, Juba, Malakal, Yambio, Bentiu and Bor field offices.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Field office work planning process

Need to facilitate the work planning process for field offices

14. The UNMISS three-year Strategic Vision 2021-2024 outlined the Mission’s strategic priorities and critical tasks. In accordance with the SRSG Directive 008/2018 of December 2018, each field office was required to develop and implement a work plan to achieve specific objectives. HOFOs oversee the implementation of priority objectives in their respective field offices.

15. A review of monthly field office reports issued between July 2022 and April 2023 by all field offices and interviews with all HOFOs and team leaders showed that all field offices had appropriately identified their priority objectives aligned with the mandate and strategic vision of UNMISS. These objectives addressed core elements such as preventing conflict between communities and promoting reconciliation, supporting humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities, protecting civilians from violence, fostering conditions for the return of displaced persons, reducing human rights violations, and improving relations between state and local authorities and aggrieved communities.

16. However, none of the 10 field offices had developed office-specific annual work plans since the issuance of the SRSG’s Directive due to a lack of guidance. To address this, the Strategic Planning Unit developed the Integrated Mission Work Plan endorsed by SRSG in March 2023. Subsequently, the Planning Unit circulated a draft template for the development of field office work plans. The field offices attempted to use this template to prepare their work plans for the 2023/24 performance period, but they faced difficulties in effectively capturing their priorities. The field offices found the predefined outcomes in the draft template too high-level, requiring further refinement to match their objectives and priorities. Furthermore, the absence of a robust consultation process involving the Strategic Planning Unit, field office staff, and section heads hindered the timely and effective development of work plans for the field offices. This could undermine the ability of field offices to address certain critical priorities.

(1) UNMISS should hold consultation sessions involving the Strategic Planning Unit, field offices and heads of sections to facilitate the field office work planning process.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it would convene consultation sessions on the planning process with the Strategic Planning Unit, field offices and heads of sections.

B. Coordination and implementation of mandated activities

Field offices made progress on their strategic priorities, established information sharing, and enhanced collaboration for humanitarian support

17. Good coordination between officials in MHQ and field offices is essential for effective mandate implementation. It enables UNMISS civilian, military and police components, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), and other partners across the Mission to work together cohesively, share resources, minimize duplication of efforts, and accomplish their shared objectives in an integrated manner.

18. The activities undertaken in all field offices contributed towards the achievement of the UNMISS mandate. For example, protecting civilians, deterring violence, creating conducive conditions for return of

internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their places of origin, and reconciliation of conflicting communities were among the strategic objectives for most of the field offices. Review of minutes of weekly senior management meetings and monthly reports from field offices between July 2022 and April 2023 showed that the field offices undertook integrated activities to deliver humanitarian assistance and services to areas beyond IDP camps, build capacity of IDP community leaders, and conduct integrated patrols to deter conflicts. These contributed to building confidence among civilians, identifying drivers of conflict, and verifying reports of human rights violations, in furtherance of the Mission mandate by all UNMISS field offices.

19. In addition, Mission leadership shared information with HOFOs to facilitate their appropriate responses to challenges arising from the dynamic operating environment of field offices. The Chief of Staff provided regular updates to HOFOs on actions taken by Mission leadership related to field offices, and the Deputy SRSG, Political held monthly briefings to update HOFOs on national political developments and discuss key leadership engagement strategies for responding to political developments. The section chiefs within the political pillar¹ attended the briefings every second month. The field offices sent daily situational reports to MHQ as part of the Mission's early-warning system and provided weekly and monthly reports to Mission leadership. For example, between July 2022 and April 2023, all field offices reported monthly on their priorities and key developments on political events, insecurities, humanitarian needs, planned activities and the results achieved during the month.

20. UNMISS, through its field offices, collaborated with and provided support to UNCT and HCT partners to respond to humanitarian needs arising from insecurity and adverse climatic conditions such as droughts and floods. However, the support faced challenges in certain field offices such as Aweil, Rumbek, Torit and Kuajok because some partners were not based in those locations. The Office of the Deputy SRSG, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, in consultation with UNCT and HCT, created a position of Area Based Coordinator in Malakal, Bentiu and Wau field offices in June 2023, on a pilot basis to extend it to other field offices in the future. The role of Area Based Coordinator included the coordination of development and humanitarian programmes and enhancing coherence with UNMISS teams.

21. OIOS concluded that field offices were making progress on their strategic priorities. Furthermore, as action was being taken to facilitate more efficient field operations through enhanced coordination and decision-making between HOFOs and UNCT and HCT partners in field offices, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

Need to enhance coordination of integrated activities

22. Each field office held weekly meetings chaired by HOFOs, with representatives from all components (civilian, police and military) present. Each field office also had a Field Integrated Operations Centre (FIOC) under the HOFO's authority, responsible for planning, coordinating and reporting on integrated activities. FIOCs organized monthly patrol plans, liaised with authorities for permissions, consolidated reports, tracked action plans, and managed early-warning systems. OIOS review of field office monthly reports and minutes of senior management meetings between July 2022 and March 2023 showed active participation of all components in various integrated activities, including training workshops and leadership engagements with interlocutors.

23. However, the military and civilian components did not consistently share information through the FIOC, which affected the coordination of integrated activities in some field offices. For instance, military officials in Torit, Yambio and Juba were informed by the Force Headquarters about security situations,

¹ UNMISS Political Pillar is comprised of Political Affairs, Civil Affairs, Human Rights, and Electoral Affairs divisions, United Nations Police Component and Rule of Law Advisory Section.

which they should have learned from civilian personnel in field offices. Similarly, civilian team members in the Malakal field office reported that Sector North military personnel occasionally shared situational awareness information directly with the Force Headquarters, bypassing FIOC. This occurred due to oversight, as components prioritized their primary chains of command for information sharing. As a result, there was a delay in the sharing of information through the FIOC's early warning mechanism. Timely information sharing among all components through the FIOC is imperative for accurate and credible information for management decision-making.

24. Furthermore, achieving coordination with other components was challenging, primarily because of the gaps that ensued during the rotation of police and military personnel. It often took considerable time for the newly arrived personnel to become fully acquainted with the ongoing operations at field offices. In addition, ensuring the effective achievement of objectives of some substantive² sections became challenging when relevant subject matter experts could not participate in simultaneous integrated activities or during their absences from the Mission. This issue was exacerbated in units like Gender Affairs, which had only one staff member in each field office, and Child Protection, which had one staff member in Kuajok and Rumbek. In such cases, the absence of these individuals led to a lack of subject matter expertise in integrated activities. Consequently, certain integrated activities in field offices, such as workshops, dialogues, and outreach events, often failed to fully address the key objectives of these sections when their subject matter experts were absent.

25. To address this challenge, it was necessary for team members from other sections or components to step in on behalf of absent subject matter experts to ensure the representation of integrated activities. OIOS observation of FIOC meetings and interviews with key officials revealed that introducing simulation exercises during planning meetings for integrated activities, where subject matter experts could discuss and demonstrate appropriate responses related to their respective sections, would have enhanced the understanding of other team members present. This approach would have empowered team members from different sections with relevant knowledge and skills to effectively contribute when subject matter experts were unavailable. Moreover, the consistent use of detailed handover notes from absent officials would further promote a common understanding of objectives.

(2) UNMISS should reinforce procedures for all Mission components to consistently share information through the field-integrated operations centres.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it would reinforce relevant procedures, as outlined in the Mission's guidance to the heads of field offices, sector commanders and field office police coordinators, to streamline relevant information through the field integrated operations centres. The Mission would update the relevant standard operating procedures accordingly.

(3) UNMISS should enhance the effectiveness of integrated activities by: (a) incorporating simulation exercises during the field offices' integrated planning meetings; and (b) promoting the consistent use of handover notes to prepare team members to cover the absence of subject matter experts in integrated activities.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it would issue clear instructions on the use of handover notes when subject matter experts are absent from integrated activities. Additionally, the

² Substantive sections include the Child Protection, Gender Affairs, Strategic Planning, Legal Affairs and Best Practices units, Protection, Transition and Reintegration, and Security and Safety sections, Communication and Public Information Division, Office of the Force Commander, Conduct and Discipline Team, Joint Mission Analysis Center, Joint Operations Center, and Field Support Office, in addition to the Political Pillar.

Mission would emphasize the inclusion of progressively challenging simulation exercises into the agenda of the field offices' tabletop exercises.

Need to improve engagement between heads of field offices and chiefs of substantive sections in Mission headquarters

26. The Mission's decentralized structure presents dual reporting lines for staff in field offices. Civilian sections' team leaders in field offices report to HOFOs as first reporting officers and to the respective section chiefs in MHQ as second reporting officers. On the other hand, police and military personnel coordinate with HOFOs and civilian components in field offices at operational and tactical levels but report through their chains of command to the Police Commissioner and Force Commander, respectively, in MHQ.

27. The chiefs of substantive sections in MHQ engaged with their section staff based in the field offices to develop annual work plans as part of the results-based budgeting process. However, they did not have routine engagements with HOFOs during the annual work plan development process. The importance of such engagements was often overlooked mainly because the roles of HOFOs did not involve overseeing budget resources, and hence, their input was not deemed essential in the budget preparation process.

28. As a result, although HOFOs play an important role in implementing mandated activities in the field offices, they had limited inputs in determining the scope of work and allocation of resources for programmatic activities in field offices. This occasionally led to competing priorities between substantive section chiefs and HOFOs and created confusion for staff in field offices. For example, section chiefs would occasionally assign resources to tasks they considered important, even if HOFOs didn't view them as urgent priorities. To partially address this gap, \$100,000 was allocated to the Office of the Chief of Staff for programmatic funding in the 2022/23 fiscal year. Expenditure records showed that between September 2022 and June 2023, HOFOs used \$67,000 from the funds towards programmatic priority objectives as determined by them, such as engaging with state officials, civil society organizations, and communities to address conflicts, restoring peace or building trust in various conflict hotspots. Although HOFOs reported having ad hoc discussions with some substantive section chiefs, establishing regular interaction with them on strategic and operational priorities would contribute to improved overall coherence.

(4) UNMISS should establish forums to facilitate regular interaction between heads of field offices and chiefs of substantive sections in Mission Headquarters for effective coordination of operational priorities.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it would implement measures for regular meetings between substantive section heads and heads of field offices. Additionally, it would establish regular forums involving heads of field offices, section chiefs, the Resident Coordination Office, and humanitarian and development partners to promote the triple nexus approach.

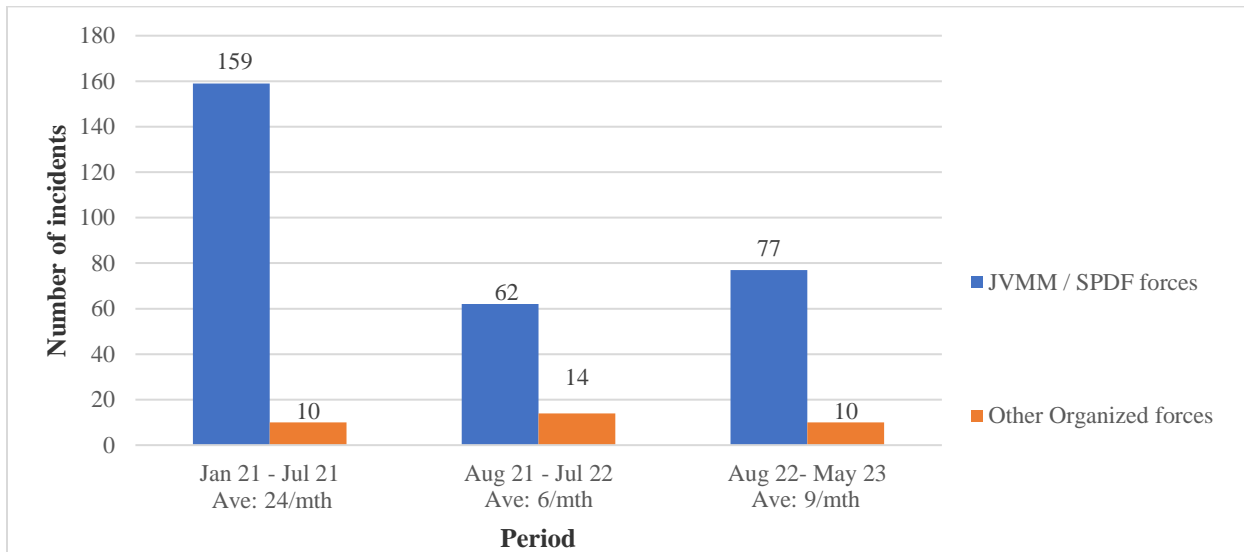
The Mission continued its efforts to address access restrictions

29. UNMISS had established a practice of sharing information on its military troop movements with the host government to foster security cooperation. Field offices submitted planned visit locations to the Force Headquarters in Juba, which then shared this information with the host government's Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM)³ for its acknowledgment, typically one month in advance.

³ The Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism is a Directorate under the Republic of South Sudan's Ministry of Defense and Veteran Affairs which oversees the ground operations of the South Sudan People's Defense Forces.

30. However, UNMISS field office teams were intermittently denied entry by the South Sudan People’s Defense Forces (SSPDF) and opposition forces’ soldiers at checkpoints despite presenting approved Sharing of Information (SOI) documents from JVMM, resulting in the cancellation of planned visits. An analysis of related data showed that between January 2021 and May 2023, there were 332 access denials by SSPDF and other organized forces across UNMISS field offices, as shown in figure I.

Figure I
Incidents of access denials for UNMISS between January 2021 and May 2023



Source: UNMISS access denials data

31. To address this, UNMISS and the host government established the High-Level Forum in 2021 as a mechanism to promote unhindered mobility and access for UNMISS field operations. It was co-chaired by the Deputy SRSG, Political and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Other key participants in the monthly meetings included the Minister of Defense, legal advisors, chiefs of government security organs, and officials from JVMM. The Mission also held workshops for officials of the JVMM and other organized forces in Juba on 27 July 2021 and 26 July 2022 to address access denials. These efforts resulted in improved access for the UNMISS Force and a reduction of access denials. As UNMISS leadership consistently raised access restriction concerns in the monthly high-level forums with counterparts in the host government, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

C. Support for field office operations

Need to improve the use of iNeed portal for engineering service requests

32. The Mission used the iNeed Self-Service portal (iNeed) to submit and manage technology and engineering support service requests (SSRs) by personnel. An analysis of iNeed data between November 2021 and February 2023 showed 86,812 SSRs for technology-related support from all field offices. The Field Technology Section (FTS) service desk resolved 94 per cent of SSRs within two days on average, except for Juba’s higher volume SSRs (38 per cent of total SSRs) which were resolved within four days on average. Out of 6,058 client satisfaction surveys completed for resolved SSRs for technology-related support, 95 per cent of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the resolution of SSRs.

33. However, the submission and management of engineering SSRs were suboptimal due to incomplete implementation of the iNeed portal across the Mission and system or user errors. The submission of engineering SSRs in the iNeed portal was launched in Juba in 2019 and extended to field offices between January 2022 and March 2023. However, Kuajok and Rumbek field offices still relied on manual task orders as of August 2023, as the relevant officials in these field offices had not prioritized its adoption.

34. Furthermore, engineering staff in Bor and Malakal did not consistently receive automatic notifications for some SSRs and had to manually review requests in the system, resulting in delayed response times. In addition, the engineering staff in Juba, Bentiu, Malakal, Aweil and Wau noted that users often erroneously selected incorrect service locations or combined multiple requests within a single SSR that should have been routed to different engineering units. This led to delays in resolution and an increased likelihood of SSRs being closed without resolution. Between July 2021 and March 2023, 9,233 engineering SSRs were initiated. The average time to resolve these SSRs was 12 days, with 2,221 (24 per cent) SSRs resolved between 12 and 327 days. Furthermore, 368 (47 per cent) of 789 respondents to the iNeed user satisfaction survey for engineering SSRs indicated that their requests were closed without being resolved.

35. OIOS analysis of iNeed data showed incorrect locations for 9,392 (11 per cent) of the 86,812 technology-related SSRs and 3,496 (39 per cent) of the 9,233 engineering SSRs. For example, 697 technology SSRs incorrectly indicated that users were located in New York, 255 SSRs mentioned Valencia and 15 SSRs showed Darfur as their location. The FTS management explained that New York was set as the default location for all uniformed personnel and requests submitted on behalf of users by the FTS service desk. Moreover, some users had not updated their user profiles to reflect their current duty stations. As a result, service location data in the iNeed portal was inaccurate, impacting its utility for management decision-making.

(5) UNMISS should: (a) prioritize the adoption of the iNeed portal in Kuajok and Rumbek field offices; and (b) issue guidelines to instruct users on keeping their profiles updated and properly using the iNeed portal.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the iNeed portal had been activated in Kuajok and Rumbek. Additionally, it would provide guidance on updating user profiles in the portal.

The Mission acted on logistical challenges but needed to reevaluate free transportation for contractor supplies to field offices

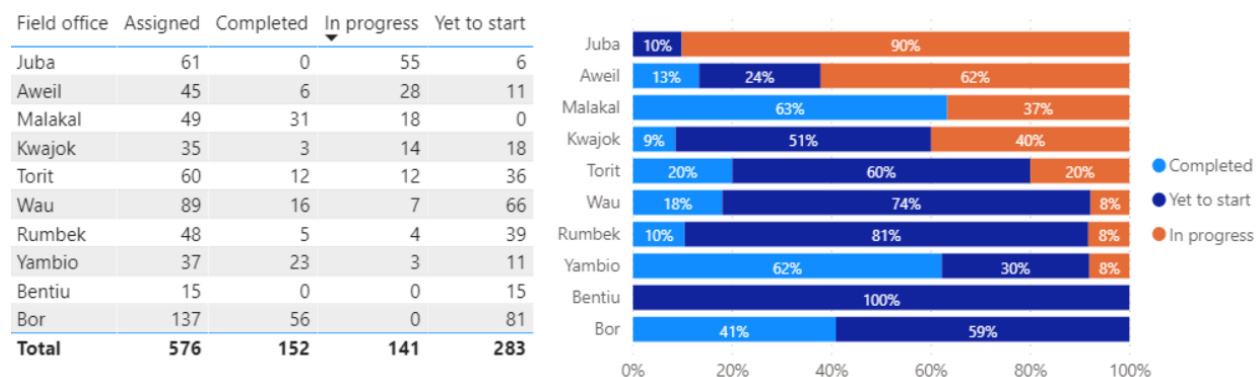
36. The Mission faced operational and logistical challenges due to prolonged floods in Bentiu, Malakal and Bor, inadequate road infrastructure, and the annual six-month wet season, which rendered roads impassable in many parts of the country. This was exacerbated by the reduction of the Mission's aviation fleet by 44 per cent and its helicopter passenger lift capabilities by 61 per cent from September 2022 due to a significant safety concern raised by the International Civil Aviation Organization. This resulted in the grounding of 11 air assets that were contributed by a service provider from a specific country. As discussed below, these challenges hindered the effective implementation of some activities and staff welfare in field offices.

a) The Mission took action to address logistical challenges to improve the condition of accommodation units

37. OIOS observation and interviews with uniformed and civilian staff in Malakal, Bentiu, Bor, Yambio and Wau revealed that some accommodation units were old, lacked essential items for kitchens and bathrooms, and had broken furniture. An analytical review of asset ageing reports showed that 33 per cent of 5,745 prefabricated containers exceeded their seven-year useful life threshold as of 15 August 2023,

with 1,492 containers (26 per cent) in use for 10 to 23 years. The Mission procured 576 replacement accommodation units and 438 bathroom and 454 kitchen capsules that were received in Juba between November 2022 and February 2023. However, installation of replacement accommodations lagged, with only 152 (26 per cent) completed and 283 (49 per cent) yet to start by 15 August 2023, as shown in figure II. Notably, in Bentiu, the installation had not commenced at all. Moreover, out of 151 accommodation units assigned to military contingents across field offices, 66 per cent had not initiated installation as of 11 August 2023.

Figure II
Installation status of accommodation units in UNMISS as at 11 August 2023



Source: OIOS analysis of UNMISS accommodation data

38. The Mission usually repairs existing prefabricated accommodation units to extend their expected useful lives. However, these repairs, and the installation of replacement units, encountered delays primarily due to the short supply of essential materials such as murram, sand, cement, aggregate, plumbing and electrical spares. These challenges were exacerbated by logistical difficulties in transporting these materials to field offices.

39. UNMISS used all available means to transport supplies from Juba to field offices within available resources. For example, it increased the use of river barge to transport engineering supplies from Juba to Malakal from 25 tons in 2022 to 1,143 tons between January and June 2023, and preparations were underway to transport an additional 97 containers between August and September 2023. Since the Mission was taking action to transport essential supplies to mitigate the delays for engineering projects, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

b) Need to reassess the free transportation of contractor supplies to field offices

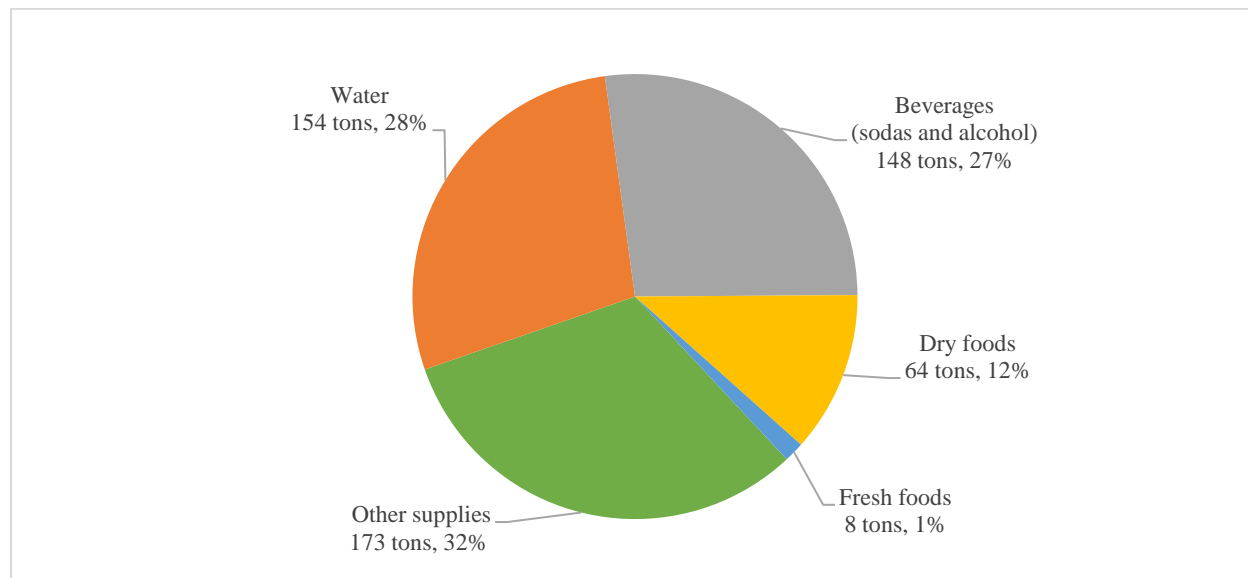
40. The Mission established two contracts for catering and bar services in Juba and field offices. In accordance with the contract, contractors were responsible for transporting supplies to the required locations and, where practicable, the Mission would provide United Nations transportation at a cost-reimbursable basis at its discretion.

41. To safeguard staff welfare in field offices during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNMISS provided United Nations transportation from Juba to field offices for the contractors' supplies and waived its right to cost reimbursement. The Director of Mission Support approved this waiver from April 2020 to June 2022, and extended it twice until June 2024.

42. The Mission airlifted 547 tons of supplies for two contractors from Juba to field offices between January 2022 and June 2023. The supplies included fresh and frozen foods, water, beverages, oil, disposable

cups and plates and hygiene products. Despite these efforts, some field offices consistently faced shortages of some essential items. For example, during visits to Malakal and Bentiu field offices, OIOS observed ongoing shortages of fresh food items such as meat and vegetables in the cafeterias and frequent depletion of bottled water within a day or two of delivery. An analytical review of relevant data showed that fresh foods and bottled water shipments to all the field offices constituted only 8 tons (1 per cent) and 154 tons (28 per cent) respectively, while the remaining 71 per cent of items transported were dry foods, beverages, and other supplies, as shown in figure III.

Figure III
Quantities of supplies airlifted from Juba to field offices on behalf of two contractors



Source: OIOS analysis of UNMISS shipment data

43. In view of the improved supply chains post-COVID-19 restrictions, the Mission needs to reevaluate the necessity of transporting contractor supplies on United Nations flights at no cost. Furthermore, it is imperative for the Mission to consider prioritizing the transport of only essential items of contractors such as fresh food and water on United Nations flights, while advising contractors to handle the transportation of non-essential supplies themselves. OIOS estimated that the Mission had foregone potentially \$280,000 to \$480,000 in cost recovery by providing free transportation for 547 tons of supplies based on historical transportation costs of \$0.51 per kilogram on AN26 cargo aircraft and \$0.88 per kilogram on Mi8 aircraft.

(6) UNMISS should reassess the need to provide free transportation for all contractor supplies to field offices on United Nations flights and take appropriate action.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 6 and stated that it would reassess the decision to provide free transport and take appropriate action.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Internal Audit Division
 Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of field office operations in support of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁴ / Important ⁵	C/ O ⁶	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁷
1	UNMISS should hold consultation sessions involving the Strategic Planning Unit, field offices and heads of sections to facilitate the field office work planning process.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of consultation sessions to facilitate the field office work planning process.	30 June 2025
2	UNMISS should reinforce procedures for all Mission components to consistently share information through the field-integrated operations centres.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that procedures for information sharing through the field-integrated operations centres are reinforced.	30 June 2024
3	UNMISS should enhance the effectiveness of integrated activities by: (a) incorporating simulation exercises during the field offices' integrated planning meetings; and (b) promoting the consistent use of handover notes to prepare team members to cover the absence of subject matter experts in integrated activities.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that simulation exercises are incorporated in integrated planning, and handover notes are used consistently.	30 June 2024
4	UNMISS should establish forums to facilitate regular interaction between heads of field offices and chiefs of substantive sections in Mission Headquarters for effective coordination of operational priorities.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of regular interaction between heads of field offices and chiefs of substantive sections.	31 March 2024
5	UNMISS should: (a) prioritize the adoption of the iNeed portal in Kuajok and Rumbek field offices; and (b) issue guidelines to instruct users on keeping their profiles updated and properly using the iNeed portal.	Important	O	Receipt of sufficient evidence that the iNeed portal has been activated in Kuajok and Rumbek, and guidance issued to users on updating profiles and using the iNeed portal.	31 December 2024

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 UNMISS in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of field office operations in support of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁴ / Important ⁵	C/ O ⁶	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁷
6	UNMISS should reassess the need to provide free transportation for all contractor supplies to field offices on United Nations flights and take appropriate action.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of the reassessment of free transportation for contractor supplies to field offices and appropriate action.	30 July 2024

APPENDIX I

Management Response

UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Mission
in South Sudan



NATIONS UNIES

Mission des Nations Unies
en Soudan du Sud

Date: 12 December 2023

To: Byung-Kun Min
Director, Internal Audit Division
OIOS

From: Guang Cong 
Officer-in-Charge
United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

Subject: **Management response to the draft report of an audit of field office operations in support of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (Assignment No. AP2023-633-08)**

1. UNMISS gratefully acknowledges receipt of the draft audit response dated 28 November 2023.
2. UNMISS accepts the recommendations. An action plan for each recommendation is attached in the Appendix as requested.
3. I would like to thank OIOS for the continued support and consideration provided towards enhancing the work of UNMISS.

cc: Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative to the Secretary General and Head of Mission, UNMISS
Ms. Jutta Hinkkanen, OiC Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary General- RC-HC, UNMISS
Ms. Leda Limann, Chief of Staff, UNMISS
Ms. Victoria Browning, Director of Mission Support, UNMISS
Mr. Aggrey Kedogo, Chief Service Delivery, UNMISS
Ms. Daniela Wuerz, Chief Business Analytics and Compliance, UNMISS
Ms. Oanh-Mai Chung, Substantive Audit Focal Point, UNMISS
Mr. Saumendra Nath De, Chief Resident Auditor for UNMISS, Internal Audit Division, OIOS
Mr. Jeffrey Lin, Professional Practices Section, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

Management Response

Audit of field office operations in support of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNMISS should hold consultation sessions involving the Strategic Planning Unit, field offices and heads of sections to facilitate the field office work planning process.	Important	Yes	SPU	30 June 2025	The Mission takes note of the recommendation and will convene consultation sessions involving the Field Offices and Heads of Sections on planning processes.
2	UNMISS should reinforce procedures for all Mission components to consistently share information through the field-integrated operations centres.	Important	Yes	HOFO, Sector Commanders	30 June 2024	<p>The Mission notes the recommendation and will make active efforts to reiterate relevant procedures, as outlined in the Mission guidance to the HOFOs, Sector Commanders and FOPCs, to streamline relevant information through the FIOCs.</p> <p>As such, the recommendation will be included in the UNMISS SOP on Functioning of the UNMISS FIOCs, dated 1 February 2020, and the UNMISS SOP on Integrated Reporting to MHQ and UNHQ, dated 1 February 2020, both of which are currently under revision.</p> <p>Alongside, JOC sends out a six-monthly email refreshing all in the Mission's monitoring and reporting</p>

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.

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						<p>chain on the importance of consistent sharing of information.</p> <p>The Mission would like to however note that the Sector Commanders (G2) have a direct responsibility to collect information regarding Force Commander's Critical Information Requirements and report towards FHQ U2. This is the Force specific approach but is still embedded in the framework of the Mission Intelligence Group which is led by JMAC.</p> <p>This process is established to support analysis for mission leadership under the authority of the Chief of Staff through JMAC and by doing so it ensures the information integration within the Mission.</p>
3	UNMISS should enhance the effectiveness of integrated activities by: (a) incorporating simulation exercises during the field offices' integrated planning meetings; and (b) promoting the consistent use of handover notes to prepare team members to cover the absence of subject matter experts in integrated activities.	Important	Yes	HOFOS, Sector Commanders	30 June 2024	<p>The Mission notes the recommendation and commits to issuing clear instructions that promote the use of handover notes when subject matter experts are absent from integrated activities.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the Mission has emphasized incorporating progressively challenging simulation</p>

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						exercises into the agenda of the FO TTXs.
4	UNMISS should establish forums to facilitate regular interaction between heads of field offices and chiefs of substantive sections in Mission Headquarters for effective coordination of operational priorities.	Important	Yes	ODSRSG P ODSRSG RC/HC OCOS	31 March 2024	<p>The Mission notes the recommendation and will take the necessary measures to ensure that regular and ad hoc meetings between substantive section heads and HOFOS take place, as well as ensure regular forums are established between the HOFOS, section chiefs, RCO, humanitarian and development partners to promote the triple nexus approach.</p> <p>It is worth noting, as acknowledged in the OIOS audit, the Deputy SRSG/P's efforts in providing monthly briefings to update HOFOS on national political developments and discussing strategies for dealing with political and security developments at the subnational level. This monthly forum has been active since late 2020 and involves the heads of political pillar sections every alternate month. The minutes of these briefings are recorded by the ODSRSG-P and shared with all the participants.</p> <p>The ODSRSG RC/HC uses the DSRSG-P monthly meeting to</p>

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						<p>integrate issues from the protection pillar/RC/HC functions as necessary to the meeting. The minutes of these briefings are recorded by the ODSRSG and shared with all the participants.</p> <p>Additionally, the Deputy SRSG/P convenes ad-hoc coordination meetings with relevant heads of field offices to prevent and mitigate subnational violence. These meetings also include section chiefs, Force, UNPOL, humanitarian, and development partners.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Mission Chief of Staff holds monthly meetings with HoFOs and also convenes ad hoc thematic meetings with HoFOs. Recent such ad hoc meetings have been held on topics such as quick impact projects, protection of civilians, electoral assistance, temporary operating bases.</p>
5	UNMISS should: (a) prioritize the adoption of the iNeed portal in Kuajok and Rumbek field offices; and (b) issue guidelines to instruct users on keeping their profiles updated and properly using the iNeed portal.	Important	Yes	FAO Kuajok FAO Rumbek Chief FTS AO ODMS	31 December 2024	<p>The Mission accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>iNeed is operational in both Kuajok and Rumbek (screen shots of iNeed are being submitted to OIOS as evidence). Kuajok is fully utilizing</p>

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						<p>the system and additional training has been requested by Rumbek to ensure staff are fully trained in the use of the application.</p> <p>FTS and ODMS will work together to issue broadcasts to all staff to remind them to keep their profiles updated in iNeed and to use the platform for service requests.</p>
6	UNMISS should reassess the need to provide free transportation for all contractor supplies to field offices on United Nations flights and take appropriate action.	Important	Yes	Service Delivery/Welfare	30 July 2024	<p>The Mission accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>Service Delivery/Welfare will reassess the decision to provide free transport and advise on the appropriate course of action.</p>