



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2024/048

Audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

The lack of a finalized mission concept and incomplete implementation of recommendations from key strategic reviews impacted the effective direction and management of the Mission

10 October 2024

Assignment No. AP2023-684-01

Audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures implemented by UNSMIL to achieve its mandate. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2021 to 30 December 2023 and focused on higher and medium risk areas related to: (a) governance and oversight mechanisms; (b) work plan development, implementation and monitoring; and (c) management of mission support functions.

The Mission was addressing inadequacies in work plan development and monitoring, but the lack of a finalized mission concept and incomplete implementation of recommendations from key strategic reviews impacted the effective direction and management of the Mission. A high vacancy rate also impacted implementation of the Mission's mandate.

OIOS made seven recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UNSMIL needed to:

- Finalize and endorse its mission concept of operations and review, repurpose or address outstanding recommendations from the independent strategic review and joint assessment mission;
- Expedite the development of an evaluation policy;
- Establish a mechanism to monitor and report on the status of vacancies on a regular basis;
- Include in its action plans for staff career development, gender, and diversity and inclusion, activities that are specific, measurable and time-bound, and implement them;
- Initiate the process to recover underpayment of rent for accommodation from a staff member;
- Ensure the United Nations Guard Unit remains in regular contact and consultation with the Office of Military Affairs in the Department Peace Operations; and
- Ensure timely implementation of pending recommendations of the Board of Inquiry, including the assessment of the relevancy and timeline.

UNSMIL accepted the recommendations, implemented one and initiated actions to implement the remaining. Actions required to close the remaining recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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Audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).
2. UNSMIL was established on 16 September 2011 as a special political mission, under Security Council resolution 2009 (2011). The UNSMIL mandate is set out in Security Council resolution 2542 (2020) and paragraph 16 of resolution 2570 (2021). The mandate is renewed annually and most recently, Security Council resolution 2702 (2023) extended the mandate until 31 October 2024.
3. The Mission's mandate includes mediation and good offices to support: (a) an inclusive political process leading to a democratically elected government and its reconciliation; (b) peacebuilding and state-building efforts, formed on the basis of credible, transparent and inclusive elections; (c) advancing gender equality, human rights and rights-based national reconciliation and transitional justice processes; (d) addressing the threat from terrorism; and (e) cultivating mutually beneficial relationships with its international partners. UNSMIL is also requested to provide support to the 5+5 Joint Military Commission¹ and the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned ceasefire monitoring mechanism, including through the facilitation of confidence-building measures and the scalable and incremental deployment of UNSMIL ceasefire monitors once conditions allow.
4. UNSMIL is headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), who is supported by two Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (DSRSGs): Political and Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator.
5. UNSMIL 2023 proposed programme budget amounted to \$88.4 million as detailed in table 1. The resources were to provide funding for 297 staff positions (1 SRSG, 2 DSRSG, 8 D-1, 12 P-5, 28 P-4, 31 P-3, 2 P-2, 124 Field Service, 80 General Service (GS), and 9 National Professional Officers), including the proposed establishment of 99 new positions for the ceasefire monitoring component in 2023. The resources would also support five backstopping positions based at Headquarters in New York (1 P-5, 3 P-4, and 1 GS). UNSMIL manages and occupies one major compound in Libya, with most staff located in Tripoli and limited field presence in Libya (Benghazi and Sabha) and in Tunis (Tunisia).

Table 1: UNSMIL financial resource requirements in the 2023 proposed programme budget (\$'000)

Expenditure category	2021	2022	2023
Military and police personnel costs	6,393.5	6,676.5	6,761.1
Civilian personnel costs	33,756.4	33,256.5	41,722.7
Operational costs	28,981.1	29,329.0	39,948.4
Total (net of staff assessments)	69,131.0	69,262.0	88,432.2

Source: [A/77/6 \(Sect.3\)/Add.4](#)

6. Comments provided by UNSMIL are incorporated in italics.

¹ The 5+5 Joint Military Commission consists of five senior military officers chosen by the Government of National Unity, which controls Tripoli and surrounding areas, and five senior military officers chosen by the General of the Libyan National Army, which exercises de-facto control over Eastern and Southern parts of the country.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures implemented by UNSMIL to achieve its mandate.
8. This audit was included in the 2023 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the importance of the Mission in supporting peace, security and political stability in Libya.
9. OIOS conducted this audit from August 2023 to May 2024. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2021 to 30 December 2023. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in: (a) governance and oversight mechanisms; (b) mandate implementation and monitoring; (c) and management of mission support functions.
10. The audit methodology included: (a) reviews and analyses of relevant policies, guidelines, and reports, (b) discussions and interviews with concerned UNSMIL officials and staff; (c) assessment of systems, practices and processes for data management, and (d) analytical reviews of data including those maintained in Umoja and its Strategic Management Application (SMA).
11. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Strategic planning and oversight mechanisms

Need to complete strategic documentation and implement recommendations from key strategic reviews

12. The mission startup guidance requires field missions to develop a mission concept that includes a statement of intent and strategy on how the mission plans to implement its mandate; guiding principles for mandate implementation; mission objective priorities; and key assumptions and risks. The mission concept is a management tool for strategic planning, communication and resource allocation. To further assist in mission planning, the Security Council (resolution 2542 (2020)), mandated an independent strategic review (ISR) of UNSMIL, including: (a) an assessment and recommendations for improving the efficiency of the UNSMIL overall mission structure, prioritization of tasks and the capacity and effectiveness of staffing, including on mediation and peace process management; and (b) further assessment of the options for effective ceasefire monitoring under the auspices of the United Nations. OIOS observed the following in relation to these activities:
13. **Mission concept not endorsed:** UNSMIL Office of Chief of Staff (OCOS) prepared a new mission concept in 2020 that included the Mission's strategic objectives, priorities, assumptions and risks, mandated tasks and performance measures, cross cutting issues, and implementation of the Secretary-General's priorities. The Mission concept was updated annually; however, it was not endorsed by the SRSG. The Mission attributed this to the several changes over the years in senior Mission management, including changes in the incumbents of the SRSG, Chief of Staff (COS) and Chief of Mission Support (CMS) positions, and other key staff rotations. Despite the Mission concept not being endorsed, the Ceasefire Monitoring Component (CMC) developed their strategic plan and concept of operations in 2022, which highlighted the component's priorities, sequence of mandated activities, methodology for integration and mandate implementation. The Electoral Assistance Service (EAS) and the Gender Advisory Section also prepared concepts of operations, while Public Information and Communications Section (PICS) prepared a communications strategy in 2022, which outlined the Mission's communication strategy and vision.

However, there was a lack of agreement, collaboration and coordination among Mission management on key priorities needed to develop work plans and implement recommendations from the ISR.

14. **Delayed implementation of long-outstanding ISR recommendations:** The ISR was conducted in June and July 2021 and the results endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2629 (2022). The report included 16 recommendations in five focus areas: (a) role of UNSMIL; (b) structure of UNSMIL; (c) priorities and capacities of the Mission; (d) United Nations integration; and (e) footprint of the United Nations in Libya.

15. To track implementation of the recommendations, OCOS developed a matrix in December 2022 showing action points, responsible lead entity, priority level and timelines. The matrix was subsequently updated with implementation status and comments by managers and OCOS describing the actions taken and planned to be taken, including incorporating some of the latter in their section work plans.² The Mission updated the Security Council and General Assembly on the implementation of the ISR through quarterly reports of the Secretary-General and during its engagement with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and Fifth Committee. As of May 2024, 3 recommendations were indicated as fully implemented, 11 partially implemented or ongoing, and 2 had not started due to the delayed elections. Implemented recommendations included undertaking diplomatic briefings and increasing staff in field offices. UNSMIL also participated in the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Libya, as part of implementing the ISR recommendations on improving United Nations integration.

16. However, OIOS noted that some recommendations remained open as the Mission had challenges implementing them. For example, the Mission was unable to establish and secure and/or expand regional hubs in Benghazi and Sabha due to the volatile security situation in those locations; the liquidity crisis impacted speedy recruitment; and OCOS was unable to establish new posts following recommendations against the same by ACABQ. Also, other recommendations were overtaken by events. The Mission, however, did not review and repurpose the recommendations to make them more adaptable for its purposes. UNSMIL indicated that a staffing review had been initiated with the support of the Department Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Department of Operational Support. The review will be used to inform the Mission's 2026 budget process.

17. As a result of the challenges in implementing the ISR recommendations, in January 2023, the SRSR requested a team led by the Director of the Northern Africa Division in the single political structure shared by DPPA and the Department of Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) to undertake a joint assessment mission (JAM) review of UNSMIL to provide strategic guidance on the implementation of the recommendations.

18. **Long-outstanding JAM review recommendations:** The JAM report dated 11 April 2023 made 35 recommendations of which 18 were classified as high priority and required immediate implementation. The recommendations were related to the structure of UNSMIL, staff vacancy rates, integrated mission planning for the expansion of the Mission's footprint in Libya, aviation capacity, health support plan, importation and restrictions on information and communication technology equipment, and cooperation with the United Nations country team (UNCT) on operational issues and staff welfare measures.

19. However, as of May 2024, the Mission had implemented only five recommendations, including the deployment of staff to Benghazi on a permanent basis; various recruitments such as of a Welfare Officer, Coordination Officer and Conduct and Discipline Officer as well as filling of vacant posts in the Political Affairs Service (PAS); and redeployment of resources initially approved for CMC in Benghazi to Mission Support. Twenty-nine recommendations remained open partly due to the ongoing liquidity crisis and

² EAS, CMC, PICS and Political Affairs Service

vacancies in OCOS and Office of the CMS (OCMS), which made it difficult to monitor implementation of the recommendations. The Mission stated that some of the recommendations were no longer relevant or feasible, such as merging CMC with the Security Institutions Service, reviewing the Department of Safety and Security/Integrated Security Workforce structure or deploying armed security personnel to the United Nations common compound. However, UNSMIL did not conduct a formal review to address the recommendations that remained relevant.

20. The above was partly attributable to the frequent changes in key Mission executive positions, including those of the SRSG, COS and CMS. This included:

- (a) Four Heads of Mission between 2021 and 2024, and the SRSG's position is vacant as of May 2024.
- (b) Three COS between 2021 and 2024, with lengthy vacancies in the COS position from September to mid-November 2022 and again from May to October 2023 with five officers-in-charge acting during this period.
- (c) The CMS joined the Mission in February 2021 but has been out of the Mission since April 2023 on administrative leave. The Mission appointed two officers-in-charge during this period of absence. A new CMS was appointed in January 2024.

21. The lack of a finalized mission concept and incomplete implementation of recommendations from key strategic reviews impacted the effective direction and management of the Mission.

(1) UNSMIL should: (a) finalize and endorse its mission concept of operations incorporating its strategy to guide mandate implementation and prioritization of resources; and (b) review, repurpose or address outstanding recommendations from the independent strategic review and joint assessment mission.

UNSMIL accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the new Officer-in-Charge of UNSMIL was reviewing the mission concept, which would be updated considering the upcoming mandate renewal and the ongoing staffing review. While some of the ISR and JAM recommendations had already been implemented and others overtaken by events, the recommendations will also be reviewed in light of the most recent developments, mandate renewal and priorities, and, where required, UNSMIL will consider repurposing or addressing outstanding recommendations.

B. Work plan development, implementation and monitoring

The Mission was addressing inadequacies in work plan development and monitoring

22. OIOS review of the Mission's development and monitoring of its work plan noted the following:

23. **Inconsistencies in work planning documentation:** Substantive sections such as EAS, CMC, PICS, and Human Rights, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice Service (Human Rights) developed work plans for 2021 to 2023 following internal meetings and consultations within the sections, internal retreats and workshops, and collaborations with UNCT and the Security Management Team. However, they used different templates to describe their annual activities, outputs and targets, which resulted in inconsistencies in the information the sections included on their work planning documents and omissions of key elements such as time-bound targets, key performance indicators, outcomes and the required human and financial resources.

24. OCOS stated that during the absence of a COS there was no structure to ensure the work planning and monitoring processes were adequate. In preparation for the Mission's 2023 annual work plan and to

brief the then newly appointed SRSG, OCOS required all sections, in September 2022, to prepare a briefing note on their mandate delivery including key activities and way forward, resources and challenges. The briefing note was the only finalized work planning documentation prepared by the Joint Analysis and Reporting Unit, PAS³ and Security Institutions Service; therefore, it was unclear how these units planned to effectively use available human and financial resources to implement their mandates.

25. In January 2024, OCOS developed and shared new work plan documentation for 2024 that were more comprehensive and provided guidance to sections to identify and link programme objectives, activities, priorities, targets, outputs, outcomes, timelines, and impact to their respective mandates for submission within prescribed timelines.

26. **Absence of Mission consolidated work plans:** OIOS also noted that UNSMIL did not prepare a consolidated work plan for the Mission at the entity level. In its absence, UNSMIL used the UNSDCF, annual proposed programme budget, SRSG compact, and draft mission concept as its main reference to guide the implementation of its mandate. However, these documents were prepared at a very high level and were not supplemented with a consolidated work plan elaborating how the sections would collaborate and ensure coordinated implementation of the mandate. This was attributed to inadequate resources in OCOS. Furthermore, although the SRSG chaired weekly senior management and biweekly security management team meetings to keep abreast of the situation on the ground in four of the Mission's pillars, namely the political, security, electoral, and human rights pillars to understand their effect on the Mission's operations, the sections highlighted the need for more collaboration.

27. OIOS noted that as of June 2024, the Mission was working on a "joint work plan," mapping specific activities/project deliverables of various Mission components to the 2023-2025 UNSDCF, 2024 planned results-based budget results and the SRSG's compact. The draft plan identified the lead and collaborating UNSMIL section responsible for each activity, the related United Nations agency/implementing partner, and other elements such as the crosscutting strategy (women, youth and civil society), geographical focus and relevant Strategic Development Goal. While the mapping exercise was being driven by the outcomes and outputs of the UNSDCF as required in situations where there is an integrated United Nations presence, UNSMIL had supplemented it with requirements that were specific to its mandate. The draft work plan also incorporated a monitoring mechanism. However, the timelines for the activities were not specific with most of them indicated as January 2024 to December 2024 or January 2023 to December 2025. Also, no target had been established for completion of the work plan. Nonetheless, OIOS concluded that important progress had been made towards establishing a consolidated Mission work plan.

28. **No senior management feedback on progress reports prepared to monitor implementation of sections' work plans:** OCOS requested all sections to provide mid-term updates on their progress on the implementation of goals and performance indicators as a part of the SRSG's compact and the Mission's programme plan deliverables for 2022 and 2023. On his arrival, the SRSG established a politically focused election task force in March 2023, which comprised the DSRSGs and substantive heads of sections, to discuss negotiation strategies, ideas, initiatives and incentives that would further the work of the Mission. The task force met on an as needed basis. OIOS was informed that the minutes of these meetings were not maintained due to the highly sensitive nature of the information discussed. Nevertheless, OIOS confirmed that heads of sections attended this meeting.

29. The DSRSG Political, who subsequently left the mission in March 2024, stated that the Mission's progress per the mandate plans was reviewed and monitored with the heads of sections during periodic meetings. However, OIOS review of the available meeting minutes, including minutes of weekly senior management team meetings, did not indicate that discussions were held on the progress reports provided to

³ PAS had draft work plans for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 but they only included its objectives.

the SRSG and DSRSG Political. Challenges in conducting work plan activities were not identified and there was no formal structure to implement remedial actions, where necessary, based on lessons learned.

30. UNSMIL stated that the Officer-in-Charge of the Mission has, since May 2024, introduced a core management meeting which includes the Head of Mission, DSRSGs, COS and CMS to take decisions impacting the entire mission and prepare for senior management meetings. To further improve the coordination and information sharing, the Mission had revived its central planning calendar of activities, and established a calendar tracking mission events, activities and key meetings. As UNSMIL developed new work plan documentation for 2024 and introduced management meetings at the senior level to improve coordination and to monitor work plan implementation, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

The Mission conducted and recorded the implementation of activities in Umoja

31. A review of various documents showed that UNSMIL implemented some important activities. In 2022 and 2023, the SRSG met with international actors such as foreign ambassadors, Libyan political figures and institutions, the African Union, development banks and social councils. He also engaged with regional and international actors to mobilize support to address the political stalemate in Libya. Mission components also conducted various activities to implement planned activities and deliverables for 2022 and 2023, which were recorded in SMA. OIOS substantiated implementation of activities across the Mission including:

- (a) EAS developing: (i) guidance to support the High National Election Commission, (ii) an electoral outreach plan for opening of the voter registry, and (iii) a budget planning matrix for elections in 2023.
- (b) PAS coordinating the drafting of SRSG briefings and Secretary-General's reports, including SRSG briefings to the Security Council that were required every 60 days.
- (c) The Human Rights Section meeting with civil society actors, human rights defenders, female lawyers, the justice system, line ministries, parliamentarians, the bar association, and academia.
- (d) CMC conducting workshops and training for local and international monitors and meeting various interlocutors including foreign representatives.
- (e) The Security Institutions Service facilitating meetings and consultations with international actors and Libyan institutions, conducting consultations and workshops on capacity-building training, coordinating with Member States, UNCT and civil society organizations to train and empower champions within the community on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform programmes.
- (f) PICS maintaining a website and social media accounts on Facebook and X (formerly twitter), which were updated regularly with the various Mission activities and events.
- (g) The Gender Advisory Section preparing a three-year action plan on "Inclusive Mediation and Peace Building Processes in Libya: Protection and participation of women 2023 – 2025."

Need to develop and operationalize a clear evaluation mechanism

32. OIOS noted that there was no documented evaluation policy describing the evaluation methodology and scope of evaluation activities with clearly defined roles and responsibilities as required by the administrative instruction on evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat (ST/AI/2021/3). UNSMIL also did not have an evaluation schedule and had not conducted periodic evaluations for any of its programmes, projects or capacity and functions. As a result, UNSMIL missed an opportunity to comprehensively evaluate its programme components and measure their overall capacity, performance and impact in achieving strategic objectives and to identify lessons learned for greater impact.

33. UNSMIL acknowledged the significance of evaluations and stated that OCOS had finalized onboarding a staff member who would develop an evaluation policy and annual evaluation plans and conduct evaluations.

(2) UNSMIL should expedite the development of an evaluation policy and plan to conduct periodic evaluation of its programme components.

UNSMIL accepted recommendation 2 and stated that small missions like UNSMIL did not have dedicated programme evaluation capacity. The Mission will engage with the Business Transformation and Development Division to develop an evaluation policy that is adapted to its needs and will also designate an Evaluation Focal Point.

C. Management of mission support functions

Need to strengthen key aspects of human resources management

34. OIOS identified the need to strengthen human resources management to address the following issues:

35. **High vacancy rate:** There was a high vacancy rate within the Mission, with 26 per cent of positions remaining vacant as of May 2024, including 51 posts that had been vacant for more than two years. As of May 2024, seven organizational units were operating with vacancy rates of 30 per cent and above. The high vacancy rate was partly due to the establishment of 92 new positions in 2023 for CMC in Sirte, the Organization's recruitment restrictions on regular budget positions, and delays in issuing of visas to on boarding staff. In September 2023, UNSMIL requested the Controller for exception to recruit 24 critical posts and was given permission to proceed with 14 of them. However, OIOS noted that the 60 recruitments from rosters and 15 position-specific recruitments that were conducted between 2021 and 2023 took, on average, 88 days and 386 days, respectively against a target of 120 days. The Human Resources Unit was not effectively monitoring and reporting on vacancies regularly.

36. **Infrequent communication with staff:** Staff complained, in interviews, about infrequent town hall meetings and inadequate follow-up on their concerns. The SRSG held a town hall meeting in November 2022 shortly after his arrival and another in September 2023 following a significant flood event in eastern Libya. A prior town hall had been held in March 2021 by the Special Envoy. However, talking points and minutes of these meetings were not consistently maintained and there was no action plan to address issues related to unresolved staff concerns raised in the town hall meetings.

37. **Inadequate planning for achieving gender parity:** The Mission's gender parity remained below the Secretariat's average, with female staff holding 26 per cent of encumbered posts as of June 2024. The low representation of female staff, especially in professional and higher staff categories, was attributed to the hardship and non-family nature of the Tripoli duty station, among other factors. In June 2023, UNSMIL prepared an action plan for 2023 to 2026 on key areas such as staff career development, gender, diversity, and inclusion. The plan was in response to the United Nations System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity. The action plan activities were, however, not specific, measurable and time-bound and were not yet implemented.

38. **Decreasing compliance with staff performance evaluation requirements:** There was a decline in staff performance evaluation compliance rates, with 80 per cent completion for the 2022/2023 performance cycle as of December 2023 (six months after the expected completion date), and 86 per cent completion for the 2023/2024 performance cycle as of June 2024. This decline from 99 per cent completion

rate in the 2021/2022 performance cycle was due to a lack of enforcement of timely completion by managers. The Mission indicated that they are taking actions to monitor and enforce the completion of staff performance evaluations by the specified due dates.

39. Addressing vacancies, promoting a cohesive organizational culture, advancing gender parity, and enhancing staff evaluation processes were essential for mission effectiveness and mandate delivery.

(3) UNSMIL should establish a mechanism with status updates and action plans to monitor and report on the status of vacancies on a regular basis.

UNSMIL accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it had implemented several internal measures to help fill job openings within 120 days of issuance. These included the issuance of reports on a weekly and monthly basis since February 2024, to monitor vacancies, recruitment, onboarding, and recruitment planning. Most of the delays in the recruitment plan were due to liquidity and visa challenges, which also delayed/suspended the onboarding process.

(4) UNSMIL should include in its action plan on staff career development, gender, and diversity and inclusion, activities that are specific, measurable and time-bound, and implement them.

UNSMIL accepted recommendation 4 and stated that its Gender Parity Action plan was currently being reviewed. Meanwhile, the Mission had issued new guidance and revised the selection memo template, designed to promote and improve gender parity in the Mission. UNSMIL had also established a task force to address racism.

Need to address irregular rental deductions

40. The Engineering and Facility Management Unit developed standard operating procedures on allocation of accommodation. Staff living at Oea compound were required to pay full rent for single occupancy villas or a reduced rate of 50 per cent if they occupied a 2- or 3-bedroom villa that required sharing a bathroom, living space or kitchen. Staff at director level were provided with their own villas. OIOS review of the amounts recovered from staff members based on the type of accommodation provided indicated that they were mostly in compliance with the established procedures, except for one senior staff member who was provided with a single occupancy villa but was charged the lower rental deduction rate of 50 per cent.

41. The staff member arrived at the Mission in early 2021 and was allocated a villa for which the rental deduction was initially applied in full. However, in December 2021 the staff member requested through the Human Resource Office in UNSMIL to apply a 50 per cent reduction in rental deduction effective from the arrival date at the Mission and was refunded \$5,164. The justification provided in an email to the head of Mission and DSRS Political was that the accommodation was also used as office space and cited concerns about confidentiality of meetings in the designated office. However, there was no evidence that the request was approved. The reduction resulted in an underpayment of rent amounting to \$11,754. UNSMIL stated that there was inadequate scrutiny over rental deductions and possible abuse of authority.

42. UNSMIL needed to take steps to recover the underpaid rent from the staff member and enhance scrutiny over rental reductions to prevent similar irregularities.

(5) UNSMIL should initiate the process to recover underpayment of rent for accommodation from the concerned staff member.

UNSMIL accepted recommendation 5 and stated that action would be taken after consideration of additional documentation provided by the staff member.

The Mission was addressing the shortfall in equipment deployed by the United Nations Guard Unit but needed to ensure the Unit remains in regular contact with DPO

43. The United Nations entered into a memorandum of understanding with a troop contributing country (TCC) effective 2 October 2017 for the deployment of the United Nations Guard Unit (UNGU) to assist in the protection of United Nations personnel and designated property. In 2023, 234 personnel were deployed at a cost of \$6,761,100. The statement of unit requirements (SUR) dated 14 August 2016 and a memorandum of understanding required the TCC to provide specific equipment at UNSMIL. However, the quarterly status reports on contingent-owned equipment for the period 1 January 2021 to 30 December 2023 rated UNGU overall performance as unsatisfactory in terms of serviceability per memorandum of understanding requirements because of undeployed equipment.

44. Eighteen explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) equipment were to be delivered in May 2017; however, as of May 2024, only nine were deployed, and an inspection of the deployed equipment reported that six were of the wrong pattern and therefore did not meet the specifications in the SUR. UNSMIL was awaiting deployment of the remaining nine EOD equipment, which had not been allowed to enter Libya due to inadequate documentation that delayed custom clearance for the importation of the equipment. Inadequate equipment may result in the inability of the UNGU to safely secure United Nations compounds and protect staff.

45. UNSMIL stated that the missing documentation had since been provided and they were working with the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to obtain the relevant custom clearances. They were also reviewing UNGU operations and equipment requirements and will update the SUR and memorandum of understanding accordingly. Pending receipt of the relevant clearances, the Mission was considering establishing an on-demand contract for demining activities that will help to mitigate risks, thus ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel.

46. The SUR also required the UNGU Commander to remain in regular contact and consultation with the Office of Military Affairs in DPO (DPO-OMA) on technical matters, as well as with the Chief Security Adviser for advice on United Nations security management system policies, daily tasking and actions to be taken during crises. However, there have been no consultations between UNGU and DPO-OMA since UNGU deployed in Tripoli in December 2017. UNSMIL stated that monthly consultations began in February 2024 but did not provide supporting evidence.

47. Consultations between UNGU and OMA were necessary to ensure comprehensive operational and technical oversight of their operations.

(6) UNSMIL should, in coordination with DPO, take steps to ensure that the United Nations Guard Unit remains in regular contact and consultation with the Office of Military Affairs in DPO.

UNSMIL accepted recommendation 6 and stated that UNGU had taken steps to ensure regular contact with OMA and the UNGU Commanding Officer was holding monthly meetings with OMA.

Need to implement or reassess long-outstanding recommendations from the Board of Inquiry

48. A critical incident occurred in Benghazi, Libya on 10 August 2019 that resulted in the deaths and injury of UNSMIL personnel. The Headquarters Board of Inquiry conducted its proceedings between 15 and 28 November 2019 and made 22 recommendations aimed at improving operational safety and security.

49. UNSMIL developed a matrix and updated the progress on implementation of the recommendations, seven of which had been fully implemented, including reassignment of a nurse in 2024 and preliminary assessment of two hospitals for stabilization and evacuation of patients during medical emergencies and trauma. Pending recommendations included: (a) ensuring safe and secure access to food, water and the essentials of living for the Benghazi hub; (b) updating training for close protection officers; and (c) conducting threat assessments through a security-specific lens to mitigate potential future incidents and safeguard the well-being of UNSMIL staff.

50. However, considering the United Nations liquidity crisis, mission deployment and changes in the political and security landscape in Libya since the Benghazi incident, including the low footprint and availability of medical and mortuary services in Benghazi, UNSMIL needed to conduct an assessment to ensure that the outstanding recommendations remain relevant. Failure to do so undermined the Mission's operational effectiveness and compromised its duty of care to staff.

(7) UNSMIL should take steps to ensure timely implementation of the pending recommendations of the Board of Inquiry, including the assessment of the relevancy and timeline.

UNSMIL accepted recommendation 7 and stated that until recently, UNSMIL did not have staff based permanently in Benghazi. The Mission was exploring the establishment of an integrated joint Level 1 clinic with the UNCT, and medical evacuation arrangements and mortuary services had been put in place.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

51. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNSMIL 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 the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ^{4/} Important ⁵	C/ O ⁶	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁷
1	UNSMIL should: (a) finalize and endorse its mission concept of operations incorporating its strategy to guide mandate implementation and prioritization of resources; and (b) review, repurpose or address outstanding recommendations from the independent strategic review and joint assessment mission.	Important	O	Receipt of the finalized and endorsed mission concept of operations and results of the review of outstanding ISR and JAM recommendations and evidence of implementation of those with ongoing relevance.	31 December 2025
2	UNSMIL should expedite the development of an evaluation policy and plan to conduct periodic evaluations of its programme components.	Important	O	Receipt of the evaluation policy and a plan for periodic evaluations of UNSMIL programme components.	31 January 2025
3	UNSMIL should establish a mechanism with status updates and action plans to monitor and report on the status of vacancies on a regular basis.	Important	O	Receipt of monthly staffing vacancy reports with status updates and action plans that are used to monitor the status of vacancies.	31 December 2024
4	UNSMIL should include in its action plans for staff career development, gender, and diversity and inclusion, activities that are specific, measurable and time-bound, and implement them.	Important	O	Receipt of staff career development, gender, and diversity and inclusion action plans that include activities that are specific, measurable and time-bound and evidence of their implementation.	31 December 2024
5	UNSMIL should initiate the process to recover underpayment of rent for accommodation from the concerned staff member.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of remedial action taken to recover underpayment of rent for accommodation from the concerned staff member.	31 December 2024
6	UNSMIL should, in coordination with DPO, take steps to ensure that the United Nations Guard Unit remains in regular contact and consultation with the Office of Military Affairs in DPO.	Important	C	Action complete.	Implemented

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 UNSMIL in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ^{4/} / Important ₅	C/ O ⁶	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁷
7	UNSMIL should take steps to ensure timely implementation of the pending recommendations of the Board of Inquiry, including the assessment of the relevancy and timeline.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of the actions taken to implement the pending Board of Inquiry recommendations.	31 December 2025

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹¹ / Important ¹²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNSMIL should: (a) finalize and endorse its mission concept of operations incorporating its strategy to guide mandate implementation and prioritization of resources; and (b) review, repurpose or address outstanding recommendations from the independent strategic review and joint assessment mission.	Important	Yes	Mission Planning Officer	31 December 2025	<p>1 (a): The current mandate of UNSMIL, under Security Council resolution 2703 (2023) expires on 31 October 2024. The Security Council is expected to renew the mandate in October. The Officer-in-Charge of UNSMIL is currently reviewing the mission concept, which will be updated in light of the mandate renewal and the ongoing staffing review.</p> <p>1 (b) Some of the recommendations are already being implemented such as undertaking diplomatic briefings, expansion of staff in field offices. Others have been overtaken by events on the ground, such as the liquidity crisis has impacted ability to hire rapidly or rejection by ACABQ of proposed new posts. The mission will review the recommendations in light of the recent developments and the mandate renewal and priorities and where required will consider repurposing or addressing outstanding recommendations.</p>
2	UNSMIL should expedite the development of an evaluation policy and plan to conduct periodic evaluations of its programme components.	Important	Yes	Mission Planning Officer	31 January 2025	Small missions like UNSMIL do not have dedicated programme evaluation capacity. The mission will engage with BTAD to develop an evaluation policy that is adapted to its needs. It will also designate an Evaluation Focal Point.
3	UNSMIL should establish a mechanism with status updates and action plans to monitor and report on the status of vacancies on a regular basis.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	31 December 2024	UNSMIL implemented internal measures to help fill job openings within 120 days from the time the JO is issued. The Mission continues to send follow-ups and reminders to the Hiring Managers (HMs) to complete their actions promptly and to meet with HMs to assist with any administrative procedure or technical aspect in Inspira. The Mission sends monthly reports to the Head of Mission (HoM) on recruitment and

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Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹¹ / Important ¹²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>vacant positions. However, with the liquidity crisis, the mission has had to slow down the onboarding process and not complete the hiring process as timely as it should.</p> <p>The Mission also coordinates and collaborates with all hiring managers (HMs) to link their offline weekly list of positions posted with the HR data generated from Inspira to monitor the progress of each recruitment and update the key performance indicators for the various stages of the recruitment process so to achieve the benchmark of 120 days.</p> <p>While the Mission staffing complement is issued monthly, reports on a weekly and monthly basis have been issued since February 2024 to monitor vacancies, recruitment, onboarding, and recruitment planning.</p> <p>Most of the delays in the recruitment plan are due to liquidity challenges, which also delayed /suspended the onboarding process. In addition, the Libyan visa challenge continues to add two to three months before the selected individual can travel to the Mission area, and to complete the JO in Inspira. This causes an interruption in and constant adjustment of recruitment plans.</p>
4	UNSMIL should include in its action plans for staff career development, gender, and diversity and inclusion, activities that are specific, measurable and time-bound, and implement them.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer and Hiring Managers	31 December 2024	UNSMIL has a Gender Parity Action Plan from 2023 until 2026, it is currently being reviewed. The Mission continues to work with hiring managers to ensure that qualified female candidates are selected for vacant positions.

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Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹¹ / Important ¹²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>The OiC/UNSMIL has issued a new guidance, which requires all hiring managers to prioritize suitable female candidates in light of the need to improve gender parity in the UNSMIL. The process is documented in a revised selection memo template designed to ensure in promoting gender parity, with details of gender distribution.</p> <p>However, many of UNSMIL's job openings do not yield a sufficient number of female applications who meet the job requirements. In addition, the gender parity effort is further exacerbated by the recruitment freeze. The Mission will continue to work with UNHQ and the local outreach teams to expand on its ongoing efforts to reach gender parity in line with the SRSB strategy.</p> <p>As one of the tools to promote inclusivity and diversity, UNSMIL has established a task force to address racism. Data related to geographic and gender diversity is also provided to section heads and hiring managers on a monthly basis and at time of hiring.</p> <p>In the ongoing Staffing Review, UNSMIL makes efforts to evaluate existing staffing resources to assign functions focusing on career development. This capacity may be used to work with staff members in planning a career development roadmap for the Mission.</p>

Audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹¹ / Important ²¹	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
5	UNSMIL should initiate the process to recover underpayment of rent for accommodation from the concerned staff member.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	31 December 2024	On the partial rental recovery, the Mission has reached out to the concerned staff member on this matter. However, staff member has since provided additional documentation which will be shared as an annex. Once completed, appropriate action will be taken.
6	UNSMIL should, in coordination with DPO, take steps to ensure that the United Nations Guard Unit remains in regular contact and consultation with the Office of Military Affairs in DPO.	Important	Yes	UNGU Commander	Implemented	This recommendation is already being implemented. UNGU Commanding Officer has monthly meetings with OMA.
7	UNSMIL should take steps to ensure timely implementation of the pending recommendations of the Board of Inquiry, including the assessment of the relevancy and timeline.	Important	Yes	Chief Medical Officer	31 December 2025	<p>A preliminary assessment of two (02) hospitals (Dar Al Shifa and Valencia Hospitals) in Benghazi has been conducted and both hospitals fit the purpose of stabilization and evacuation during medical emergencies and trauma. A brief assessment report is attached.</p> <p>MEDEVAC arrangements are in place. Medical evacuation can be done utilizing a UNSMIL flight, and was used in a recent evacuation, when a private air ambulance was not available as needed. Also, a systems contract for air ambulance services from Europe or Kenya is in place and current being reviewed.</p> <p>The overall joint operations in Benghazi will be reviewed with the UNCT. Until recently, UNSMIL did not have staff based permanently on the ground. We are exploring the establishment of an integrated joint UNOE Level I Clinic at Benghazi with cost sharing</p>

Audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ^[1] / Important ^[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>from UNSMIL and UNAFPs based on the planned staffing presence at the location.</p> <p>Mortuary services are not available in Libya. Only Public hospitals are authorized to store human remains, perform postmortems, and provide necessary documents (death certificate, non-infectious certificate, postmortem report, burial permit, etc.) for repatriation of HR to a destination either within or outside Libya.</p> <p>As an alternate, UNSMIL has included the mortuary services in the UN-contracted Level III hospital contracts in Tripoli and Tunis. Once the UN receives relevant documents from a public hospital, human remains will be moved to a funeral home under the Level III hospital contract for preparation of the human remains (preparation of human remains, coffin) and repatriation (cargo booking at actuals) to the destination accordingly. Level III hospital contract in Tripoli is attached.</p>

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

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



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Confidential

7 September 2024

Ref: UNSMIL/COS/2024/134

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

From: Stephanie Koury *stephanie koury*
Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs
And Officer-in-Charge of UNSMIL

Subject: **Draft report on an audit of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya**
(Assignment No AP2023-684-01)

1. Reference is made to your Interoffice Memorandum OIOS-2024-01561, dated 23 August 2024, by which you transmitted the above-mentioned report for my review.
2. UNSMIL has no comments on the draft report and accepts all recommendations. Please find attached an action plan with target dates and the titles of the individuals responsible for implementing the recommendations (Appendix I).
3. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the colleagues of the OIOS Internal Audit Division for the constructive cooperation throughout this audit.

cc: Mr. Jack Christofides, Director, NAD, DPPA
Ms. Uchenna Odenigbo, CMS, UNSMIL
Mr. Marco Kalbusch, COS, UNSMIL
Ms. Xin Zhou, OIOS