



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2025/036

Audit of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

**There were some important gaps that the
Mission needed to address to enhance the
efficiency and effectiveness of its support
activities for disarmament, demobilization
and reintegration programme**

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Audit of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Mission's DDR activities in supporting the national DDR programme. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2024 and included: (a) planning and monitoring, (b) support to the national DDR programme, and (c) reporting and evaluation of support to the national DDR programme.

MINUSCA, in conjunction with other stakeholders, supported the Government of the Central African Republic to implement the national DDR programme by providing technical, financial, security and logistical support. However, there were some important gaps that affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the support activities. MINUSCA had not issued guidelines that would ensure it provided support to the national DDR programme in a consistent and timely manner. The Mission had not implemented adequate measures to reduce the stockpiling of weapons that had been recovered outside the national DDR programme. In addition, the Mission did not consistently conduct human rights due diligence assessments prior to providing support to non-United Nations security forces that were involved in disarmament and demobilization operations. There were only limited communication and outreach activities.

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

- Finalize guidelines for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration core support activities.
- Take measures to enable the Mission to independently verify the completeness and accuracy of the data on ex-combatants processed, and payments made to them.
- Ensure Government entities' adherence to the requirement of providing periodic reports on materials donated in support of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.
- Conduct periodic counts of weapons and ammunitions collected from disarmament and demobilization activities and take actions to hand over to the Government weapons collected from all disarmament exercises.
- Take measures to ensure that the human rights due diligence assessments are conducted prior to providing support to the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.
- Develop an effective communication and outreach plan to increase awareness of the local population and participation by armed groups, in the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

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

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Audit of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

2. The United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2659 (2022), 2709 (2023) and 2759 (2024) mandated MINUSCA to support the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR)¹ programme of the Government of Central African Republic (Government). Specifically, MINUSCA was required to support the Government to:

- a) Implement an inclusive and gender-sensitive programme for DDR, repatriate foreign elements that were members of armed groups and ensure the separation of children;
- b) Develop and implement Community Violence Reduction (CVR) programmes for members of armed groups including those not eligible to participate in the national DDR programme;
- c) Implement a national plan for the integration of eligible ex-combatants into the national security and defence forces; and
- d) coordinate the support provided by multilateral and bilateral partners for the reintegration of eligible and vetted ex-combatants. The MINUSCA DDR Section is responsible for implementing these aspects of the MINUSCA mandate.

3. The Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation held in May 2015 resulted in the transitional government and armed groups signing the Bangui Agreement on the principles of DDR, and integration into the uniformed state forces of the Central African Republic. The agreement outlined the criteria for armed groups to be considered eligible for the national DDR programme. This eligibility criteria was reiterated in the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR) of February 2019 which was signed by the Government and 14 armed groups. Nine of the 14 armed groups that were signatories to the APPR had been dissolved as of the time of audit.

4. The oversight and coordination mechanism for activities in support of the national DDR is provided through two external committees comprising the: (i) Strategic Committee on DDRR, security sector reforms and national reconciliation (DDRR/RSS/RN), which is the political decision-making body for DDRR chaired by the Head of State, with representation from the government, relevant national institutions, armed groups and international partners. The Strategic Committee also provides oversight on the implementation of the national DDR programme; and (ii) Technical Committee on DDRR/RSS/RN chaired by the Minister of DDRR and APPR follow up, with representation from Government Ministries, UEPNDDRR², MINUSCA and international partners. This Committee prepares the meetings of the Strategic Committee

¹ The United Nations uses the concept and abbreviation DDR as an all-inclusive term that includes related activities, such as repatriation, rehabilitation and reconciliation, that aim to achieve sustainable reintegration (Integrated DDR Standards 1.10)

² UEPNDDRR (Unité d'Exécution du programme national de désarmement, démobilisation, réintégration et rapatriement) is responsible for implementing the national DDR programme on behalf of the Government

by proposing decisions and recommendations, and integrates the recommendations of the Strategic Committee into the development of the national DDR programme strategies.

5. Between 1 July 2022 and 31 December 2024, MINUSCA supported UEPNDDRR to deploy 36 mobile teams to conduct disarmament and demobilization (DD) operations in 25 locations in the country. These mobile teams processed 1,181 ex-combatants (including 120 women) out of a projected number of 7,000 (including 490 women) from 10 armed groups who surrendered various weapons of war, including: 1,060 military grade weapons, 44,545 rounds of ammunition, 60 grenades, and 4 rockets.

6. MINUSCA DDR activities are guided by the DDR national strategy, framework of the national DDR programme, Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) and MINUSCA standard operating procedures on management of weapons, ammunition and explosives received during DDR and CVR activities (SOP on management of weapons and ammunitions).

7. The MINUSCA DDR Section is headed by a Chief at the D-1 level, who reports to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Political. In the fiscal year 2023/24, the section had 29 approved posts consisting of 16 international and 5 national staff and 8 United Nations volunteers. The DDR Section is based in Bangui and has staff in seven field locations including Birao, Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, Kaga Bandoro, Ndele and Obo.

8. The programmatic budget for the DDR Section to support the national DDR programme was \$500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. MINUSCA also administered trust funds comprising \$3.5 million for the period 16 December 2016 to 30 June 2023, and \$250,000 for the period 7 July 2023 to 31 July 2025. These funds were solely used to support DD operations, including payment of travel allowances for members of the UEPNDDRR mobile teams.

9. MINUSCA used various systems to record data on activities implemented in support of the national DDR programme including: (i) Umoja which recorded data on utilization of funds issued to and expenditures incurred by UEPNDDRR; (ii) the United States Assistance Management System (SAMS) Domestic system to report on the utilization of trust funds; and (iii) Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to record the number of ex-combatants disarmed and demobilized, and weapons and ammunitions collected from ex-combatants.

10. Comments provided by MINUSCA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

11. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Mission's DDR activities in supporting the national DDR programme.

12. This audit was included in the 2024 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the importance of the Mission's DDR activities in achieving its mandate of supporting the national DDR programme.

13. OIOS conducted this audit from November 2024 to March 2025. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2024. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks areas in the DDR activities, which included: (a) planning and monitoring; (b) support to the national DDR programme; and (c) reporting and evaluation of support to the national DDR programme.

14. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel involved in the implementation of the DDR activities; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) assessment of the data management

systems; (d) analytical review of data; and (e) field visits to Bria, Bouar and Kaga Bandoro to review DDR activities implemented in these locations.

15. To assess the reliability of data pertaining to DDR activities, OIOS: (a) reviewed related documentation, including master files maintained in Microsoft Excel files for ex-combatants, weapons and ammunitions, and the cash journal; (b) interviewed MINUSCA DDR personnel who maintained these data; (c) reviewed data on the cash advances to, and expenditure reports received from UEPNDDRR and recorded in Umoja; and (d) traced a random sample of data to source documents, including disarmament certificates that were prepared at the DD sites, and supporting documents for expenditures incurred by UEPNDDRR. Based on the review, OIOS determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of addressing the audit objectives.

16. The audit was conducted in accordance with the Global Internal Audit Standards.

17. The audit did not include the CVR programme which was covered in a separate OIOS audit (audit of CVR projects in MINUSCA, Report number 2022/049). All recommendations in that audit have been implemented and closed.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Planning and monitoring

MINUSCA implemented mechanisms to plan and coordinate its support to the national DDR programme

18. The DDR Section prepared annual work plans which outlined the various activities to be implemented by the Section in line with the Mission plan. The DDR section collaborated with the host government, United Nations Country Team and international partners for its support to the implementation of the national DDR programme. The provision of support included: (a) technical support for the organization and planning of DD operations and advocacy with armed groups; (b) financial support for the deployment of mobile teams to conduct DD operations and payment of transport and reinsertion allowances to demobilized combatants during the DD phase; (c) security for DD operations, with support from MINUSCA Force in conjunction with the national security and defence forces, and providing escorts for DD-related movements/travel; and (d) logistical support in the form of air transportation of UEPNDDRR personnel, their equipment and demobilization and reinsertion kits to 15 DD sites/locations that were not accessible by road.

19. The DDR Section attended meetings of the Strategic Committee and Technical Committee to discuss issues affecting the implementation of the national DDR programme. Additionally, the DDR Section attended various meetings at the Mission level, including those of the Political pillar, the Mission Senior Management Group for protection, and the protection working group. During these meetings, the support provided by the Mission to the national DDR programme, and action points arising from the Mission's Senior Leadership Team meetings were discussed.

The Mission was addressing the challenges in implementation of the programme

20. The DDR Section was required to develop a plan, define realistic performance indicators and targets and monitor the progress. A review of the performance reports for fiscal years 2022/23 and 2023/24 for activities related to supporting the national DDR programme indicated that the Mission did not achieve the following targets:

- Out of 1,000 ex-combatants that were eligible to be disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated on a yearly basis, only 351 (35 per cent), and 226 (23 per cent) were disarmed in 2022/23 and 2023/24 respectively; and
- Of the 10 annually planned vetting exercises only six were conducted to support the integration of armed groups into the national defence and security forces in the fiscal year 2022/23 and only one was completed in the fiscal year 2023/24.

21. The Mission attributed the low implementation to various external factors including: the absence of reliable lists of eligible combatants, lack of commitment by leaders of armed groups to the DDR process; an increase in parallel disarmament operations conducted by national defense forces and other security personnel outside the framework of the national DDR programme; and the Government submitting to MINUSCA a low number of requests for vetting of ex-combatants.

22. To address some of these challenges, the SRSB, during the tenth session of the Strategic Committee held on 19 September 2024, reiterated the need for all parties to adhere to the national DDR programme and discouraged the continuation of parallel disarmament exercises as these eroded the gains achieved by the formal DDR process. Further, the SRSB stated that the Mission would only support operations that were carried out within the framework of the national DDR programme. In view of these constraints and MINUSCA's initiatives, OIOS is not making a recommendation.

B. Support to the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme

Support to the Government in implementing the national DDR programme needed to be enhanced

23. During the period under review, the Mission received 36 requests from UEPNDDRR to support mobile teams. OIOS reviewed a sample of 30 of these requests which included 25 requests to support DD operations and five requests to support payment of the second and/or third instalments of the demobilization and reinsertion allowances. OIOS review indicated that the Mission implemented mechanisms to enable it to provide the required support. However, the following gaps were identified in the implementation of activities.

(a) Guidelines for the implementation of the Mission DDR support activities were not finalized

24. OIOS noted that the support activities have been provided without formal guidelines or standard operating procedures. For example, there were no guidelines on the processing of requests from UEPNDDRR, and the Mission had not finalized guidelines on the handling of combatants who surrendered directly to the Mission's TOBs outside the DDR process. This increased the risks of inconsistent implementation, delays, and lack of accountability in the provision of the support activities. These guidelines might include the eligibility criteria and the procedures to be implemented to mitigate the risks of accepting combatants with a record of grave violations of international human rights or refugees' laws.

(1) MINUSCA should finalize guidelines for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration core support activities, including procedures for handling combatants who surrendered at the Mission's Temporary Operating Bases, and procedures for processing requests for support from the host government.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Mission would prioritize formalizing the existing draft guidelines as a more immediate solution to effectively address the handling of combatants

who surrendered at the Mission's Temporary Operating Bases. Further, the Office of Chief of Staff would consider preparing guidelines on the handling of requests for support from the host government.

(b) Lists with names of combatants were not included in the requests for assistance from UEPNDDRR

25. The Bangui agreement requires armed groups, prior to commencement of disarmament operations, to provide lists of their eligible elements detailing the identity and armaments associated with the combatants, and lists of the armament and equipment to be returned.

26. However, OIOS review noted that requests from UEPNDDRR did not include lists with names of combatants that were targeted to be disarmed and demobilized during the respective DD operations. In the absence of these lists, the Mission could not ascertain the reasonableness, accuracy and completeness of ex-combatants that were processed through the DD operations, and verify the accuracy of payments made to them, resulting in an unmitigated risk of misappropriation of resources.

(2) MINUSCA should ensure that names of combatants targeted to undergo disarmament and demobilization mechanisms are included in the requests for assistance to enable the Mission to verify the completeness and accuracy of elements that have been processed and payments made and explain any deviation from the initial list.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Mission would obtain lists of combatants from UEPNDDRR prior to commencement of the disarmament and demobilization operations and reconcile them with the final lists of ex-combatants that have completed the disarmament and demobilization operations to identify and report any deviations. In that regard, through a memorandum sent to the Chef de cabinet of the President of the host country on 1 August 2025, the SRSG informed the host country that MINUSCA would continue supporting the DD operations, but that this support would only be provided if provisional lists of combatants and related weapons were submitted to the Mission prior to commencement of the operations.

(c) The utilization of reinsertion kits handed over to the Government was not consistently monitored

27. The handover documents for materials issued by the Mission to the Government require the receiving entity to establish an inventory of the equipment/items provided, regularly update the inventory, and share this information with MINUSCA on a quarterly basis from the date of the handover document.

28. OIOS review of handover documents indicated that in October 2023, the Mission donated to UEPNDDRR assorted items that were to be included in reinsertion kits (including clothing, utensils and cutlery, and hygiene items) for distribution to 2,700 ex-combatants during the DD operations. These also included items of clothing and shoes specifically targeted for an estimated 250 women ex-combatants. However, the Mission did not receive quarterly inventory reports on the utilization of the reinsertion kits from the Government. As a result, there was an unmitigated risk that the reinsertion kits may not have been issued to ex-combatants during DD operations as intended.

(3) MINUSCA should establish a mechanism for monitoring Government entities' adherence to the requirement of providing periodic reports on materials donated in support of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, to ensure accountability.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it would request reports on donated items to be made available.

- (d) Procedures for the management of weapons and ammunition collected from ex-combatants needed to be enhanced

29. The strategy for the national DDR programme requires MINUSCA to store and secure weapons recovered through the disarmament process pending a political decision on their final destination. The SOP on management of weapons and ammunitions defined procedures the Mission needed to implement to ensure the maintenance of adequate records on weapons and ammunition, and to safeguard their physical security during storage and transportation. As of 12 February 2025, 3,847 weapons, 186,880 ammunitions, 1,586 grenades and 329 rockets had been recovered since the inception of the national DDR programme and handed over to MINUSCA. The Mission provided containers that were located in military contingent camps for the storage of weapons and ammunitions recovered through the national DDR and CVR programmes in Bangui, Bria, Bouar and Kaga Bandoro. Staff of the DDR Section maintained custody of the keys to these containers.

30. OIOS noted that the consolidated master listing of weapons and ammunitions centrally maintained by the DDR Section was not updated properly to allow the management to make informed decisions on the ammunitions under the custody of the Mission. For example:

- The master listing of weapons and ammunitions did not contain sufficient detail to track the movement of weapons and ammunitions, including dates when they were dispatched from the DD sites to the central storage in Bangui. This increased the risk that the Mission would not be able to adequately track the weapons in transit.
- Similarly, the master listing of weapons and ammunitions did not record: 3 weapons that had been recovered from DD operations conducted in Sam Ouandja by UEPNDDRR; and 380 weapons of war that had been collected under the national DDR programme and handed over to the host government on 24 May 2024.

31. Furthermore, OIOS visits to the weapons and ammunition storage facilities in Bria, Bouar and Kaga Bandoro indicated that in addition to hunting/artisanal/traditional weapons, the Mission held assorted weapons of war which had been surrendered by ex-combatants outside the national DDR programme and had been in the Mission's custody for an undetermined period of time. These included 104 weapons in Bria, 15 weapons in Bouar and 17 weapons and 298 ammunition in Kaga Bandoro. The DDR Section indicated that these weapons had been recovered from various disarmament exercises including the CVR programme, the pre-DDR phase that was conducted prior to commencement of the national DDR programme in 2019 and during protection of civilian patrols conducted by the Force. Yet, the Mission had not initiated actions to reduce stock piling and ensure that minimal levels were maintained in these locations by transferring the weapons to the Government.

32. This resulted as the Mission had not implemented a mechanism to monitor the ammunition stored including periodic physical counts. The Mission stated that it had only limited expertise to support the effective management of adequate records on weapons and ammunitions. In March 2025, the Mission Chief of Staff invited the DDR Section to attend a meeting of the Mission's Weapons and Ammunition Advisory Board which discussed how to reduce the weapons recovered from various DDR operations.

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| <p>(4) MINUSCA should coordinate amongst the relevant Mission components to: (i) conduct periodic counts of weapons and ammunitions collected from disarmament and demobilization activities in all its locations, (ii) timely update its records on weapons and ammunitions; and (iii) take actions to hand over to the Government weapons collected from all disarmament exercises.</p> |
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MINUSCA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it would address this recommendation through the existing Weapons and Ammunitions Advisory Board structure. MINUSCA noted that weapons were counted and registered by UEPNDDRR armorers as they were the property of the Government of the Central African Republic. These weapons were temporarily stored at field locations. The Microsoft Excel files used by the DDR Section for record keeping as the master files were an exact replica of the national database and were accurate and regularly updated. Also, weapons were transported to Bangui for formal handover by UEPNDDRR to the Ministry of Defense.

- (e) HRDD assessments were not consistently conducted prior to providing support to non-United Nations security forces

33. MINUSCA SOPs on implementation of the United Nations HRDD Policy (HRDDP) on support to non-United Nations security forces required the Mission to carry out a risk assessment before providing support to ensure that support was not given to individuals that had committed grave violations of international, and/or human rights laws. The support activities included financial and logistical support, including air and road transportation.

34. MINUSCA established a HRDDP Secretariat³ to, among other roles, assess the potential risks involved in providing the requested support and conduct HRDD risk assessments. OIOS noted that 20 of the 30 requests to support mobile teams reviewed required the Mission to conduct HRDD assessments prior to providing financial and logistical support to UEPNDDRR, as the mobile teams included 114 non-United Nations security forces. However, the Mission conducted HRDD assessments for only 11 (55 per cent) of the 20 requests and assessed 63 of the 114 non-United Nations security forces.

35. The above resulted as the Human Rights Division, which hosts the HRDDP Secretariat, was not included in the Tasking Orders for 11 of the 20 requests that required HRDD assessments. The provision of support to non-United Nations security forces prior to completion of HRDD assessments poses a reputational risk to the Organization in the event the recipients are subsequently found to have a record of grave violations of international human rights, humanitarian or refugee laws.

- (5) MINUSCA should enforce the requirement for the Human Rights Division to be notified of all requests for the provision of support to the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme to ensure that all cases that require human rights due diligence assessments are identified and assessed prior to the provision of support.**

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it had requested for all identification documents to be circulated before the commencement of disarmament and demobilization missions to enable the human rights due diligence assessments to be completed as required.

MINUSCA implemented mechanisms to account for funds it provided to support the national DDR programme

36. The Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations included guidelines the Mission was required to adhere to in safeguarding and ensuring accountability of cash advances issued to support the national DDR programme. In addition, MINUSCA year end closing instructions outlined timelines for submission of expenditure reports for programmatic activities and surrender of unused cash balances issued

³ MINUSCA established an integrated HRDDP Secretariat with one focal point each from the United Nations Police and the Force to coordinate the implementation of the United Nations HRDD Policy

to Mission personnel for programmatic activities. The grant documents for the trust funds administered by MINUSCA in support of the national DDR programme outlined the expenditures they were required to support and the reporting requirements.

37. OIOS noted that the Mission had submitted all the 18 quarterly reports that comprised of nine progress and nine financial reports on the trust funds for the period July 2022 to September 2024. These reports included expenditures that had been incurred in support of the national DDR programme, based on requests for assistance received from UEPNDDRR.

38. OIOS review of records for cash advances maintained by the DDR Section for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 October 2024 indicated that the Financial Resourcing and Performance Section (FRPS) issued cash advances of \$475,000 to the DDR Section. Subsequently, the DDR Section disbursed \$388,333 to UEPNDDRR. OIOS reviewed all the 31 justifications prepared by the DDR Section and submitted to FRPS for expenditures of \$326,666 that had been incurred by UEPNDDRR against cash advances previously issued. These justifications comprised of a cover memo, a cash advance transaction report and supporting documentation received from UEPNDDRR including signed sheets with details of cash payments and copies of identification cards of ex-combatants who received the payments. However, as addressed in recommendation 2 of this report the Mission did not verify the payments to ex-combatants against the lists of ex-combatants initially targeted during the DD operations and obtain explanations for any differences noted.

MINUSCA provided support to ensure the national DDR programme was gender responsive

39. The framework for the national DDR programme provides that an indicative figure of seven per cent of eligible female combatants could be considered in the design of the programme and requires implementing a gender perspective to the DDR process to adequately respond to the differentiated needs of male and female ex-combatants. In addition, the framework requires that all activities granted to male are equally offered to female ex-combatants, including a basic re-insertion package.

40. The MINUSCA Gender Advisory Unit worked closely with the DDR Section to ensure that the Mission's support to the national DDR programme was gender-sensitive and regularly reviewed the data on DD exercises that had been concluded to confirm the participation of women combatants. Further, the DDR Section indicated that through various forums, including meetings with leaders of armed groups and sessions conducted to create awareness among local communities on the national DDR programme, the participation of women in the programme was encouraged. As a result, as of December 2024, the 5,091 ex-combatants who had been disarmed and demobilized since inception of the national DDR programme in 2019 included 342 women, representing 6.7 per cent, which was within the targets that were envisaged during the design of the programme.

41. OIOS review of payments to ex-combatants noted that all the 1,181 ex-combatants (including 120 women) that were disarmed and demobilized during the audit period received equal demobilization and reinsertion allowances. The Mission procured and handed over to UEPNDDRR specific items that were included in reinsertion kits that were issued to women ex-combatants during the DD process. Women combatants who were not holders of weapons of war and ammunitions, and hence did not fulfil the criteria for joining the national DDR programme were referred to the CVR programme that was managed by the Mission. As of 31 December 2024, the Mission indicated that the number of beneficiaries since inception of the CVR programme was 41,819 (including 15,799 women). OIOS concluded that the Mission had implemented measures to ensure that the national DDR programme was gender responsive.

MINUSCA took action to support the integration of ex-combatants into the national defence and security forces

42. MINUSCA's mandate requires the Mission to support the Government to integrate eligible ex-combatants into the national security and defence forces. The framework of the national DDR programme requires mobile teams to include a vetting sub-cell comprising of a magistrate from the Ministry of Justice, a Judicial Police Officer from the Ministry of Public Security and a MINUSCA Human Rights specialist to identify elements with a record of war crimes, crimes against humanity and serious human rights violations with a view to possible prosecution.

43. The Government formulated a framework for the integration of ex-combatants into the national defence and security forces, and MINUSCA, as a member of a working group established under the framework, provided technical advice and support. The working group recommended that 8 to 10 per cent of new recruitment slots be reserved for ex-combatants for integration into the national defence and security forces. The recommendations of the working group, following endorsement by the Strategic Committee, subsequently guided the integration of ex-combatants into the national defence and security forces.

44. In addition, the Mission assumed a more direct role in supporting the vetting processes as the Government did not have the capacity to conduct the vetting of ex-combatants and did not maintain comprehensive databases on war crimes, crimes against humanity and serious human rights violations. A review of the vetting database maintained by the Human Rights Division indicated that during the period under review, the Mission received seven requests from UEPNDDRR to vet 957 ex-combatants that had completed the DD process and were being considered for integration into the national defence and security forces. The results of the vetting indicated that 44 (4.5per cent) of the 957 ex-combatants were flagged as having a possible record of committing serious violations of international human rights law or breaches of international humanitarian law, and did not meet basic requirements of morality and integrity to serve in the national security and defence forces.

The Mission coordinated efforts to reintegrate eligible ex-combatants

45. MINUSCA is mandated to coordinate the support provided by multilateral and bilateral partners, to assist the Government in reintegrating eligible and vetted ex-combatants into peaceful civilian life and to help ensure that these efforts will lead to sustainable socio-economic reintegration.

46. Three projects were implemented during the audit period by the World Bank and the Peace Building Fund for the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants. These projects were aimed at equipping beneficiaries with skills that would assist them return to civilian life, including basic training on literacy and arithmetic, vocational training in primary, secondary or tertiary areas and general training aimed at assisting them launch income-generating activities. Of the two projects implemented by the World Bank, one ended on 30 June 2023, and another commenced on 1 July 2024 and was ongoing as at the time of the audit report. The project funded by Peace Building Fund was implemented by three United Nations entities between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024.

47. MINUSCA coordinated the holding of monthly meetings for the reintegration programme, which were attended by various stakeholders. During these meetings, the stakeholders discussed the progress that had been made and challenges experienced in the implementation of the reintegration programme. RBB reports for fiscal year 2022/23 and fiscal year 2023/24 indicated that the Mission facilitated all the 24 meetings that were planned to be held during the period. The Mission also provided air transportation to the implementing partners to enable them to access the targeted beneficiaries in the country. OIOS concluded that the Mission had been adequately involved in coordinating the support provided by various stakeholders to ensure the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants.

An awareness and communication plan in support of the national DDR programme was not prepared

48. The framework of the national DDR programme provides that UEPNDDRR will assume a lead role in raising awareness and communicating activities of the national DDR programme while the Mission conducts related activities as well in conjunction with UEPNDDRR. The awareness activities help beneficiaries and their communities to better understand the national DDR programme. These activities focus on reconciliation and peace messages to prevent conflict, particularly with regard to the reintegration of ex-combatants into local communities. They also inform ex-combatants, families and community members of the objective and benefits of the programme.

49. Interviews with DDR staff in the field offices and review of a sample of 30 of the 130 DDR weekly reports prepared during the period indicated that MINUSCA conducted awareness raising sessions with the local communities to brief them on the conditions and eligibility criteria of the national DDR programme and encourage them to join the programme. In addition, the Strategic Communications and Public Information Section prepared and broadcast features and programmes through its various media channels to create public awareness on activities that had been implemented by the Mission in support of the national DDR programme. However, the Mission conducted only 6 out of the 24 planned awareness raising activities during the audit period. This resulted as an effective communication and outreach plan had not been developed.

(6) MINUSCA should, in coordination with the Government of the Central African Republic, develop an effective communication and outreach plan to increase awareness of the local population and participation by armed groups in the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the national DDR programme was limited to members of the 14 armed groups that signed the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. The Mission would coordinate future communication and outreach efforts with the Government of the Central African Republic and would align the eligibility criteria and strategic objectives of the national DDR programme by focusing on: (i) clarifying the scope and eligibility of the programme to avoid misinformation; (ii) engaging communities in complementary stabilization and reintegration initiatives outside the DDR framework; and (iii) supporting local peacebuilding efforts that are inclusive but distinct from the formal DDR process.

C. Reporting and evaluation of support to the national DDR programme

MINUSCA established mechanisms to record and report on its DDR activities

50. MINUSCA is required to present to the Security Council a report on the progress of implementation of its mandate on a quarterly basis.

51. OIOS review of 30 of the 130 weekly DDR reports noted that DDR Officers prepared weekly reports which summarized the main activities that were implemented by their respective field offices. The DDR Section consolidated these reports and shared them with the Mission's senior management and various Mission components on a weekly basis. Subsequently, information included in these reports, together with data on ex-combatants that had been processed and weapons recovered from DD operations were used to prepare the quarterly reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council and subsequently the annual budget performance reports of the Mission. Further, the DDR Section documented its key performance indicators in the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS) results framework, and provided periodic updates on the extent of their implementation. OIOS concluded

that the Mission had established mechanisms that enabled it to monitor and report on the implementation of its DDR activities.

MINUSCA was committed to assess the effectiveness of the Mission's support to the national DDR programme

52. The United Nations Administrative Instruction on evaluations in the United Nations Secretariat, ST/AI/2021/3 provided that evaluation was an integral part of the management of the programme planning and budgetary cycle. These instructions required missions to consider and incorporate evaluation results and lessons learned to inform strategic and transparent programme delivery.

53. MINUSCA conducted bi-annual CPAS reviews to assess the extent of implementation of targets it had established for its DDR activities. While the Mission had not conducted an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the support it provided to the national DDR programme it stated that it had initiated the recruitment of a DDR Monitoring and Evaluation Officer who would be responsible for conducting evaluations of DDR activities.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical/ Important ⁵ | C/ O ⁶ | Actions needed to close recommendation | Implementation date ⁷ |
|----------|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 | MINUSCA should finalize guidelines for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration core support activities, including procedures for handling combatants who surrendered at the Mission's Temporary Operating Bases, and procedures for processing requests for support from the host government. | Important | O | Receipt of approved guidelines for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration core support activities and procedures for handling combatants that surrender to the Mission's Temporary Operating Bases. | 28 February 2027 |
| 2 | MINUSCA should ensure that names of combatants targeted to undergo disarmament and demobilization mechanisms are included in the requests for assistance to enable the Mission to verify the completeness and accuracy of elements that have been processed, and payments made and explain any deviation from the initial list. | Important | O | Receipt of evidence that the Mission has: (i) received lists with names of combatants prior to commencement of disarmament and demobilization operations; and (ii) verified the completeness and accuracy of elements in the disarmament and demobilization operations and explanations for deviations from the initial list. | 28 February 2027 |
| 3 | MINUSCA should establish a mechanism for monitoring Government entities' adherence to the requirement of providing periodic reports on materials donated in support of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, to ensure accountability. | Important | O | Receipt of evidence that the Mission has received and reviewed periodic reports on materials donated to the Government in support of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. | 28 February 2026 |
| 4 | MINUSCA should coordinate amongst the relevant Mission components to: (i) conduct periodic counts of weapons and ammunitions collected from disarmament and demobilization activities in all its locations, (ii) timely update its records on weapons and ammunitions; and (iii) take actions to hand over to the Government weapons collected from all disarmament exercises. | Important | O | Receipt of evidence that the Mission has: (i) conducted periodic counts of weapons and ammunitions collected from disarmament and demobilization activities; (ii) updated its records on weapons and ammunitions; and (iii) handed over to the Government weapons collected from all disarmament exercises. | 28 February 2027 |
| 5 | MINUSCA should enforce the requirement for the Human Rights Division to be notified of all requests for the provision of support to the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme to ensure that all cases that require | Important | O | Receipt of evidence that the Mission has conducted human rights due diligence assessments for all cases where the Mission is required to provide support to non-United | 31 August 2026 |

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical ⁴ / Important ⁵ | C/ O ⁶ | Actions needed to close recommendation | Implementation date ⁷ |
|----------|--|---|----------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| | human rights due diligence assessments are identified and assessed prior to the provision of support. | | | Nations security forces involved in the national DDR programme. | |
| 6 | MINUSCA should, in coordination with the Government of the Central African Republic, develop an effective communication and outreach plan to increase awareness of the local population and participation by armed groups in the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. | Important | O | Receipt of evidence that the Mission has coordinated with the Government of the Central African Republic to develop a communication and outreach plan for the national DDR programme. | 28 February 2027 |

⁴ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

⁵ Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

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

⁷ Date provided by MINUSCA in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye
A: Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight
Services

DATE: 8 August 2025

ATTN: Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Director
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

REFERENCE: MINUSCA/OCOS/161/2025

FROM: Valentine Rugwabiza
DE: SRSG and Head of MINUSCA



SUBJECT: **MINUSCA's comments on the Draft Report of an audit of DDR Activities in**
OBJET: **MINUSCA (Assignment No. AP2024-637-03).**

1. With reference to your interoffice memorandum dated 15 July 2025 on the above captioned subject, kindly find attached MINUSCA's comments on amended Annex I of the Draft Report of an audit of DDR activities in MINUSCA.


2. I take this opportunity to thank your team for the findings and recommendations issued in this audit as well as for the many constructive and timely discussions held with concerned sections.

Annex: - MINUSCA's comments on the Draft Report of an audit of DDR Activities in MINUSCA.

cc: Mr. Renner Onana, Mission Chief of Staff, MINUSCA
Mr. Pierre-Emmanuel Ubalijoro, Chief, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Section, MINUSCA
Mr. Sory Sangaré, Director of Mission Support, MINUSCA
Ms. Jesca Muyingo, Director, Strategic Communications and Public Information, MINUSCA
Mr. Seydou Sirpe, Chief Resident Auditor for MINUSCA, Internal Audit Division, OIOS
Ms. Tiphaine Dickson, Risk Management and Compliance Officer, MINUSCA

Management Response

Audit of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical ¹ / Important ² | Accepted? (Yes/No) | Title of responsible individual | Implementation date | Client comments |
|----------|---|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 1 | MINUSCA should finalize guidelines for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration core support activities, including procedures for handling combatants who surrendered at the Mission's Temporary Operating Bases, and procedures for processing requests for support from the host government. | Important | Yes | DDR Director/ Chief of Staff | 18 months | MINUSCA will prioritize formalizing the existing draft guidelines as a more immediate solution to address this issue effectively for handling combatants who surrendered at the Mission's Temporary Operating Bases. The Office of the Chief of Staff will consider preparing guidelines on the handling of requests for support from UEPNDDRR. |
| 2 | MINUSCA should ensure that names of combatants targeted to undergo disarmament and demobilization mechanisms are included in the requests for assistance to enable the Mission to verify the completeness and accuracy of elements that have been processed and payments made, and explain any deviation from the initial list. | Important | Yes | DDR Director | 18 months | MINUSCA has implemented the first element of this recommendation since 1 August 2025. Letter requiring lists of combattants (and weapons) be submitted before request for assistance is  Lettre_150-SRSG-au -Chef-de-cabinet-de considered. Thus, MINUSCA will obtain lists of combatants from |

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

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


Management Response

Audit of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical ¹ / Important ² | Accepted? (Yes/No) | Title of responsible individual | Implementation date | Client comments |
|----------|--|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| | | | | | | UEPNDDRR prior to commencement of the disarmament and demobilization operations and reconcile it with the final list of ex-combatants that have completed the DD operations to identify and report any deviations . |
| 3 | MINUSCA should establish a mechanism for monitoring Government entities' adherence to the requirement of providing periodic reports on materials donated in support of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, to ensure accountability. | Important | Yes | DDR Director | 6 months | MINUSCA will request reports on donated items to be made available but cannot commit to achieving a result that is wholly and exclusively dependent on the Government of the Central African Republic (GoCAR). While we acknowledge the auditors' recommendation, it is important to note that the Mission does not retain control over donated items once they have been formally handed over to a sovereign Government. Upon the signing of the handover form and transfer of possession, the Mission's oversight ends, and it no longer has leverage to influence the use or management of the donated assets. |

Management Response

Audit of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical ¹ / Important ² | Accepted? (Yes/No) | Title of responsible individual | Implementation date | Client comments |
|----------|--|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 4 | MINUSCA should: (i) conduct periodic counts of weapons and ammunitions collected from disarmament and demobilization activities in all its locations, (ii) timely update its records on weapons and ammunitions; and (iii) take actions to hand over to the Government weapons collected from all disarmament exercises. | Important | YES | SATO/UNMAS | 18 months | <p>MINUSCA will address this recommendation through the existing Weapons and Ammunition Advisory Board structure with the support of UNMAS.</p> <p>MINUSCA notes, however, that weapons are counted and registered by UEPNDDRR armorers, as they are the property of the Government of the Central African Republic. These weapons are temporarily stored at field locations.</p> <p>Regarding record-keeping, the Excel file used by the DDR section as the Master File is an exact replica of the national database. It is both accurate and regularly updated.</p> |
| 5 | MINUSCA should enforce the requirement for the Human Rights Division to be notified of all requests for the provision of support to the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme to ensure that all cases that require human rights due diligence assessments are identified and assessed prior to the provision of support. | Important | YES | DDR Director | 12 months | <p>MINUSCA has requested all IDs be transmitted before the start of DDR missions to enable the HRDD assessment process to be completed as required. Request formulated by since 1 August 2025.</p> <p></p> <p>Lettre_150-SRSG-au -Chef-de-cabinet-de</p> |

Management Response

Audit of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical ¹ / Important ² | Accepted? (Yes/No) | Title of responsible individual | Implementation date | Client comments |
|----------|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| 6 | MINUSCA should, in coordination with the Government of the Central African Republic, develop an effective communication and outreach plan to increase awareness and participation of the local population and armed groups, in the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. | Important | Yes with clarification requested | SCPI Director | 18 months | <p>While we appreciate the intent to enhance inclusivity and awareness of the DDR process, it is important to clarify that the national DDRR programme is strictly limited to members of the 14 armed groups that signed the APPR (Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation). This eligibility criterion is a foundational element of the programme, agreed upon by all stakeholders, including the Government and MINUSCA.</p> <p>Targeting individuals from the local population or non-signatory groups for participation in the DDRR programme would not only contravene the terms of the APPR but could also undermine the credibility and integrity of the peace process. Such an approach risks creating confusion, raising unrealistic expectations, and potentially destabilizing the fragile security environment.</p> |

Management Response

Audit of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical ¹ / Important ² | Accepted? (Yes/No) | Title of responsible individual | Implementation date | Client comments |
|----------|----------------|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | | | | | | <p>Future communications and outreach efforts are currently being coordinated with the GoCAR and will be carefully aligned with the eligibility criteria and strategic objectives of the DDRR programme, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clarifying the scope and eligibility of the programme to avoid misinformation. -Engaging communities in complementary stabilization and reintegration initiatives outside the DDRR framework. -Supporting local peacebuilding efforts that are inclusive but distinct from the formal DDRR process. |