



# **INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION**

## **REPORT 2024/019**

---

### **Audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan**

**UNMISS needed to strengthen emergency  
response preparedness by finalizing or  
updating its contingency plans and timely  
addressing the gaps identified in the  
scenario-based exercises**

**20 May 2024**

**Assignment No. AP2023-633-04**

# **Audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of emergency response preparedness in UNMISS. The audit covered the period from July 2021 to August 2023 and included: (a) emergency response and crisis management structures; (b) contingency planning; and (c) rehearsal of contingency plans and operational readiness assessments.

UNMISS established the requisite emergency response and crisis management structures to ensure an adequate response to crises. However, UNMISS did not finalize or update its contingency plans, ensure personnel mobile numbers were registered on the mass notification system and address the gaps identified in the scenario-based exercises in a timely manner.

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

- Work with other stakeholders to ensure all contingency plans are finalized or updated to incorporate emerging risks such as large influxes of returnees, refugees and internally displaced persons in Bor, Bentiu, Torit and Wau field offices and gaps identified in scenario-based exercises;
- Cascade and tailor its business continuity plan to the field offices to assure effective management of location-specific risks;
- Periodically remind personnel to register their mobile phone numbers on the mass notification system and reinvigorate its efforts to ensure personnel comply with mandatory radio checks;
- Collaborate with humanitarian partners to conduct a comprehensive review of all required tasks and develop implementation plans to ensure spill-over areas are ready to use in protecting civilians during crises; and
- Develop implementation and monitoring plans for after-action recommendations arising from scenario-based exercises.

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

# CONTENTS

I. BACKGROUND	1-2
II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	2-3
III. AUDIT RESULTS	3-11
A. Emergency response and crisis management structures	3-4
B. Contingency planning	5-8
C. Scenario-based exercises and operational readiness assessments	8-11
IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	11

ANNEX I      Status of audit recommendations

APPENDIX I   Management response

# Audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

## I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS).

2. UNMISS is required to respond to emergencies that pose a danger to its personnel, premises, assets, lives and civilian rights. Emergencies may result from several factors in the Missions' operating environment, such as rapidly deteriorating security due to armed conflict, as was the case in December 2013 and July 2016, and adverse climatic conditions, such as extended droughts and floods that have characterized the last four years. The human-caused and natural hazards in South Sudan resulted in serious security and humanitarian crises, which caused thousands of civilians to be internally displaced, thereby forcing them to seek refuge in Mission-designated protection of civilian (POC) sites and evacuation of staff out of the Mission area.

3. UNMISS established emergency response preparedness and crisis management structures composed of representatives from the military, police, substantive and support components and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1  
**Emergency response management structures and offices**

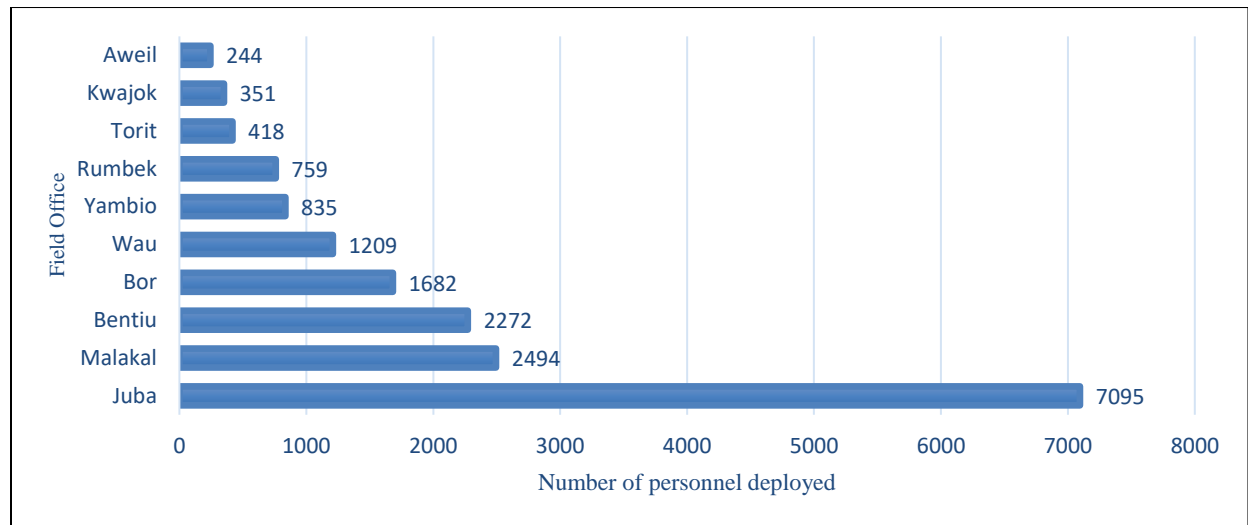
Structure/Office	Chair/Responsible official	Responsibility
Crisis Management Team (CMT)	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG)	To accelerate decision-making, issue crisis response strategic directions to Mission components, and coordinate and liaise with UNCT and other partners.
Operational Coordination Committee	Chief of Staff	To integrate and coordinate operational decision-making across the Mission components, develop options for early response and recommend actions in support of Special Representative of the Secretary-General's (SRSG's) priorities and Mission mandate.
Crisis Management Working Group (CMWG)/Technical Working Group <sup>1</sup>	Chief of Staff or their designate	To review the contingency plans to identify gaps, implement Crisis Management Team (CMT) and Operational Coordination Committee decisions, and coordinate and monitor scenario-based exercises and follow-up on implementation of after-action plans.
Office of Chief of Staff	Chief of Staff	To coordinate operational planning and ensuring the implementation of CMT decisions.
Centre Joint Operations Centre at Mission Headquarters and Field Integrated Operations Centres in field offices	Chief, Joint Operations Centre	To provide early warning notification, which includes informing senior management of an impending and ongoing crisis through daily situational and flash reports.
Joint Mission Analysis Centre	Chief, Joint Mission Analysis Centre	To support the CMT with regular forward-looking briefings, analyses and assessments.

<sup>1</sup> When there is no crisis, the Crisis Management Working Group operates as a Technical Working Group

4. Emergency response preparedness in UNMISS is governed by the United Nations Policy on Crisis Management and Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS), complemented by the UNMISS Crisis Management standard operating procedures and the Manual for integrated scenario-based exercises.

5. As of August 2023, the Mission personnel consisted of 1,907 international staff, 1,391 national staff, 168 individual contractors, 1,424 United Nations Police and 12,469 military troops. The deployment of Mission personnel is shown in figure I.

Figure I  
**Personnel deployment in UNMISS field offices as of August 2023**



Source: UNMISS staffing tables

6. Comments provided by UNMISS are incorporated in italics.

## II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of emergency response preparedness in UNMISS.

8. This audit was included in the 2023 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the reputational, financial, and operational risks that can result from inadequate emergency and crisis response preparedness.

9. OIOS conducted this audit from October to December 2023 and the audit covered the period from July 2021 to August 2023. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in emergency response preparedness, which included: (a) emergency response and crisis management structures; (b) contingency planning; and (c) scenario-based exercises and operational readiness assessments.

10. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel involved in emergency response preparedness to obtain better understanding of activities conducted to ensure adequate response and preparedness, (b) physical inspections of internally displaced persons spill-over areas in Juba to verify if the designated areas are ready for use in emergency situations, and (c) reviews of relevant documentation such as minutes of meetings, contingency plans, after-action reports for scenario-based exercises, and

operational readiness assessments reports to validate activities undertaken as part of emergency response preparedness.

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

### **III. AUDIT RESULTS**

#### **A. Emergency response and crisis management structures**

The emergency response structures worked adequately to promptly implement action points during a crisis

12. UNMISS established the requisite emergency response management structures, including the CMT, Operational Coordination Committee, CMWG and Technical Working Group with appropriate terms of reference in line with the policy on ORMS and the Mission's standard operating procedures. During the audit period, UNMISS only had one major crisis involving fighting in the Malakal protection of civilians (POC) site, during which the Mission CMT was activated. To resolve the crisis, the CMT chaired by the SRSG and consisting of relevant senior Mission managers and members of UNCT met 14 times between 8 June and 14 July 2023 and issued crisis response strategic decisions to Mission components and coordinated activities involving the UNCT in resolving the crisis. Similarly, the CMWG chaired by the Chief of Staff and consisting of relevant Mission components also met several times as required, supported the CMT in developing options and recommendations for emergency response and ensured the timely implementation of decisions.

13. OIOS assessments indicated that the emergency response structures worked adequately to promptly implement action points such as the identification of key government authorities and community leaders to influence the de-escalation of the conflict, reinforcement of the Formed Police Unit's capability, accounting for UNMISS staff, issuance of timely press statements on the situation, and expediting the case review and release of detainees.

14. The Operational Coordination Committee is responsible for making operational decisions across Mission components. However, it did not meet every week as required by its terms of reference. The Committee was required to meet 113 times, but only managed to meet 58 times (representing 51 percent) due to other Mission priorities. There were no meetings held for four months between August and November 2022. The Technical Working Group was also required to meet 113 times, but only managed to meet 53 times (representing 47 percent). Additionally, there were no meetings held for seven months from November 2022 to May 2023. Moreover, an average of 5 out of 16 standing members of the Working Group did not attend the meetings.

15. At the time of the audit, OIOS noted an improvement in the frequency of meetings held and several Committee and Working Group members attending the meetings. However, the meetings were generally irregular, and hence, there was a risk of ineffective integration and coordination of operational decision-making across Mission components, including ensuring that contingency plans are reviewed and rehearsed as required. UNMISS explained that the respective committees did not meet during certain periods because there were no crisis-related issues to be discussed. Weekly meetings were considered onerous, especially during periods of relative calm and during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mission agreed to revise the Committees' terms of reference. This revision would ensure meetings are outcome-focused and held regularly. Members will also be reminded of their obligation to attend meetings. Given the Missions' explanation and proposed action, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

## An adequate early warning mechanism was in place

16. United Nations Security Council resolution 2677(2023) and the Missions' early warning and response concept note require UNMISS to identify and deter potential threats or attacks on civilians by maintaining a mission-wide early warning and response system and proactively patrolling high-risk areas, such as internally displaced persons camps and POC sites, within available resources and capacity.

17. In line with the resolution, UNMISS military, police and substantive components conducted routine patrol activities as the primary medium of collecting emergency early warning and situational awareness information. Based on information collected during patrolling activities, the Joint Operations Centre prepared integrated daily and weekly situational reports for Mission senior management, covering political developments, situational updates, Mission operations and activities, and staff safety and security. These reports were circulated to the United Nations Headquarters, UNCT, and UNMISS substantive components. The Joint Mission Analysis Centre also prepared an early-warning matrix for Mission management, which analyzed the conflict trends and their implications for contingency planning and mandate implementation. OIOS analysis of 93 out of 791 integrated daily situational reports showed that Mission components timely and appropriately informed senior management about the political, security, economic and social developments in the country. In the case of the Malakal POC crisis, senior management was informed about the youth and internally displaced persons' mobilization activities and identified civic leaders who needed to be engaged to help resolve the crisis.

18. The information-gathering activities were often impeded by movement restrictions imposed by the government and the opposition forces on Mission patrolling activities. To address these restrictions, the Mission senior management regularly raised concerns about them in the High-Level Forum<sup>2</sup> meetings with senior host government officials.

19. A review of minutes of meetings held by the High-Level Forum during the audit period showed that movement restrictions were on the agenda in 7 of 10 meetings convened, and the engagement yielded positive results in facilitating more effective gathering of emergency early warning information. For example, the deliberations resulted in the signing of revised guidelines by UNMISS and the host government for operational-level coordination of the movement of UNMISS personnel in 2022. Also, the High-Level Forum, in its May 2023 meeting, resolved to conduct sensitization workshops for government security personnel to strengthen the utilization of the operational guidelines and to reduce security checkpoints along the Nile and Sobat rivers from 64 to 9 within three months. Furthermore, UNMISS established a Movement Restriction Working Group in April 2023 to streamline the reporting and resolution of movement restrictions of Mission personnel. Overall, the number of movement restrictions reduced from an average of 26 to 10 per month, but there were still monthly fluctuations, with August 2023 showing an upward swing to 37 access denials.

20. OIOS concluded that UNMISS was taking appropriate actions to ensure timely collection and sharing of emergency early warning, human rights violations and situational awareness information, thereby facilitating the Mission's POC interventions.

---

<sup>2</sup> The High-Level Forum was co-chaired by the host government Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General-Political and consisted of high-level officials from the government departments and UNMISS senior managers.

## B. Contingency planning

### Need to finalize and review contingency plans

21. The ORMS policy requires UNMISS to develop and maintain updated contingency plans to enhance preparedness in the core elements<sup>3</sup> of the framework. In addition, the SRSG's guidance on contingency planning requires Mission components to develop contingency plans for the POCs, high-level political engagements, and the enabling of continued humanitarian operations.

22. UNMISS components<sup>4</sup> prepared 76 contingency plans that covered all core ORMS elements and the SRSG's priorities for contingency planning. To ensure the plans' effectiveness and consider each field office's unique circumstances, some plans were developed specifically for each office. Other plans were developed for the Mission headquarters and stored by the Office of the Chief of Staff. However, 40 of the 76 plans (representing 53 per cent) were either not yet finalized and approved by senior management or were past their review dates, some by over two years, as shown in table 2. For instance, the communication and public information strategy had not been finalized, and the critical staff list, vital records and names of vendors outlined in the 2019 business continuity plan needed to be updated.

Table 2

#### **Breakdown of status of contingency plans as of 31 August 2023**

Status	Number	Per centage
Updated	36	47 %
Past review date	38	50 %
Not approved by management	2	3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100 %</b>

23. OIOS noted that some components did not update their contingency plans because they considered them no longer required by the Mission, without following a formal process of discarding plans. For instance, the Joint UNMISS/Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) Contingency Plans for Bor, Bentiu, Torit and Wau field offices of 2019 were not updated by the Protection, Transition and Reintegration Section based on the assumption that they were no longer needed after the POC sites were redesignated as internally displaced persons camps.

24. Some components, such as Safety and Security, Police, Military and the Medical Section developed location-specific contingency plans to effectively plan for risks specific to the field offices. However, the 2019 business continuity plan was developed from the Mission headquarters perspective and was not tailored to field office environments. Staff in the Office of Chief of Staff stated that location-specific business continuity plans would be developed after the Mission plan is reviewed and updated.

25. The above occurred because the Technical Working Group did not appropriately and regularly report to the Operational Coordination Committee and senior management on the status of the contingency plans. As a result, some contingency plans did not incorporate emerging risks to appropriately guide Mission personnel in responding to emergencies and to ensure prompt recovery from major disruptive events. This included the impact of the influx of over 373,000 returnees and refugees from Sudan in locations such as Bor, Bentiu, Kuajok and Aweil, persistent droughts and floods, upcoming national elections, and gaps identified during the scenario-based exercises.

<sup>3</sup> The ORMS elements include crisis management, safety and security of personnel, premises and assets, crisis communications, emergency medical support, information and communication technology resilience, business continuity, and support to Mission personnel and eligible family members.

<sup>4</sup> Mission components that prepared contingency plans include Chief of Staff, Civil Affairs, Communication and Public Information, Field Technology, Force, Human Resources, Joint Operations Centre, Medical, Mission Support, Police, Political Affairs, Protection Transition and Reintegration, Rule of Law and Security Institutions, and Security



**(1) UNMISS should update and finalize contingency plans to include emerging risks such as large influxes of returnees, refugees and internally displaced persons in Aweil, Bor, Bentiu, Kuajok, Torit and Wau field offices and address gaps identified in scenario-based exercises and have them approved by senior management.**

*UNMISS accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Technical Working Group would be tasked to work with lead sections to ensure contingency plans for all sections are updated to incorporate emerging risks and identified gaps and would coordinate the development of new contingency plans.*

**(2) UNMISS should cascade and tailor its business continuity plan to the field offices to ensure effective management of location-specific risks.**

*UNMISS accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it would ensure the effective development and oversight of location-specific business continuity strategies.*

#### Need to improve emergency preparedness

26. To ensure readiness to prevent, respond and recover from disruptive events, UNMISS maintained updated contact details of CMT, CMWG and Operational Coordination Committee members for ease of communication during crises. It also developed and tested the information and communication technology disaster recovery plan, promulgated the crisis management standard operating procedures, conducted evacuation drills and fire risk inspections, regularly reminded staff to update personal information, trained 951 personnel in security-related courses, and monitored the number of personnel in the Mission area. The Mission also furnished three conference rooms in different locations with communication equipment and installed standby power for CMT meetings during crises.

27. However, there were inadequacies in some aspects of emergency response preparedness, as outlined below:

(a) *Personal protective equipment (PPEs) was not appropriately distributed across the Mission*

28. Analysis of Umoja report showed that PPEs, such as fragmentation jackets and ballistic helmets that need to be used by personnel during road evacuation were not adequate. Out of 3,331 personnel<sup>5</sup>, only 573 (17%) were given Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs). Additionally, in 6 out of 10 field offices, there were 1,622 expired PPEs in stock or the custody of security personnel. The Safety and Security Section stated that although UNMISS procured 1,150 PPEs in 2023, there was still a shortage of 2,580 PPEs. However, a request to procure additional PPEs was under consideration by the Budget and Finance Section. Given the actions being taken by the Mission, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

(b) *Emergency communication preparedness measures were not fully effective*

29. UNMISS primarily used email, mass notification systems, and hand-held radios to communicate with its personnel during crises. However, out of 4,890 Mission personnel, 3,532 (71 per cent) had registered their mobile phone numbers on the mass notification system. Furthermore, the average number of personnel that complied with mandatory radio checks from July to October 2023 was 72 per cent against a target of 100 per cent. Although Juba had the highest personnel, it also had a lower-than-average compliance rate. Despite section chiefs receiving regular data from the Safety and Security Section to ensure that staff under their supervision are fully conversant with the use of hand-held radios, there was no

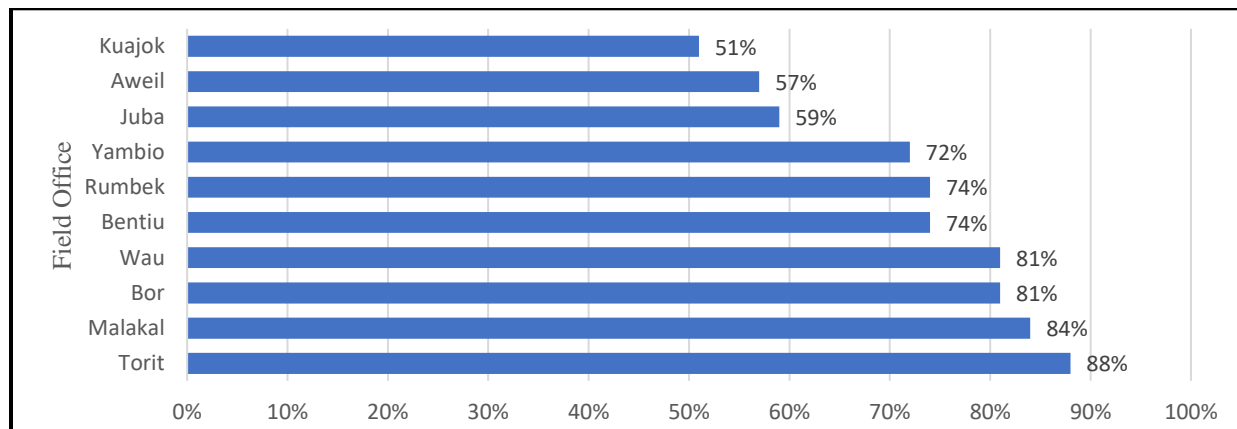
---

<sup>5</sup> This figure excludes 1,391 national staff and 168 national individual contractors that do not live in UNMISS camps and hence not issued with PPEs.

improvement in the statistics from an average of 72 per cent to the expected 100 per cent over the four months reviewed. Figure II below shows the percentage of personnel that conducted radio checks per field office.

Figure II

**The average percentage of personnel that conducted radio checks from July to October 2023**



Source: Security and Safety Section radio room statistics

30. The above occurred because of inadequate oversight. The Safety and Security Section did not issue periodic reminders to staff to register their mobile numbers on the mass notification system, as the last reminder prior to the audit was issued in October 2021. There was also no effective mechanism to enforce personnel compliance with the mandatory radio checks. As a result, UNMISS had an unmitigated risk of being unable to communicate effectively with personnel during a security crisis.

**(3) UNMISS should periodically remind personnel to register their mobile phone numbers on the mass notification system and reinvigorate its efforts to ensure personnel comply with mandatory radio checks.**

*UNMISS accepted recommendation 3 and stated that the Mission would ensure the Safety and Security Section issues monthly reminders for staff to sign up for the mass notification system to increase the rate of compliance. The Mission will also enhance its efforts to ensure personnel comply with mandatory radio checks, though 100 per cent compliance will be challenging due to staff turnover.*

Comprehensive and urgent actions are needed to ensure the spill-over areas are ready to use in protecting civilians during crises

31. The Mission’s mandate and the SRSG’s priorities for Mission contingency planning require UNMISS to protect civilians exposed to a credible threat of physical violence at the POC sites in Malakal, redesignated internally displaced persons’ sites, and pre-identified spill-over areas, within existing capacity and resources. In response, UNMISS developed the Joint UNMISS/CCCM cluster contingency plans for Juba and Malakal.

32. OIOS review of the POC-related contingency plans, interviews with staff of the Protection, Transition and Reintegration Section responsible for leading the Mission’s POC efforts, and physical inspection of the spill-over areas at United Nations House and Tomping camps noted the following:

- (a) The spill-over area in Tomping, intended to hold about 5,000 internally displaced persons who might seek UNMISS protection during a crisis, was not ready for use for over a year. This was

because about 25 per cent of the area was covered by garbage collected from the adjacent drainage and overgrown grass, and there was no perimeter security fence.

- (b) All medical supplies prepositioned by various humanitarian organizations at the Tomping spill-over area had expired. There were shortfalls in non-medical materials such as tents, buckets and garbage bags. Also, UNMISS did not adequately coordinate with the humanitarian organizations to preposition medical and non-medical materials at the United Nations House spill-over area for immediate use by UNMISS staff to support the physical well-being of the internally displaced persons in an emergency until the humanitarian workers could have access to the spill-over area.
- (c) A humanitarian organization designated to lead humanitarian response efforts at the United Nations House spill-over area ceased operations in South Sudan in March 2023 and had not been replaced by the CCCM cluster at the time of the audit.
- (d) The training of 60 police and military volunteers to assist humanitarian personnel in managing the spill-over areas in Juba was initially planned for May 2023 but had not been conducted at the time of the audit.
- (e) The spill-over area in Malakal had not been identified. As a result, during the June 2023 crisis in the Malakal POC site, about 7,000 internally displaced persons who fled the POC site camped on the road between the POC site and the humanitarian hub, blocking access to the humanitarian hub.

33. The above gaps occurred because relevant components in UNMISS, such as heads of field offices, Mission Support Division, and Protection, Transition and Reintegration Section had not adequately prioritized the optimal preparation of spill-over areas and incidental activities. As a result, UNMISS was not adequately prepared to support the physical protection of internally displaced persons in the spill-over areas in accordance with its mandate.

**(4) UNMISS, in liaison with humanitarian partners, should conduct a comprehensive review of all required tasks and develop implementation plans to ensure spill-over areas are ready to use in protecting civilians during crises.**

*UNMISS accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Mission would collaborate with relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations to preposition humanitarian supplies within their capacities considering the funding gaps and consequent reduction in humanitarian operations that has negatively affected the seamless replenishment of prepositioned humanitarian aid supplies across the country including the spill-over areas at Tomping and United Nations House. UNMISS also undertook to ensure spill-over areas in Tomping and United Nations House are ready for use in the event of an influx of internally displaced persons.*

## **C. Scenario-based exercises and operational readiness assessments**

UNMISS regularly conducted integrated scenario-based exercises

34. UNMISS planned and conducted 69 integrated scenario-based exercises to assess the Mission's preparedness to respond to various emergencies, as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3

**Number and nature of integrated exercises conducted between July 2021 and June 2023**

Nature of exercise	Table-top exercises	Field-based exercises	Total
Crisis Management Team	5	0	5
Crisis Management Working Group	4	0	4
Field offices	42	16	58
Rehearsal of concept drill for road evacuation	1	0	1
Stress test for Force casualty evacuation	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>69</b>

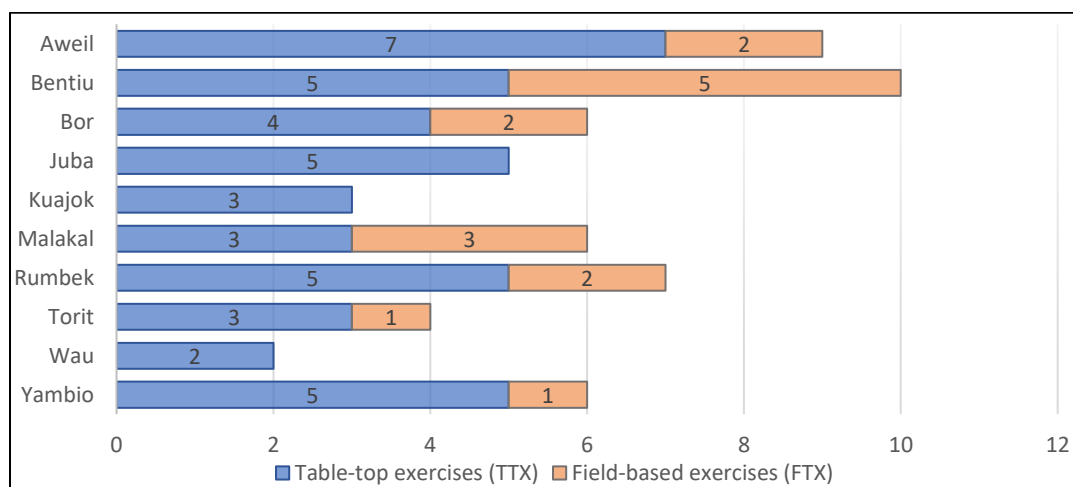
Source : Joint Operations Centre database

35. However, OIOS review of the plans and after-action reports for the exercises noted the following weakness:

- (a) Six field offices did not conduct either table-top or field-based integrated scenario-based exercises during the period July to December 2022, and one field office did not conduct the integrated exercises during the period January to June 2023. This was contrary to the guidance of the Office of the Chief of Staff, which requires all field offices to conduct an integrated scenario-based exercise every six months.
- (b) Contrary to the manual for integrated scenario-based exercises, table-top exercises were not always followed by field-based exercises to assess the feasibility of the recommendations and lessons learned. As shown in figure III below, three field offices did not conduct any field-based exercises, while five field offices conducted more table-top than field-based exercises.

Figure III

**Type of integrated scenario-based exercises per field office between July 2021 and June 2023**



Source: JOC database of scenario-based exercises

36. UNMISS attributed the above shortfalls to: (a) the security situation in Bor and Malakal, (b) the need to perfect the table-top exercises before field-based exercises could be conducted, and (c) delayed troop rotation exercises due to limited air assets following the suspension of 11 rotary aircraft in September 2022 based on to safety concerns. The Aviation Section advised that the air asset fleet was fully restored in March 2024. UNMISS also stated that it conducted the highest number of scenario-based exercises among the four high risk missions identified in the Santos Cruz report. The Mission further stated that it will continue conducting routine integrated scenario-based exercises both at Mission Headquarters and the field

offices and will prioritize field-based exercises. Based on the Mission explanation and planned action, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

Need to strengthen monitoring and implementation of after-action recommendations from scenario-based exercises

37. There were delays in implementing the lessons learned and recommendations raised in the after-action reports relating to the scenario-based exercises. For instance, the average resolution time for 16 recommendations in the after-action reports for three CMT table-top exercises conducted in 2021 was 388 days. Four of the 16 action points were not fully resolved as of September 2023, including developing a comprehensive road evacuation plan and reviewing all contingency plans.

38. There was also no evidence of implementing recommendations from the field office-led exercises because implementation plans were not systematically developed, and there were no target dates, names of responsible officials, or systematic monitoring of implementation status. For example, implementation plans were only developed for 16 (representing 28 per cent) of 58 field office exercises, and only 7 of the 16 implementation plans identified the responsible sections and the target implementation date. Furthermore, the after-action reports showed repetitive recommendations that had not been addressed, including the need for identification cards for dependents of national staff and more training in basic first aid, safe and secure approaches in field environments, and medical evacuation 9-Liner. Additionally, recommendations that required the involvement of Mission headquarters were reported to the Operational Coordination Committee through the semi-annual briefings of the Joint Operations Centre; however, these recommendations were not systematically followed up on to resolve the issue.

39. The delays in implementing recommendations and the non-development of scenario-based exercises after-action implementation plans could be attributed to inadequate management oversight. As a result, the Mission components may not be adequately prepared to respond in a cohesive manner to emergencies.

**(5) UNMISS should develop implementation and monitoring plans for after-action recommendations resulting from the integrated scenario-based exercises, including indication of start and target completion dates and names of responsible officials or sections.**

*UNMISS accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it was already implementing the recommendation. All field offices have started utilizing the new after-action report template that outlines measures that need to be implemented, identifies the lead section or official, target start and completion dates. UNMISS further stated that the after-action recommendations are tracked/monitored on a quarterly basis by Joint Operations Centre through the Field Integrated Operations Centre.*

Need to enhance the operational readiness of battalions and formed police units

40. The Force Commander's annual training directives outline the number and type of scenario-based exercises battalions must complete. Additionally, the battalion commanders are required to conduct self-assessments, and the Force Evaluation Cell should conduct two operational readiness assurance assessments of the battalions during their tenure in the Mission. Similarly, the Formed Police Units Coordination Office is required to: (a) continuously review the operational and logistical ability of the Units to perform mandated tasks; and (b) conduct monthly operational readiness inspections, quick reaction team inspections, and other mandatory training.

41. OIOS review of training and operational readiness-related activities indicated the following shortfalls:

- (a) 16 (representing 67 per cent) of 24 required military scenario-based exercises<sup>6</sup> were conducted during the period of 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. Among the conducted exercise, nine exercises were delayed by an average of 93 days from their planned dates.
- (b) 569 (representing 71 per cent) of the 803 planned operational readiness activities were conducted for all four Formed Police Units deployed in Juba, Bentiu and Malakal from July 2021 to August 2023, as shown in table 4.

Table 4  
**FPU operational readiness activities between July 2021 and August 2023**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Conducted</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Operational readiness inspections	104	73	70 %
Quick reaction team inspections	358	213	59 %
Directive of the use of force	149	112	75 %
Public order management and crowd control	192	171	89 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>71 %</b>

42. In addition, the Formed Police Units’ Coordination Office only conducted 2 of the 16 mandatory shooting range training sessions. The Force headquarters and Coordination Office attributed this to disruptions caused by the timing of troop and police rotations, operational priorities, and lack of shooting range in Bentiu. However, OIOS noted that there was inadequate planning and execution of operational readiness-related activities as the Mission did not amend the number of planned activities considering operational challenges faced. As a result, there is an unmitigated risk that military and police operational capability shortfalls may not be identified and resolved timely, thus undermining their ability to effectively respond to emergencies. In a previous audit of military patrolling activities (report no. 2023-058, issued on 16 November 2023), OIOS recommended that UNMISS address weaknesses in the planning and conduct of battalions’ self-assessments and operational readiness assessments. UNMISS was in the process of implementing the recommendation at the time of this report.

43. UNMISS agreed that going forward, the Mission will carefully revise, juxtapose and adjust planned operational readiness activities to ensure they are appropriately prioritized and balanced between operational readiness exercises and real-time operational engagements and challenges. Based on the planned actions, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

#### **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

---

<sup>6</sup> UNMISS Force Commander’s Training Directive for the period July 2022 to June 2023, required the military battalions to complete 24 trainings, broken down into six sectors and Force Headquarters: 7- table-top exercise (TTX), 7-command post exercise (CPX), 7-field training exercise (FTX) for infantry battalions, and 3-communication exercise (COMMEX) at Force Headquarters)

## STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>7</sup> / Important <sup>8</sup>	C/ O <sup>9</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>10</sup>
1	UNMISS should update and finalize contingency plans to include emerging risks such as large influxes of returnees, refugees and internally displaced persons in Aweil, Bor, Bentiu, Kuajok, Torit and Wau field offices and address gaps identified in scenario-based exercises and have them approved by senior management.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that contingency plans are either updated, finalized or developed and incorporate emerging risks and gaps identified in scenario-based exercises.	31 October 2024
2	UNMISS should cascade and tailor its business continuity plan to the field offices to ensure effective management of location-specific risks.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of development of location specific business continuity plans.	31 December 2024
3	UNMISS should periodically remind personnel to register their mobile phone numbers on the mass notification system and reinvigorate its efforts to ensure personnel comply with mandatory radio checks.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that personnel are reminded to register their phone numbers on the mass notification system and improved radio checks statistics.	30 June 2024
4	UNMISS, in liaison with humanitarian partners, should conduct a comprehensive review of all required tasks and develop implementation plans to ensure spill-over areas are ready to use in protecting civilians during crises.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of engagement with humanitarian partners to review all required tasks and development of implementation plans aimed at ensuring spill-over areas are ready to use to protect civilians.	31 July 2024
5	UNMISS should develop implementation and monitoring plans for after-action recommendations resulting from the integrated scenario-based exercises, including indication of start and target completion dates and names of responsible officials or sections.	Important	O	Receipt evidence of quarterly monitoring and tracking of after-action recommendations from scenario-based exercises.	31 July 2024

<sup>7</sup> Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

<sup>8</sup> Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

<sup>9</sup> Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

<sup>10</sup> Date provided by UNMISS in response to recommendations. [Insert "Implemented" where recommendation is closed; (implementation date) given by the client.]

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**



**UNITED NATIONS**

United Nations Mission  
in South Sudan

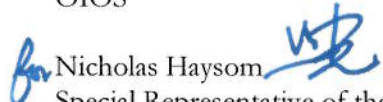


**NATIONS UNIES**

Mission des Nations Unies  
en Soudan du Sud

Date: 13 May 2024

To: Byung-Kun Min,  
Director,  
Peacekeeping Audit Service  
OIOS

From:  Nicholas Haysom  
Special Representative of the Secretary-General  
United Nations Mission in the Republic of South  
Sudan

Subject: **Management Response to the draft report of an Audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (Assignment No. AP2023-633-04)**

1. UNMISS gratefully acknowledges receipt of the detailed results of the audit dated 29 April 2024.
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. Guang Cong, Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary General- Political, 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. Jeffrey Lin, Professional Practices Section, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

## Management Response

## Audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNMISS should update and finalize contingency plans to include emerging risks such as large influxes of returnees, refugees and internally displaced persons in Aweil, Bor, Bentiu, Kuajok, Torit and Wau field offices and address gaps identified in scenario-based exercises and have them approved by senior management.	Important	Yes	Aweil FO Bor FO Bentiu FO Kuajok FO	31 October 2024	The Mission accepts the recommendation. The Mission will ensure that contingency plans of all sections are updated and incorporate emerging risks and identified gaps. The Technical Working Group platform will review plans and work with lead sections who will oversee the update, coordination and development of new contingency plans.
2	UNMISS should cascade and tailor its business continuity plan to the field offices to ensure effective management of location-specific risks.	Important	Yes	OCOS	31 December 2024	The Mission accepts the recommendation and will ensure the effective development and oversight of location-specific business continuity strategies.
3	UNMISS should periodically remind personnel to register their mobile phone numbers on the mass notification system and reinvigorate its efforts to ensure personnel comply with mandatory radio checks.	Important	Yes	Safety and Security	30 June 2024	The Mission accepts the recommendation but would like to clarify that regular reminders to register with the mass notification system are circulated.  However, the Mission will ensure that UNDSS issues monthly reminders for staff to sign up to the mass

<sup>1</sup> Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

<sup>2</sup> Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

## Management Response

## Audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						notification system to increase the rate of compliance. The Mission accepts to enhance its efforts to ensure personnel comply with mandatory radio checks. The Mission expects the recommendation to continue due to the turnover of staff members.
4	UNMISS in liaison with humanitarian partners should conduct a comprehensive review of all required tasks and develop implementation plans to ensure spill-over areas are ready to use in protecting civilians during crises.	Important	Yes	PTR	31 July 2024	<p>The Mission takes note of this recommendation but would like to clarify that the funding gaps and consequent reduction in humanitarian operations by UN agencies and NGOs has affected the seamless replenishment of prepositioned humanitarian aid supplies across the country including the spill over areas at Tongping and UN House.</p> <p>The Mission will continue to collaborate with the relevant UN AFPs to preposition humanitarian supplies, within their capacities, and ensure spill-over areas in Tongping and UN House are ready in the event of an influx of IDPs.</p>
5	UNMISS should develop implementation and monitoring plans for after-action recommendations resulting from the integrated scenario-based exercises, including indication of start and target	Important	Yes	JOC	31 July 2024	<p>The Mission accepts this recommendation and already implementing it.</p> <p>UNMISS conducts the highest number of scenario-based exercises</p>

Management Response

Audit of emergency response preparedness in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	completion dates and names of responsible officials or sections.					<p>among the four high risk Missions identified in the Santos Cruz report. The Mission will continue conducting routine integrated scenario-based exercises both at Mission HQ and the field offices.</p> <p>The UNMISS Manual on Scenario Based Exercise developed a standardized AAR template. This includes an improvement plan that outlines measures that need to be implemented, identification of the lead and is timebound with target start and completion dates.</p> <p>The Mission would like to emphasize that all FOs have started utilizing the new AAR template with a tracking/monitoring system established by JOC through the FIOCs on a tri-monthly basis.</p>