



## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

### REPORT 2017/118

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Audit of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

The Mission needed to improve utilization of its demining capacity and monitor performance reporting and quality assurance over demining operations

14 November 2017  
Assignment No. AP2017/672/02

# **Audit of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over demining activities in UNIFIL. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2016 and included a review of the management of demining activities in UNIFIL, operational and safety preparedness and payments to United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Lebanon.

The utilization of demining capacity in UNIFIL was low and needed to be improved. In addition, the Mission needed to enhance performance monitoring of demining activities and ensure consistent application of the quality assurance methodology.

OIOS made nine recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UNIFIL needed to:

- Review and update the Technical Arrangement with UNMAS Lebanon as well as key operational standard operating procedures;
- Assess and improve the utilization of demining assets, taking into account the low or unpredictable number of the Blue Line points approved to be demined;
- Clarify the respective responsibilities of the Deputy Force Commander and the Chief of Staff for the supervision of demining activities;
- Direct the J3 Combat Engineer Section to enhance and report on key performance indicators, and follow up with UNMAS Lebanon to ensure performance reports are received timely;
- Develop terms of reference on convening coordination meetings with UNMAS Lebanon;
- Establish adequate monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the J3 Combat Engineer Section and UNMAS Lebanon enforce validation requirements and maintain evidence of pre-deployment training of rotating demining/explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams;
- Put in place procedures to ensure UNMAS Lebanon consistently apply the quality assurance methodology in evaluating demining/EOD teams' adherence to safety standards and track and report on implementation status of outstanding safety recommendations;
- Review the requirements to administer refresher training for demining/EOD teams after periods of inactivity; and
- Ensure that all EOD teams submit execution reports and back-up arrangements are activated when assigned EOD teams are unavailable to clear cut lanes and blue line points.

UNIFIL accepted eight and partially accepted one recommendation and has initiated action to implement them.

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# **Audit of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).
2. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1701, one of the key tasks of UNIFIL is to mark the line of withdrawal (known as the Blue Line) between Lebanon and Israel to avoid unintentional violations, incidents and rise of potential tensions. To facilitate the marking of the Blue Line, UNIFIL carries out operational demining activities<sup>1</sup> by opening and clearing mines from safe lanes through minefields to reach the Blue Line points. UNIFIL's demining activities are undertaken only after the Governments of Lebanon and Israel have agreed on the geographical coordinates of each Blue Line point. There were about 540 Blue Line points within the Mission's area of operations. As at 31 December 2016, the Mission had demined 326 Blue Line points approved by both Governments. One, 12 and zero new Blue Line points were approved in 2015, 2016 and as at 30 June 2017, respectively. UNIFIL also periodically refurbishes cut lanes to and blue barrels erected at demined Blue Line points.
3. UNIFIL's J3 Combat Engineer Section (J3-CES) under J3 Branch of the military component is responsible for organizing, planning and coordinating demining and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) activities of the Mission. Two troop-contributing countries (TCCs) provide six demining and two EOD teams, based on their respective memoranda of understanding (MOUs). The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is responsible for supporting and enabling UNIFIL mine operations. These services are provided under an MOU and a Financial Agreement between the United Nations and a United Nations agency (Agency A), and a Technical Arrangement between UNIFIL and UNMAS Lebanon. The services include training, validating, licensing and providing quality assurance to support the Mission's compliance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and Lebanese National Mine Action Standards (NMAS). Various standard operating procedures of UNIFIL also guide the Mission's demining activities.
4. The approved personnel strengths of J3-CES, the two TCCs and UNMAS Lebanon were 14, 360 and 10, respectively. The combined approved budget and expenditure for the financial years 2014/15 to 2016/17<sup>2</sup> for the Mission's demining activities were \$32.5 million and \$31.6 million, respectively.
5. Comments provided by UNIFIL are incorporated in italics.

## **II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

6. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over demining activities in UNIFIL.
7. This audit was included in the 2017 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the strategic importance and operational and financial risks relating to demining activities in UNIFIL.
8. OIOS conducted this audit from January to May 2017. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2016. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and

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<sup>1</sup> UNIFIL is not engaged with humanitarian demining, which is to clear land and protect local populations from landmines and other explosives.

<sup>2</sup> Includes estimated expenditure for the last three months of the financial year 2016/17

medium risk areas in demining activities, which included: management of demining activities in UNIFIL, operational and safety preparedness and payments to UNMAS Lebanon.

9. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel; (b) reviews of relevant documentation; (c) analytical reviews of data and sample testing of operational reports of J3-CES, training and validation records on demining/EOD teams and payment records for troops and equipment; and (d) visits to demining sites.

### **III. OVERALL CONCLUSION**

10. UNIFIL needed to assess and improve the utilization of demining assets taking into account the low or unpredictable number of the Blue Line points approved to be demined. The Mission also needed to enhance performance monitoring by: clarifying respective responsibilities of the Deputy Force Commander and the Chief of Staff for the supervision of demining activities; developing adequate key performance indicators; and more actively following up on outstanding monthly performance reports from UNMAS Lebanon. In addition, the Mission needed to: (a) revise the outdated Technical Arrangement and several standard operating procedures on demining activities; (b) put in place a mechanism to ensure UNIFIL's demining activities, supported by UNMAS Lebanon, consistently comply with the quality assurance methodology for evaluating demining/EOD teams' adherence to safety standards; and (c) improve tracking and reporting on outstanding safety recommendations.

### **IV. AUDIT RESULTS**

#### **A. Management of demining activities**

##### Need to review and update guideline documents

11. The Technical Arrangement between UNIFIL and UNMAS Lebanon requires the two parties to review and update its terms every two years. Also, UNIFIL standard operating procedures on demining activities require their regular review and update as necessary.

12. The Technical Arrangement had not been updated since 2011. Similarly, UNIFIL had not updated key demining standard operating procedures on areas such as organization and coordination of demining/EOD operations and validation and quality management of UNIFIL operational demining in two to six years. This was despite considerable changes in operating requirements such as the revision of IMAS in 2013, with which the Technical Arrangement and standard operating procedures of UNIFIL's demining activities must comply. In addition, over the past two years, the two TCCs working on demining activities spent more time on refurbishment of cut lanes and blue line barrels to reach the Blue Line points rather than on demining, due to the reduced number of new Blue Line points approved to be demined. UNMAS Lebanon also had, since December 2016, started conducting quality assurance services on refurbishments and expanding its range of training and other support services to UNIFIL. However, this extended role had not been formalized in the Financial Agreement with Agency A or in the Technical Arrangement. In addition, UNIFIL was considering undertaking humanitarian demining in coordination with UNMAS Lebanon and the Lebanese Mine Action Centre, in addition to operational demining that UNIFIL currently conducts.

13. J3-CES stated that the revision of guidance documents, which started in 2015, was not completed due to an oversight. Also, there was frequent rotation of the responsible personnel. Outdated agreement and standard operating procedures could negatively affect the effectiveness of the Mission's demining activities.

**(1) UNIFIL should, in consultation with United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon, review and revise the outdated Technical Arrangement and standard operating procedures and guidelines on demining activities.**

*UNIFIL accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it was in the process of revising the Technical Arrangement and key standard operating procedures. The Technical Arrangement was expected to be finalized by February 2018 and other standard operating procedures would be revised before the end of 2017. Recommendation 1 remains open pending submission of the revised Technical Arrangement and key standard operating procedures.*

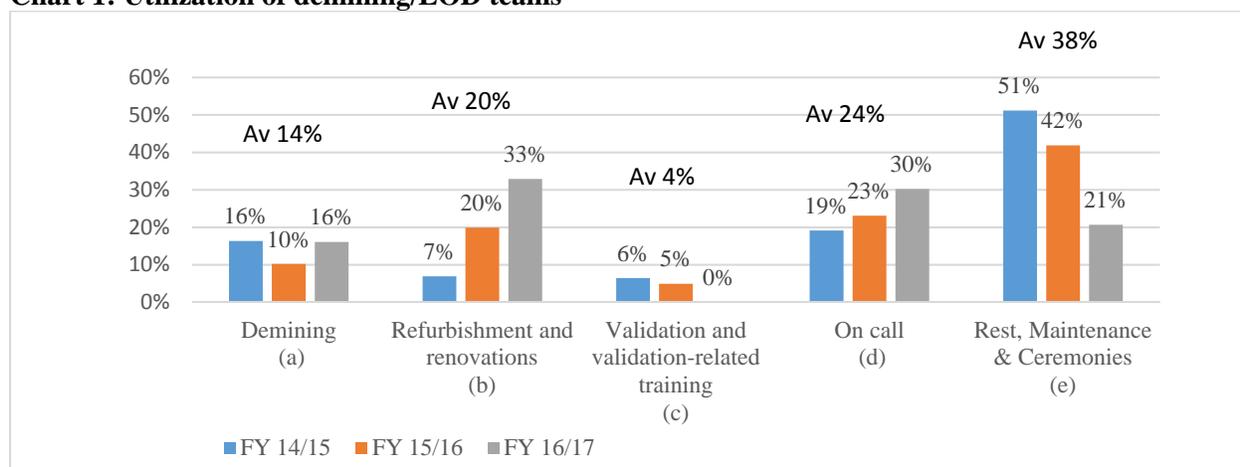
Demining/EOD teams were not fully utilized

14. The Technical Arrangement between UNIFIL and UNMAS Lebanon requires J3-CES to plan, coordinate and direct the activities of the eight demining/EOD teams for the most efficient and effective operations.

15. The demining/EOD teams spent their work days doing one of the following four activities: (a) demining Blue Line points; (b) refurbishing the Blue Line points and cutting lanes to the points that had been demined; (c) validating qualifications and skills of teams rotating; (d) being “on call”; and (e) other activities including maintenance, rest, and ceremonies.

16. A review of J3-CES records during the audit period indicated that on average, the demining/EOD teams were utilized for demining and refurbishing activities only 14 and 20 per cent of their workdays, respectively. They spent 4 per cent of their time on validation activities, 24 per cent on call, and 38 per cent was spent on rest, maintenance and attending ceremonies. Although on call time increased from 19 per cent in 2014/15 to 30 per cent in 2016/17, utilization of the teams improved over the period. For example, the utilization rates for refurbishment increased from 7 to 33 per cent, while those for rest, maintenance and ceremonies decreased from 51 to 21 per cent by 31 December 2016. While UNIFIL senior management instructed the demining/EOD teams to refurbish blue barrels and cut lanes to Blue Line points, more needed to be done to improve utilization of demining capacity. Chart 1 below summarizes the teams’ utilization rates.

**Chart 1: Utilization of demining/EOD teams**



Source: OIOS analysis of the performance data of eight demining/EOD teams. FY16/17 figures are as at December 2016

17. The low utilization rates were because the Mission had not undertaken a comprehensive review to assess its demining/EOD capacity, considering that the number of new Blue Line points that were being approved to be demined was low and unpredictable. Such a review could include a strategy to redeploy the demining/EOD teams to alternative tasks such as general engineering tasks or humanitarian demining operations or reduce their numbers. The Mission stated that due to the political sensitivity, the option of outsourcing demining operations to either one of the two governments or third parties including non-governmental organizations was not feasible.

**(2) UNIFIL should conduct a comprehensive review to assess and improve utilization of the Mission's demining and explosive ordnance disposal teams, considering the low and unpredictable number of the Blue Line points that were being approved to be demined. This review should explore the possibility of redeploying the demining teams to alternative tasks such as general engineering tasks or humanitarian demining operations, or reducing their numbers.**

*UNIFIL accepted recommendation 2 and stated that J3-CES had initiated a comprehensive review of the utilization of the Mission's demining assets prior to this audit and proposed to the Head of Mission to allow UNIFIL to undertake humanitarian demining and integrate combat engineers in force protection works. The Mission, after consulting with UNMAS Lebanon and Lebanese Mine Action Centre, had prepared a code cable to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and was preparing a related MOU. UNIFIL added that demining teams were a critical asset that must be maintained in the Mission area of operations to guarantee freedom of movement of UNIFIL peacekeepers in case of an escalation of the conflict. As of October 2017, J3-CES would also take responsibility for the Force Protection Working Group and be able to use demining assets for force protection works. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence of improved utilization of demining assets.*

#### Need to clarify reporting lines and establish adequate performance measurement mechanisms

18. UNIFIL's standard operating procedures on coordination and organization of demining/EOD operations require J3-CES to generate daily, weekly and monthly reports of TCCs' demining activities. Also, the standard operating procedures and IMAS require development and evaluation of key performance indicators on demining operations to achieve the best possible safety, effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, the Financial Agreement between the United Nations and Agency A requires UNMAS Lebanon to submit monthly reports of their activities to UNIFIL.

19. J3-CES generated daily, weekly and monthly demining reports, showing tasking of TCCs and the number of Blue Line points cleared or refurbished. However, the Section did not document the actual achievement of the teams against the tasking. Although J3-CES developed some key performance indicators to assess the teams' operations, these were inadequate as they did not include targets such as monthly utilization rates for demining, refurbishment and on call activities and number of non-conformity to safety standards raised by UNMAS. In addition, UNIFIL had not followed up to ensure UNMAS Lebanon submitted monthly performance reports on its activities. As a result, no reports were received since January 2015.

20. The above happened due to inadequate monitoring by UNIFIL management of the work of J3-CES and UNMAS, arising from unclear assignment of supervisory responsibilities. The Technical Arrangement and other guidance documents indicated that the Deputy Force Commander has overall authority over the management of demining activities; however, J3-CES reports to the Chief of Staff. During the audit, UNIFIL indicated that the Deputy Force Commander and the Chief of Staff were responsible for UNMAS Lebanon and J3-CES activities, respectively. The inadequate monitoring contributed to insufficient review

of the underutilization of demining/EOD teams and weaknesses in operational and safety preparedness as discussed in this report.

**(3) UNIFIL should amend demining directives and guidance documents to clarify the respective responsibilities of the Deputy Force Commander and the Chief of Staff for the supervision of demining activities.**

*UNIFIL accepted recommendation 3 and stated that in newly released standard operating procedures, the Chief of Staff had been assigned responsibility for tasking demining activities and this would be reflected in the Technical Arrangement. The Deputy Force Commander retained authority over the Blue Line Task Force and the related standard operating procedures would be reviewed by his office. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of revised directives and guidance documents on the supervision of demining activities.*

**(4) UNIFIL should: (i) take action to ensure J3-Combat Engineer Section enhances and reports on its key performance indicators to monitor safety, effectiveness and efficiency of the Mission's demining operations; and (ii) systematically follow up with UNMAS Lebanon to ensure monthly performance reports are received timely.**

*UNIFIL accepted recommendation 4 and stated that J3-CES introduced a new form in June 2017 that included additional performance management indicators on the effectiveness and efficiency of the demining process. UNMAS Lebanon would engage with UNIFIL senior management and UNMAS Headquarters to confirm monthly substantive reporting requirements. If deemed unnecessary, a note to file would be produced. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of reports on key performance indicators measured by J3-CES and monthly performance reports submitted by UNMAS Lebanon, or if these are no longer required, a copy of the revised Technical or Financial Agreement, which reflects this.*

UNIFIL needed to ensure adequate coordination between J3-CES and UNMAS Lebanon in monitoring demining activities

21. The Technical Arrangement between UNIFIL and UNMAS Lebanon requires them to hold regular coordination meetings to monitor the performance of demining activities and compliance with established guidelines. UNMAS Lebanon is required to endorse execution reports of J3-CES immediately after the completion of works at a Blue Line point, while TCC teams are onsite.

22. J3-CES and UNMAS Lebanon did not hold regular coordination meetings, as during the audit period, meetings were only held from October to December 2016. In addition, only 9 out of the 20 reports prepared by J3-CES were endorsed by UNMAS Lebanon during the audit period, and this endorsement was delayed by one to six months.

23. As a result, most of the performance and safety issues observed during quality assurance activities remained unaddressed and were recurring, as discussed later in the report. In the opinion of OIOS, improvement in addressing recurring quality assurance concerns could be achieved by J3-CES and UNMAS Lebanon holding regular meetings to discuss and propose action to address recurring non-conformities. UNIFIL had also not established terms of reference on convening coordination meetings, indicating among others frequency, attendees, agenda and maintenance of minutes.

**(5) UNIFIL should develop terms of reference on convening coordination meetings with the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon, indicating inter alia, frequency of such**

**meetings, attendees, agenda and requirement to maintain minutes, to monitor performance of demining activities and compliance with established guidelines.**

*UNIFIL accepted recommendation 5 and stated that J3-CES and UNMAS Lebanon would develop terms of reference for monthly coordination meetings and include them as an annex to the Technical Arrangement. UNIFIL added that J3-CES and UNMAS Lebanon had held monthly meetings since 2016 and provided reports since July 2017. The meetings focused on discussing current and future plans along with any outstanding issues, while non-conformities were addressed by UNMAS Lebanon's quality assurance officers in close coordination with J3-CES and the demining teams at the task site. There was no logical connection between holding monthly coordination meetings and the recurrence of mistakes. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of the terms of reference and minutes of coordination meetings held.*

## **B. Operational and safety preparedness**

### Controls for TCCs to meet the requirements for pre-deployment training and validation needed improvement

24. UNIFIL standard operating procedures for Operational Demining require TCCs to provide pre-deployment training to demining/EOD teams and submit proof of qualifications of key personnel. They also specify activities to be undertaken by UNMAS Lebanon to validate qualifications and skills of demining/EOD teams and medical support teams within 14 days of their deployment to UNIFIL or any extension formally granted by the Deputy Force Commander. Instances of TCCs failing validations should be reported to J3-CES and the Deputy Force Commander on the first and second attempt, respectively.

25. J3-CES personnel did not collect information on the qualifications of key personnel, stating that this was no longer required in new standard operating procedures that were currently under review. Also, J3-CES did not always maintain records evidencing TCCs' completion of pre-deployment training by rotating teams.

26. A review of four out of nine rotations during the audit period showed that in all cases, UNMAS Lebanon assessed the capacity of demining/EOD team members. About 40 per cent of the team members of two TCCs failed the first assessment and only passed on either the second or third attempt. In three of the four rotations, UNMAS Lebanon recorded in their reports that the TCCs' personnel lacked basic understanding of their countries' and UNIFIL's standard operating procedures, and skills in safety, medical and demining tasks. However, these results were not reported to J3-CES and the Deputy Force Commander. Also, in one of the rotations, 8 out of 74 personnel from one of the TCCs failed or did not attend validation assessments. Nonetheless, these eight troops, who included site supervisors, team leaders and their deputies, were deployed for demining tasks until the end of their rotation (site supervisors, team leaders and their deputies assess, approve and oversee critical operations including demolitions of dangerous objects). As required, UNMAS Lebanon checked personnel at demining sites against the list of personnel who had been validated; however, the list of validated personnel was not consistently updated.

27. The above happened as J-3 Branch were not adequately monitoring the results of the pre-deployment training and validation assessments conducted by UNMAS Lebanon. While no safety incidents occurred, further breaches of pre-deployment and validation requirements could lead to safety incidents.

**(6) UNIFIL should take action to ensure the J3 Branch establish adequate monitoring mechanisms for the J3-Combat Engineer Section and the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon to: (i) strictly enforce requirements for validating the capacity of**

**demining/explosive ordnance disposal teams; and (ii) maintain records of pre-deployment training completed by troop contributing countries.**

*UNIFIL partially accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the Mission would engage with UNMAS Lebanon to review current validation requirements and processes and amend them if necessary. UNIFIL also added that the majority of TCC demining teams demonstrated a level of comprehension of their standard operating procedures and mine action standards. UNIFIL had, since January 2017, retained records of pre-deployment training plans of TCCs. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of documents evidencing review of validation requirements and their subsequent implementation.*

#### Controls over quality assurance activities needed improvement

28. The Technical Arrangement between UNIFIL and UNMAS Lebanon on demining activities requires UNMAS Lebanon to visit demining sites periodically, assess the quality of TCCs' activities and monitor compliance with IMAS and relevant standard operating procedures. The Arrangement stipulates several critical and non-critical safety criteria and requires UNMAS Lebanon to issue an unacceptable (failed) opinion, if it finds a breach of any critical safety criteria or three or more non-critical safety criteria. The Arrangement also requires UNMAS Lebanon to recommend closure of a demining site or review of the license of the team involved in breaches of two or more critical safety criteria. Moreover, UNMAS Lebanon is required (in conjunction with UNIFIL) to establish implementation dates of its safety recommendations as agreed with the TCCs and systematically follow up and report on implementation status of the recommendations.

29. UNMAS Lebanon visited demining sites weekly and prepared 80 quality assessment reports in 2016. In 32 out of the 80 reports reviewed, critical and non-critical safety criteria were not being rated by UNMAS Lebanon, even where the previous reports had an unacceptable rating. UNMAS Lebanon issued unacceptable ratings for 9 of the 80 reports, including 3 reports that had 2 or more critical criteria breached. For these sites, UNMAS conducted two quality assessment visits the following week instead of the one required, but it did not recommend suspension of the sites or a review of the team's license despite breach of two or more critical criteria. UNIFIL and UNMAS Lebanon stated that the Technical Arrangement on demining activities stipulated that site closure was a last resort and site closure was not deemed as a necessary corrective action.

30. A review of UNMAS Lebanon's quality assessment reports showed that recommendations were at times combined with informal technical discussions and therefore not easily identifiable. In addition, the reports did not indicate target dates for implementation of the recommendations, nor did UNMAS Lebanon always appear to formally follow up and report on the implementation status, to track and resolve identified cases of noncompliance with safety standards.

31. The above happened because UNIFIL did not adequately oversee UNMAS Lebanon's quality assurance activities. Also, UNIFIL did not have procedures to ensure that UNMAS Lebanon personnel consistently applied the quality assurance rating methodology in their guidelines.

32. As a result, some safety issues previously identified were not, in certain cases, adequately resolved, which may lead to subsequent serious safety incidents. Notwithstanding, OIOS notes that there have been no demining-related accidents involving UNIFIL deminers since November 2009.

**(7) UNIFIL should: (i) put in place procedures to ensure the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon consistently applies the quality assurance methodology in evaluating demining/explosive ordnance disposal teams' adherence to safety standards, policies and**

**guidelines; and (ii) establish an adequate mechanism to timely track implementation of outstanding safety recommendations and report the status to the Deputy Force Commander.**

*UNIFIL accepted recommendation 7 and stated that UNMAS Lebanon in coordination with J3-CES would review the quality assurance methodology to determine if any amendments were necessary. A mechanism to track non-conformities was already in place through producing quality assurance reports, and non-conformities were addressed through regular and special monitoring visits. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of procedures to ensure consistent application of the UNIFIL quality assurance methodology and evidence of an adequate mechanism in place to track and report on implementation of outstanding safety recommendations to the Deputy Force Commander.*

Refresher training needed after extended periods of demining inactivity

32. The Technical Arrangement between UNIFIL and UNMAS Lebanon and standard operating procedures of the two TCCs require UNMAS Lebanon to conduct a refresher training for the TCCs' demining/EOD teams prior to undertaking new demining tasks, if they had not conducted demining activities for more than two weeks.

33. During the audit period, there were 12 instances where demining/EOD teams did not conduct any demining activities ranging from 2 to 11 weeks, requiring UNMAS Lebanon to deliver 12 refresher training sessions. UNMAS Lebanon conducted 6 of the 12 refresher training sessions to respective demining/EOD teams. This occurred because UNMAS Lebanon followed the applicable IMAS guideline prescribing refresher training 30 days without demining activities, and not two weeks, as agreed in the Technical Agreement. No revision to the Agreement was requested by UNMAS Lebanon, if the initially established criterion in the Arrangement for such training was no longer applicable. This raised the possibility that the mine clearing/EOD teams may not be properly prepared to undertake new demining tasks safely and efficiently.

**(8) UNIFIL should review with the United Nations Mine Action Service, and revise accordingly, the conditions to administer refresher training for demining/ explosive ordnance disposal teams after periods of inactivity and monitor compliance with the established refresher training requirement.**

*UNIFIL accepted recommendation 8 and stated that relevant standard operating procedures and the Technical Arrangement were under review. UNIFIL J3-combat Engineering Section and UNMAS Lebanon had since, January 2017, ensured that refresher training followed periods of demining inactivity as per current standard operating procedures, IMAS and NMAS. Recommendation 8 remains open pending receipt of the revised documents on refresher training requirements and evidence of monitoring compliance.*

Need to ensure that EOD teams clear cut lanes prior to access by users

34. The operational order (FRAGO06-02-13) on security requirements for UNIFIL Blue Line Point Visits requires EOD teams to be deployed, undertake clearing operations and confirm that the cut lanes are free of mines prior to them being accessed by personnel other than demining/EOD teams. EOD teams are required to issue an execution report upon clearing a cut lane.

35. There were at least 30 instances in 2016 requiring EOD teams to be deployed to clear cut lanes. J3-CES and EOD teams interviewed stated that they were present at these deployments. However, the EOD teams did not prepare any execution reports to confirm that cut lanes were cleared prior to access by users.

36. During OIOS observation of the verification exercise of six Blue Line points by the Lebanese Armed Force on 25 January 2017, no EOD team was present to clear the cut lanes. According to J3-CES, this was a rare and isolated case due to a breakdown of the EOD team's vehicle. No back-up team was dispatched as the EOD team did not inform J3-CES to activate back-up arrangements.

37. The above happened because J3-CES did not systematically monitor the submission of execution reports. Also, demining operational tasking orders did not clearly outline procedures for J3-CES to request back-up EOD teams, when an assigned team became unavailable. This could jeopardize the safety of personnel accessing cut lanes.

**(9) UNIFIL should establish procedures to: (i) monitor that explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams always submit task execution reports; and (ii) activate back-up arrangements when EOD teams assigned to clear cut lanes and blue line points become unavailable.**

*UNIFIL accepted recommendation 9 and stated that they would request EOD teams to submit the required execution reports. Back-up arrangements were always in place as other EOD teams were on call with 120 minutes of notice to move. In future, tasking orders for EOD support would include specific instructions for EOD teams to contact J3-CES if unexpected situations prevent their deployments. Recommendation 9 remains open pending receipt of evidence of monitoring submission of task execution reports by EOD teams.*

### **C. Payments to UNMAS Lebanon**

#### Need to improve controls over payments to UNMAS Lebanon

38. The Financial Agreements outline specific schedule and dates of installment payments to compensate for the personnel and operating costs of UNMAS Lebanon and require the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to certify the payments. Except for the initial installment payment, unutilized amounts from previous payments may be deducted from subsequent ones.

39. Payment records showed that DPKO timely certified payments to Agency A, totaling \$1.5 million, three times a year. However, DPKO certified full payments each time without taking into account unutilized amounts from previous installments, despite some activities not being undertaken. For instance, as at 31 December 2016, DPKO did not withhold \$450,000 that UNMAS Lebanon had underspent. The underspending was because two international staff posts had been vacant since June 2016 and planned consultancy assignments did not take place. OIOS audit of UNMAS (Report No. 2015/041) identified similar issues and made recommendations to address them. As the implementation of those recommendations is still on going, OIOS did not make additional recommendations in this audit.

### **V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

40. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff in UNIFIL and UNMAS Lebanon for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

(Signed) Eleanor T. Burns  
Director, Internal Audit Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>3</sup> / Important <sup>4</sup>	C/ O <sup>5</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>6</sup>
1	UNIFIL should, in consultation with United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon, review and revise the outdated Technical Arrangement and standard operating procedures and guidelines on demining activities.	Important	O	Receipt of copy of the revised Technical Arrangement and key standard operating procedures.	28 February 2018
2	UNIFIL should conduct a comprehensive review to assess and improve utilization of the Mission's demining and explosive ordnance disposal teams, considering the low and unpredictable number of the Blue Line points that were being approved to be demined. This review should explore the possibility of redeploying the demining teams to alternative tasks such as general engineering tasks or humanitarian demining operations, or reducing their numbers.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of improved utilization of demining assets.	15 July 2018
3	UNIFIL should amend demining directives and guidance documents to clarify the respective responsibilities of the Deputy Force Commander and the Chief of Staff for the supervision of demining activities.	Important	O	Receipt of revised directives and guidance documents on the supervision of demining activities.	28 February 2018
4	UNIFIL should: (i) take action to ensure J3-Combat Engineer Section enhances and reports on its key performance indicators to monitor safety, effectiveness and efficiency of the Mission's demining operations; and (ii) systematically follow	Important	O	Receipt of reports on key performance indicators measured by J3-CES and monthly performance reports submitted by UNMAS Lebanon, or if these are no longer required, a copy of the revised Technical or Financial Agreement, which reflects this.	30 November 2017

<sup>3</sup> Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>4</sup> Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>5</sup> C = closed, O = open

<sup>6</sup> Date provided by UNIFIL in response to recommendations.

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>3</sup> / Important <sup>4</sup>	C/ O <sup>5</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>6</sup>
	up with UNMAS Lebanon to ensure monthly performance reports are received timely.				
5	UNIFIL should develop terms of reference on convening coordination meetings with the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon, indicating inter alia, frequency of such meetings, attendees, agenda and requirement to maintain minutes, to monitor performance of demining activities and compliance with established guidelines.	Important	O	Receipt of the terms of reference and minutes of monthly coordination meetings.	28 February 2018
6	UNIFIL should take action to ensure the J3 Branch establish adequate monitoring mechanisms for the J3-Combat Engineer Section and the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon to: (i) strictly enforce requirements for validating the capacity of demining/explosive ordnance disposal teams; and (ii) maintain records of pre-deployment training completed by troop contributing countries.	Important	O	Receipt of documents evidencing review of validation requirements and their subsequent implementation.	31 December 2017
7	UNIFIL should: (i) put in place procedures to ensure the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon consistently applies the quality assurance methodology in evaluating demining/explosive ordnance disposal teams' adherence to safety standards, policies and guidelines; and (ii) establish an adequate mechanism to timely track implementation of outstanding safety recommendations and report the status to the Deputy Force Commander.	Important	O	Receipt of procedures to ensure consistent application of the UNIFIL quality assurance methodology and evidence of an adequate mechanism in place to track and report on implementation of outstanding safety recommendations to the Deputy Force Commander.	28 February 2018
8	UNIFIL should review with the United Nations Mine Action Service, and revise accordingly, the conditions to administer refresher training for demining/ explosive ordnance disposal teams after periods of inactivity and monitor compliance with the established refresher training requirement.	Important	O	Receipt of revised guidance documents on refresher training requirements and evidence of monitoring compliance.	28 February 2018

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>3</sup> / Important <sup>4</sup>	C/ O <sup>5</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>6</sup>
9	UNIFIL should establish procedures to: (i) monitor that explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams always submit task execution reports; and (ii) activate back-up arrangements when EOD teams assigned to clear cut lanes and blue line points become unavailable.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of monitoring submission of task execution reports by EOD teams.	31 October 2017

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**

## Management Response

## Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNIFIL should, in consultation with United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon, review and revise the outdated Technical Arrangement and standard operating procedures and guidelines on demining activities.	Important	Yes (ongoing before the commencement of the audit)	(2) Best Practice Office  (3) J3-CES, UNMAS Lebanon  Best Practice Office	(1) <b>Implemented</b> on 24/07/2017 (SOP 17-18)  (2) <b>30/12/2017</b> SOP 12-09 approved by Best Practice Office  (3) <b>30/11/2017</b> TA finalized by J3-CES & UNMAS Lebanon <b>28/02/2018</b> TA approved by Best Practice Office	UNIFIL Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) on demining activities along with the revised Technical Arrangement have been either reviewed and released or are currently under review as follows: (1) SOP 17-18 Organization and Coordination of Demining / EOD Operations was promulgated - 24 July 2017. (2) SOP 12-09 Validation and Quality Management of UNIFIL Operational Demining was revised and submitted to Best Practices Office – anticipated release in December 2017 (3) The Technical Arrangement (TA) between UNIFIL and UNMAS Lebanon has been revised and is undergoing a thorough review with an anticipated completion date of 30 October 2017. The Technical Arrangement will be sent to the Best Practice Office upon completion – anticipated release in February 2018.

<sup>1</sup> Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>2</sup> Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

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## Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
2	UNIFIL should conduct a comprehensive review to assess and improve utilization of the Mission's demining and explosive ordnance disposal teams, considering the low and unpredictable number of the Blue Line points that were being approved to be demined. This review should explore the possibility of redeploying the demining teams to alternative tasks such as general engineering tasks or humanitarian demining operations, or reducing their numbers.	Important	Yes (ongoing before the commencement of the audit)	(1) J3-CES & FC  (2) J3-CES	(1) Decision reached by UNIFIL Senior Management regarding the re-initiation of humanitarian demining activities in the UNIFIL AO by <b>31/12/2017</b>  (2) <b>15/07/2018</b> Integration of combat engineers in force protection works of	A comprehensive review of the utilization of UNIFIL demining assets was initiated prior to the promulgation of the "Notification of planned OIOS audit" dated 13 January 2017. Details are below: (1) J3-Combat Engineer Section proposed to the Head of Mission and Force Commander (HoM/FC) at the end of 2016 to reintegrate humanitarian demining activities into the Mission. In 2017, several meetings within UNIFIL (including UNMAS Lebanon, DPCA) and with the LMAC were held regarding this initiative. UNIFIL has already received an official letter from LMAC requesting UNIFIL support and a code cable has been prepared accordingly. J3-CES is currently working in close coordination with UNMAS Lebanon & LMAC to prepare a related Memorandum of Understanding. (2) UNIFIL demining teams are critical assets (lessons learned by UNIFIL after the war in 2006 in Lebanon) which must be maintained in the Mission Area of Operations (AO) in

AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
					FRAGO 2018-2019  (3) <b>No implementation needed</b>	order to guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of UNIFIL peacekeepers in case of an escalation of the conflict. These units can be tasked for Force Protection works when there are no demining activities. As of 06 October 2017, J3-CES will also take the responsibility for the Force Protection Working Group and will be able to use demining assets for force protection works.  (3) It must also be noted that in Chart 1 on page 3 of the Draft Audit Report, utilization of EOD teams: the EOD teams must be included in operational activities instead of “other activities”. As long as the EOD teams are on-call and on 120 min notice to move, their utilization rate must be considered 100%.
3	UNIFIL should amend demining directives and guidance documents to clarify the respective responsibilities of the Deputy Force Commander and the Chief of Staff for the supervision of demining activities.	Important	Yes (ongoing before the commencement of the audit)	(1) J3-CES,	(1) <b>30/11/2017</b>	The process of reviewing and amending guidance documents with reference to supervision of UNIFIL demining activities began in August 2016 as indicated below: (1) In the newly released SOP 17-18 Organization and

## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
				UNMAS Lebanon  Best Practice Office  (2) DFC	TA finalized by J3-CES & UNMAS Lebanon <b>28/02/2018</b> For approval of Technical Arrangement <b>28/2/2018</b>	Coordination of Demining / EOD Operations, the tasking authority of demining activities has been shifted to the Chief of Staff (COS). The corresponding changes will be included in the updated Technical Arrangement. (2) The UNIFIL Deputy Force Commander (DFC) is the supervisor of the Blue Line Task Force. SOP 12-02 on the Blue Line Task Force and Blue Line Marking Process will be reviewed accordingly by the office of the DFC.
4	UNIFIL should direct: (i) J3-Combat Engineer Section to enhance and report on its key performance indicators to monitor safety, effectiveness and efficiency of the Mission's demining operations; and (ii) UNMAS Lebanon to submit monthly performance reports timely.	Important	Yes	(1) J3-CES	<b>(1) Implemented as of June 2017</b>	(1) J3-CES receives on a daily basis Demining Progress Reports from the demining teams and submit weekly and monthly assessment reports to the chain of command. These reports include additional performance management indicators on the effectiveness and efficiency of the demining process. J3-CES has implemented new Ops Visit form as of Jun 2017 that includes more detailed indicators on the effectiveness and efficiency of the demining progress.

## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
				(3) UNMAS Lebanon	(2) 30/11/2017	(2) UNMAS Lebanon will engage with UNIFIL Senior Management along with UNMAS HQ to confirm monthly substantive reporting requirements. If the submission of such reports is deemed unnecessary, a Note to File will be produced that details conversations on this matter with UNIFIL and UNMAS.
5	UNIFIL should develop terms of reference on convening coordination meetings with the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon, indicating inter alia, frequency of such meetings, attendees, agenda and requirement to maintain minutes, to monitor performance of demining activities and compliance with established guidelines.	Important	Yes	(2) J3-CES, UNMAS Lebanon  Best Practice Office	(1) Implemented  (2) 30/11/2017: TA finalized by J3-CES & UNMAS Lebanon 28/02/2018:	UNIFIL recognizes the importance of holding monthly coordination meetings as stipulated in the TA. The aim of these meetings is to discuss current activities and future plans. Performance and safety issues of demining teams, if any, on the other hand, would be addressed directly at the task site. Additional points are below: (1) Monthly meetings between UNMAS Lebanon and J3-CES have been held since 2016 and reports are provided since JULY 2017. (2) The Technical Arrangement has specified that J3-CES and UNMAS Lebanon will conduct monthly meetings. The requirement for the development of a terms of reference for such meetings has

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Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
					For finalization of TA.	<p>not been previously stipulated in this document. However, J3-CES and UNMAS Lebanon will develop a terms of reference for this meeting as recommended and include it as an annex to the updated Technical Arrangement.</p> <p>We also strongly question connection drawn between the monitoring of performance and safety issues identified during the course of demining operations and the absence of a Terms of Reference for a monthly coordination meeting between J3-CES and UNMAS Lebanon (reference Point 23). As previously mentioned, non-conformities are addressed by UNMAS Lebanon Quality Assurance Officers in close coordination with J3-CES directly at the task site. The aim of monthly coordination meetings, on the other hand, is to discuss current and future plans along with any outstanding issues that need to be addressed. The Draft Audit Report (point 23) mentions that <i>performance and safety issues observed during quality assurance activities remained unaddressed and were recurring</i>, which is due to the lack of meetings. There is no</p>

## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						logical connection between holding monthly coordination meetings and the recurrence of mistakes. Non-conformities are addressed by UNMAS Lebanon Quality Assurance Officers in close coordination with J3-CES and the demining teams at the task site.
6	UNIFIL should direct the J3 Branch to establish adequate monitoring mechanisms for the J3-Combat Engineer Section and the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon to: (i) strictly enforce requirements for validating the capacity of demining/explosive ordnance disposal teams; and (ii) maintain records of completed pre-deployment training.	Important	Yes Partially	(1) Best Practice Office  (2) J3-CES  (3) UNMAS Lebanon	(1) <b>30/12/2017</b> SOP 12-09 Anticipated release December 2017  (2) <b>January 2017</b> Implemented  (3) 30/11/2017	(1) In the reviewed SOP for Validation and Quality Management of UNIFIL Operational Demining, the article that requires proof of qualifications of key staff, medics, EOD, EOR, etc. has been removed. When the TCCs submit the nomination roll and specify the function/position of each personnel, it is evidence that the TCC acknowledges the qualification of the personnel. Over the years, all demining/medic teams were validated within the prescribed validation period without any delay. (2) As of Jan 2017, all the pre-deployment training plans of the TCCs have been kept in records and will be kept for 5 years. (3) UNMAS Lebanon, in close coordination with J3-CES will review current validation

## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of of demining activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
					<b>(4) Implemented</b>	requirements and processes and amend if necessary. (4) We also wish to note that a total of 23 Validation Assessments were conducted during the audit period. During this period, three TCC demining contingents, including 9 rotations and approximately 400 personnel were assessed. A vast majority of TCC demining teams were demonstrated a level of comprehension of their SOPs which was compliant with both National and International Mine Action Standards.
7	UNIFIL should direct the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon to: (i) consistently apply the quality assurance methodology in evaluating demining/explosive ordnance disposal teams' adherence to safety standards, policies and guidelines; and (ii) establish an adequate mechanism to timely track implementation of outstanding safety recommendations and report the status to the Deputy Force Commander.	Important	Yes	UNMAS Lebanon Project Manager	<b>28/02/2018</b>	UNMAS Lebanon will review Quality Assurance methodology in close coordination with J3-CES in order to determine if any amendments are necessary. A mechanism to adequately track non-conformities is already in place via the production of quality assurance reports. The following points must also be noted:  (1) Quality Assurance forms, which are used to ensure compliance with IMAS and National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), are

## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

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Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>tailored to a specific demining process and used from site setup to site completion. The use of these forms ensures that non-conformities are tracked and addressed in a timely manner.</p> <p>(2) Annex B, Item 4, Point c of the Technical Arrangement on demining activities stipulates that site closure is a last resort. Non-conformities during operations have been addressed through regular and special monitoring visits. Site closure was never deemed as a necessary corrective action to take during the audit period.</p> <p>(3) Non-conformities, if any, are addressed in subsequent visits.</p>
8	UNIFIL should direct the United Nations Mine Action Service in Lebanon to review the conditions to administer refresher training for demining/explosive ordnance disposal teams after periods of inactivity and monitor full compliance with the established refresher training requirement.	Important	yes	J3-CES, UNMAS Lebanon  Best Practice Office	<b>30/11/2017:</b> TA finalized by J3- CES & UNMAS Lebanon <b>28/02/2018:</b> For finalization of TA	Review of the <u>Technical Arrangement</u> and relevant SOPs is ongoing as noted in responses to other recommendations in this document. UNIFIL J3-CES and UNMAS Lebanon have ensured since Jan 2017 that refresher training following periods of demining inactivity is clearly defined and enforced as per current SOPs, IMAS and NMAS.

