



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2018/012

Audit of aviation safety in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

There was a need to improve controls over the identification, assessment and mitigation of the Mission's aviation safety risks

15 March 2018

Assignment No. AP2017/641/01

Audit of aviation safety in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of aviation safety in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over the identification, assessment and mitigation of the aviation safety risks in MINUSMA. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2017 and included key aspects of the implementation and management of the aviation safety programme including: (a) aviation safety governance; (b) hazard identification and risk management; (c) the Mission's Aviation Safety Council (MASC); (d) aviation emergency response plan; (e) safety reporting process; and (f) investigations of incidents and accidents.

While MINUSMA developed various standard operating procedures for its aviation safety activities, the Mission did not consistently implement the required procedures to identify, assess and mitigate the its aviation safety risks; plan and coordinate AERP drills and exercises; and ensure adequate functioning of the MASC.

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

- Establish realistic work plans for the Aviation Safety Unit and draw on military enablers in remote areas to assist with the implementation of the Mission's aviation safety programme;
- Monitor the implementation of the aviation risk management process;
- Reassess the current number of the MASC permanent members and monitor the members' attendance at meetings, and monitor the implementation of the MASC recommendations;
- Ensure that the required desktop drills, communication and live exercises are conducted;
- Provide adequate resources for the training of staff involved in the aviation safety programme;
- Implement a follow-up mechanism to ensure the timely implementation of recommendations from aviation safety assessment visits; and
- Install equipment for screening passengers at all regional airports.

MINUSMA accepted the recommendations and has initiated action to implement them.

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Audit of aviation safety in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of aviation safety in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).
2. The MINUSMA Office of Mission Support is responsible for providing safe, efficient and cost-effective aviation operations in the Mission. The MINUSMA Aviation Safety Unit (ASU) is responsible for: monitoring the implementation of the aviation safety programme; providing timely advice and recommendations on aviation safety-related matters; and promoting aviation safety awareness and accident prevention in the Mission. The Chief of the Unit reports directly to the Director of Mission Support (DMS) and the Unit interacts primarily with Aviation, Movement Control and Security Sections in the performance of its functions. Aviation safety activities are guided by the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support (DPKO/DFS): Aviation Safety Manual of 2012; Aviation Safety Policy of 2016; and Aviation Risk Management (ARM) Policy of 2014, and MINUSMA ARM and Aviation Safety Programme standard operating procedures.
3. As of June 2017, MINUSMA aviation fleet comprised 35 aircraft (9 fixed-wing and 26 rotary wing) and 47 unmanned aerial vehicles (i.e., remotely piloted aircraft systems) which were deployed in six regions (Bamako, Gao, Kidal, Mopti, Tessalit and Timbuktu). ASU is headed by the Chief Aviation Safety Officer at the P-4 level who is supported by three aviation safety officers based in the regional aviation offices in Bamako, Gao and Timbuktu, and two national staff.
4. Because of resource constraints, ASU budget for training and travel within and outside the Mission decreased from \$126,200 for fiscal year 2015/16 to \$49,500 for fiscal year 2016/17.
5. Comments provided by MINUSMA 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 management of aviation safety in MINUSMA.
7. This audit was included in the 2017 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the operational, safety, and financial risks related to air operations.
8. OIOS conducted this audit from July to September 2017. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2017. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas related to key aspects of the implementation and management of the aviation safety programme including: (a) aviation safety governance; (b) hazard identification and risk management; (c) aviation safety council; (d) aviation emergency response plan; (e) safety reporting process; and (f) investigations of incidents and accidents.
9. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of data; (d) sample testing of selected aviation safety monthly activities; and (e) field visits to 5 of 23 frequently used airfields.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Mission aviation safety programme

Aviation safety activities needed to be fully implemented

11. The Mission Aviation Safety Programme requires ASU to: conduct airfield and helipad surveys; monitor staff members' compliance with aviation safety requirements; enforce DPKO/DFS alcohol tolerance policy; and continuously implement safety education and aviation awareness programmes by disseminating safety bulletins electronically to the staff monthly.

12. Improvements were required over the implementation of aviation safety activities as ASU did not:

- Consistently conduct monthly surveys of the 23 regular airfields and helipads and 86 ad hoc landing sites to identify and address potential hazards relating to fuel handling, fire cover, flight line, airfield conditions and markings and airfield equipment;
- Monitor staff members' compliance with ARM standard operating procedures;
- Conduct alcohol tests on aircrews in three (Kidal, Mopti and Tessalit) of the six air operation regions; and
- Consistently implement procedures to increase staff awareness and culture towards air safety operations. The Unit disseminated aviation safety bulletins to staff only three times in the audit period, i.e., November 2015, January 2016 and February 2016.

13. The above conditions resulted mainly due to staff constraints as ASU had only 6 posts for fiscal year 2016/17, instead of the 10 posts required by DPKO/DFS guidelines to manage an aviation fleet of 35 aircraft and 47 unmanned aerial vehicles. For fiscal year 2017/18, the number of authorized posts increased by three, of which two were in the recruitment process at the time of the audit. ASU also did not: (a) align its scope of work with its resources, resulting in an unrealistic work plan and therefore non-implementation of planned activities; and (b) establish and implement procedures to draw on military enablers in remote areas to assist with the implementation of the Mission Aviation Safety Programme, such as airfield and helipads surveys and aircrew alcohol tests.

14. As a result, MINUSMA missed the opportunity to periodically identify, evaluate and take prompt corrective measures to enhance the safety of aviation operations and improve efficiency.

(1) MINUSMA should: (a) establish realistic work plans for the Aviation Safety Unit that are aligned with the level of available staffing resources for effective implementation of the aviation safety programme; and (b) draw on military enablers in remote areas to assist with the implementation of work plan activities.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the ASU was finalizing a revised version of its work plan that would best suit safety oversight functions and consider staff constraints. The Mission would also coordinate with qualified military officers to assist with the implementation of the aviation safety work plan activities at remote air regions and helicopter landing sites.

Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the revised ASU work plan and evidence that military enablers are involved in the implementation of the aviation safety work plan activities in remote areas.

Need to improve the ARM process

15. The Mission ARM standard operating procedures require ASU to: monitor the risk management process and maintain ARM databases; conduct monthly statistical and trend analysis on risks identified on ARM checklists; and convene risk management committee meetings to review and recommend corrective action for high risk aviation activities. The DPKO/DFS Aviation Safety Manual also requires the Unit to: evaluate and compile aviation safety risk assessment indicators on a quarterly basis; establish and implement a mechanism to identify and investigate hazards and incidents; and record within 24 hours all occurrences and hazards in the European Coordination Centre for Accident and Incident Reporting System (ECCAIRS), a database designed to collect and exchange aviation safety information.

16. MINUSMA established two risk management committees, the Risk Assessment Team and the Senior Level Committee, and implemented risk management procedures to identify hazards through ARM checklists and reporting forms, and evaluate and mitigate associated risks. However, ASU did not properly monitor the risk assessment implementation process to ensure that the Mission complied with ARM standard operating procedures and DPKO/DFS Aviation Safety Manual requirements, as follows:

- ASU did not conduct statistical and trend analysis on aviation risks to monitor performance and ensure compliance with standard operating procedures;
- The risk management committees did not meet to review and recommend corrective actions for each high-risk aviation activity conducted by the Mission. A review of the electronic ARM system showed that a total of 135 flights operated in high-risk or very high-risk conditions should have been reviewed by the committees to ensure that the Mission had adequately mitigated the related risks;
- ASU did not compile and evaluate aviation safety risk assessment indicators for two consecutive quarters (October to December 2016 and January to March 2017) out of eight quarters due to reassignment of the Unit's senior aviation safety officer during that period. Two quarterly safety risk assessment reports (July to September 2016 and April to June 2017) completed and submitted to the DFS Aviation Safety Section by the Mission were not supported by required questionnaires to document and ascertain that assigned risk levels were accurate; and
- ASU did not consistently identify, investigate and timely report aviation incidents and hazards as follows:
 - (a) OIOS review of 94 after-mission reports prepared by aircraft pilots and 36 occurrence and 15 hazard reports showed that 15 occurrences and 13 hazards were not reported in ECCAIRS. This resulted because ASU staff did not have access to the electronic after mission report application due to technical issues at the inception of the Mission;
 - (b) A review of 94 of 136 occurrences and 36 of 61 hazards that were reported in the system indicated that there were delays by ASU in recording incidents in the ECCAIRS by an average of 10 days and 9 days, respectively from the date the occurrences and hazards were observed; and

(c) Of the 136 occurrences and 61 hazards in ECCAIRS, 103 and 9, respectively, were closed without evidence that they were investigated. Also, the status of 7 occurrences and 50 hazard reports in ECCAIRS were still open by an average of 527 days, pending completion of investigation.

17. The above conditions were due to the absence of adequate monitoring procedures to ensure that sections/units consistently submit the ARM checklist to ASU, competing priorities and staffing constraints. [REDACTED] There was a risk that aviation risks may not be identified and adequately assessed and mitigated.

(2) MINUSMA should monitor the implementation of the Mission aviation risk management process and ensure that no steps are omitted and risks are properly identified, assessed and mitigated.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that all the stakeholders would consistently implement the Mission's aviation risk management process outlined in the Mission ARM and standard operating procedures. ASU also would ensure effective functioning of the Aviation Risk Assessment Team. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence of consistent implementation of the ARM process.

The functioning of the MASC needed improvement

18. The DPKO/DFS Aviation Safety Manual requires MINUSMA to establish an MASC that meets quarterly to: (a) review and supervise the aviation operational risk assessment process; (b) discuss risk mitigation strategies related to aviation operations and allocate resources for their implementation; and (c) make safety recommendations to keep the consequences of identified and potential hazards at or below an acceptable level. The MASC quorum is reached when eight members are present at a meeting.

19. MINUSMA established a MASC with appropriate terms of reference and chaired by the DMS. However, a review of activities and minutes of meetings held during the audit period highlighted the following issues which impaired the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council in mitigating aviation safety risks:

- The Council held six of the required eight meetings due to the unavailability of its members. As a result, the Mission did not review and address the aviation safety risks that might have occurred during these two quarters. Although the Council deliberated with the required quorum of eight members, the average attendance rate was only 52 per cent due to the excessive number of 31 permanent members; and

- The recommendations of the Council were not adequately followed up for implementation due to the absence of an adequate tracking mechanism. At the time of the audit, 22 of 31 recommendations made by the Council were pending for an average of more than one year. [REDACTED]

20. The above resulted because MINUSMA: had not established a mechanism to follow up on issues discussed and recommendations made by the Council; and did not assess the number of permanent members and monitor the members' attendance to MASC meetings. There was a risk that aviation safety risks might not receive prompt management attention to mitigate the effect of aviation hazards and/or accidents.

(3) MINUSMA should: (a) reassess the current number of the Mission Aviation Safety Council permanent members and monitor the members' attendance to the meetings; and (b) establish and implement procedures to monitor and ensure timely implementation of the Council's recommendations.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it was revising the MASC terms of reference and permanent membership and that the ASU was obtaining regular feedback from relevant sections on the status of implementation of the recommendations they were responsible for. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence of timely implementation of the Council's recommendations.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(4) MINUSMA should implement monitoring procedures to ensure that the required desktop drills, communication and live exercises are conducted.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it was updating the AERP to incorporate procedures to ensure that all drills/exercises were regularly conducted. Recommendation 4 remains

open pending receipt of evidence of procedures implemented to ensure that the Mission consistently conducts the required desktop drills, communication and live exercises.

Initial inspections of aircraft were timely conducted

25. The DPKO/DFS Aviation Safety Manual requires MINUSMA to conduct initial inspection of new aircraft leased by the United Nations for use in the Mission. This inspection should verify: (a) the technical condition of the aircraft, equipment and documentation; (b) level of the operator's or military unit's performance; and (c) compliance with the terms of the contract or letter of assist. A review of all initial inspection reports for 67 new aircraft received by the Mission over the audit period indicated that MINUSMA duly inspected the aircraft against established criteria. OIOS concluded that MINUSMA had established adequate procedures for conducting initial inspections of aircraft.

Need for ASU staff to attend required training

26. The DPKO/DFS Aviation Safety Manual requires MINUSMA to provide aviation safety training to staff directly or indirectly involved in the aviation safety programme. Staff at professional level are required to attend at least 13 (4 internal and 9 external) courses, while non-professional staff are required to attend at least 7 (3 internal and 4 external) courses. The Manual further requires MINUSMA to ensure sufficient training funds are allocated to enable 50 per cent of the ASU staff to attend training courses each year.

27. MINUSMA staff directly or indirectly involved in the aviation safety programme did not consistently attend the required aviation safety-related training courses. Professional staff attended only 1 of the required 13 courses and three of the five non-professional staff attended two of the required seven courses. This resulted because of budget constraints and ASU did not establish and implement procedures to monitor the Unit's compliance with DPKO/DFS requirements for aviation safety training. There was a risk that the concerned staff might not be abreast of current aviation safety management to effectively perform their functions.

(5) MINUSMA should provide adequate resources for the training of staff involved in the aviation safety programme and establish procedures to monitor compliance with DPKO/DFS requirements for aviation safety training.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the ASU was assessing its training requirements in accordance with the DPKO/DFS Aviation Safety Manual and would request the necessary funding. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence of resources approved to allow the Mission to provide the required aviation safety training to staff involved in the aviation safety programme.

B. Aviation safety assessment visit

Aviation safety assessment visit recommendations needed to be implemented

28. The DPKO/DFS Aviation Safety Manual provides that Headquarters aviation safety staff are to conduct aviation safety assessment visits (ASAVs) to MINUSMA to provide oversight and make recommendations to promote the safety of aviation operations. The Manual requires ASU to: (a) submit to the MASC the ASAV report and recommendations for appropriate action; and (b) periodically follow up on the recommendations and corrective actions and discuss such activities at the MASC meeting.

29. DPKO/DFS conducted two ASAVs to MINUSMA in August 2015 and December 2016 and made a total of 30 recommendations to enhance safety of air operations. However, ASU did not submit to the MASC the ASAV reports and related recommendations. ASU also delayed by six months the submission of the corrective action plan for the 2016 ASAV report to the Logistics Support Division of DFS. ASU was not able to provide OIOS with information on when the corrective action plan for 2015 was submitted.

30. As of November 2017, 18 of the 30 recommendations were still pending; three of which were from the assessment visit in 2015. These recommendations were related to: (a) improvement of emergency crash and rescue services and repairs/maintenance of the runways, air strips and tarmacs; (b) the need to jointly carry out hazard identification and integrate the aviation risk management process in all air operations at Kidal; (c) the need to establish and implement procedures for the integration, cooperation and coordination with relevant entities including military and civilians in the conduct of safe air operations in the Mission's area of responsibility; (d) failure by the Movement Control Unit to comply with DPKO/DFS aviation safety requirements; and (e) coordination of aviation threat assessment with all counterparts.

31. The above resulted because ASU did not dedicate sufficient resources in order to prioritize the implementation of the ASAV recommendations and the reports were not presented to the MASC to ensure corrective actions were implemented. As a result, opportunities to enhance the safety of the Mission's aviation operations were missed.

<p>(6) MINUSMA should implement a follow-up mechanism to ensure timely implementation by concerned sections/units of recommendations from aviation safety assessment visits.</p> <p><i>MINUSMA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the development of such a follow-up mechanism was underway. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of the follow-up mechanism the Mission has put in place to monitor implementation of the recommendations from ASAVs.</i></p>
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C. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

(Signed) Eleanor T. Burns
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Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Audit of aviation safety in the
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	MINUSMA should: (a) establish realistic work plans for the Aviation Safety Unit that are aligned with the level of available staffing resources for effective implementation of the aviation safety programme; and (b) draw on military enablers in remote areas to assist with the implementation of work plan activities.	Important	O	Receipt of a copy of the revised ASU work plan and evidence that military enablers are involved in the implementation of the aviation safety work plan activities in remote areas.	30 May 2018
2	MINUSMA should monitor the implementation of the Mission aviation risk management process and ensure that no steps are omitted and risks are properly identified, assessed and mitigated.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of consistent implementation of the ARM process.	15 March 2018
3	MINUSMA should: (a) reassess the current number of the Mission Aviation Safety Council permanent members and monitor the members' attendance to the meetings; and (b) establish and implement procedures to monitor and ensure timely implementation of the Council's recommendations.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of timely implementation of the Council's recommendations.	30 April 2018
4	MINUSMA should implement monitoring procedures to ensure that the required desktop drills, communication and live exercises are conducted.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of procedures implemented to ensure that the Mission consistently conducts the required desktop drills, communication and live exercises.	30 August 2018
5	MINUSMA should provide adequate resources for the training of staff involved in the aviation safety programme and establish procedures to monitor compliance with DPKO/DFS requirements for aviation safety training.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of resources approved to allow the Mission to provide the required aviation safety training to staff involved in the aviation safety programme.	30 June 2019

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ C = closed, O = open

⁴ Date provided by MINUSAM in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Audit of aviation safety in the
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
6	MINUSMA should implement a follow-up mechanism to ensure timely implementation by concerned sections/units of recommendations from aviation safety assessment visits.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of implementation of the follow-up mechanism the Mission has put in place to monitor implementation of the recommendations from ASAVs.	31 March 2018

APPENDIX I

Management Response



		Action Plan for the Implementation of the Draft OIOS Audit Recommendations				
Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical¹/ Important²	Accepted ? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible Person	Implementation Date	Client comments³
1	MINUSMA should: (a) establish realistic work plans for the Aviation Safety Unit that are aligned with the level of available staffing resources for effective implementation of the aviation safety programme; and (b) draw on military enablers in remote areas to assist with the implementation of work plan activities.	Important	Yes	Chief Aviation Safety Officer (CASO) Chief Aviation Officer (CAVO)	30 May 2018 30 May 2018	(a) Aviation safety work plan has been reviewed to best suit safety oversight functions keeping in view available staff. The Aviation safety unit work plan has been drafted and is awaiting DMS approval. (b) The Mission has taken appropriate measures to ensure Military Enablers at remote Air Regions/ Helicopter Landing Site as Air Liaison Officers (ALOs) to assist in Aviation and Aviation Safety Unit annual Work Plan activities. The aviation safety Unit in coordination with the qualified military officers are working together to come up with the best way forward
2	MINUSMA should monitor the implementation of the Mission aviation risk management process and ensure that no steps	Important	Yes	CASO CAVO Chief Service Delivery (CSD)	15 Mar 2018	The Aviation Safety Unit has already taken up the implementation process as outlined in mission Aviation Risk Management (ARM) Standard Operating Procedures

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ Please indicate feasibility and realistic timelines for implementation of the recommendation.



	are omitted and risks are properly identified, assessed and mitigated.					(SOP) by all stakeholders during the last Aviation Safety Council Meeting (ASCM) held on 01 Feb 2018. Aviation safety will continue to ensure that Aviation Risk Assessment Team (ARAT) meetings are scheduled whenever pace of the operations permit and minutes of such meetings will be obtained from Aviation section and kept for record purpose.
3	MINUSMA should: (a) reassess the current number of the Mission Aviation Safety Council permanent members and monitor the members' attendance to the meetings; and (b) establish and implement procedures to monitor and ensure timely implementation of the Council's recommendations.	Important	Yes	CASO	30 Apr 2018 30 Apr 2018	(a) A new Terms of Reference for Mission Aviation Safety Council has been prepared that has the list of permanent members and procedure for methodical follow up. The Aviation Safety Unit will follow the approved Terms of Reference as far as practically feasible. (b) Regular feedback towards implementation of safety council meeting recommendations are being taken from the appropriate Sections/Units/staff members.
4	MINUSMA should implement monitoring procedures to ensure that the required desktop drills, communication and live exercises are conducted.	Important	Yes	CASO	30 Aug 2018	The Aviation Safety Unit is in the process of incorporating necessary procedures to ensure all drills/ exercises with respect to MINUSMA Aircraft Emergency Response Plan (AERP) SOP are regularly conducted with adequate purpose. A Desktop exercise is planned in June 2018 and a full-scale exercise by Dec 2018.



5	MINUSMA should provide adequate resources for the training of staff involved in the aviation safety programme and establish procedures to monitor compliance with DPKO/DFS requirements for aviation safety training.	Important	Yes	CASO	30 Jun 2019	The Aviation Safety Unit is in the process of recruiting new staff members and is assessing the requirements of mandatory training for the staff members as per DPKO DFS Aviation Safety Manual 2012. Necessary budgetary requirements would be updated and forwarded for approval. With increased budget, the Aviation Safety Unit will organize better trainings for its staff.
6	MINUSMA should implement a follow-up mechanism to ensure timely implementation by concerned sections/units of recommendations from aviation safety assessment visits.	Important	Yes	CASO CAVO Chief Engineering Officer (CEO) Chief Movcon Officer Principal Security Advisor (PSA)	31 Mar 2018	The Aviation Safety Unit (ASU) is establishing a follow up mechanism to ensure timely implementation of recommendations of Aviation Safety Assessment Visits (ASAV) from concerned Sections/ Units. ASU is adding the ASAV recommendations in an action plan that shall be followed up and reviewed by Mission Aviation Safety Council (MASC) and the progress will be reflected periodically in MASC minutes.
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