



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

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Audit of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement

**The Mission finalized the mission concept and
was revising the military concept of operations
but needed to ensure that organizational units
prepare annual work plans**

**27 December 2022
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Audit of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA). The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures implemented by UNMHA to ensure the achievement of its mandates. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021 and included: (a) governance and oversight mechanisms; (b) planning and implementation of mandated activities; and (c) management of mission support functions.

The Mission finalized the mission concept and was revising the military concept of operations but needed to ensure organizational units prepared annual work plans.

OIOS made one recommendation. To address the issue identified in the audit, UNMHA needed to:

- Develop annual work plans for Mission components to facilitate monitoring and achievement of results.

UNMHA accepted the recommendation and initiated action to implement it. Actions required to close the recommendation are indicated in Annex I

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Audit of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA).
2. UNMHA was established on 16 January 2019 to support the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement (S/2018/1134) reached in Sweden by the Government of Yemen and the Houthis on the city of Hudaydah and ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Issa. The Mission was established by Security Council resolution 2452 (2019) for an initial period of six months and extended in resolutions 2481 (2019), 2505 (2020), 2534 (2020), 2586 (2021) and, most recently, in resolution 2643 (2022) until 14 July 2023.
3. The mandate of the Mission is to: (a) lead and support the functioning of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) to oversee the governorate-wide ceasefire, redeployment of forces and mine action operations; (b) monitor the compliance of the parties to the ceasefire in Hudaydah governorate and the mutual redeployment of forces from the City of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Salif, and Ra's Isa; (c) work with the parties so that local security forces assure the security of the City of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa under Yemeni law; and (d) facilitate and coordinate United Nations support to assist the parties to fully implement the Hudaydah Agreement.
4. A Head of Mission (HOM) at the Assistant Secretary-General level leads UNMHA and serves as the Chair of the RCC, a tripartite forum and a significant de-escalation mechanism of the Hudaydah Agreement that included UNMHA, the Government of Yemen and the Houthis. The HOM reports to the Secretary-General through the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).
5. The activities of the Mission are implemented in: (i) Hudaydah, serving as the Mission headquarters for delivery of the mandate of the Mission; (ii) Sana'a, for operational and liaison tasks; (iii) Aden, hosting good offices and liaison capacity to facilitate interaction with the Government of Yemen; (iv) Al-Mokha, a permanent liaison presence which serves as an entry point and logistical transit hub to access Government of Yemen controlled areas in Hudaydah's southern districts, and to gain strengthened situational awareness and coordination with partners operating in these locations; (v) Amman, providing integrated support services to UNMHA and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in Yemen (OSESFY); and (vi) Djibouti, coordinating air operations relating to medical evacuations of Mission personnel.
6. UNMHA has the following organizational units working under the direction of the HOM: (i) Office of the Chairman of the RCC; (ii) Office of the Deputy HOM and Coordination; (iii) Safety and Security Section; (iv) Liaison and Coordination Mechanism Section; (v) Office of the Chief of Staff; and (vi) Office of the Chief of Integrated Mission Support, which also supports OSESFY.
7. UNMHA proposed resource requirements for 2021 amounted \$49 million, which provided for the deployment of 75 United Nations monitors, 74 international positions, 85 national positions, as well as operational costs (2022: \$45.6 million).
8. Comments provided by UNMHA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

9. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures implemented by UNMHA to ensure the achievement of its mandates.

10. The audit was conducted from January to October 2022 and included a field visit to Amman, Jordan. It covered the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in: (a) governance and oversight mechanisms; (b) planning and implementation of mandated activities; and (c) management of mission support functions

11. This audit was included in the 2022 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the importance of the Mission in supporting the Hudaydah Agreement and related processes.

12. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel; (b) reviews of relevant documentation; (c) analytical reviews of data; and (d) testing of controls to assess the adequacy of their design and function.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Governance and oversight mechanisms

The Mission finalized the mission concept

14. According to established guidelines, the mission concept includes: (a) a statement of intent and strategy on how a mission plans to implement its mandate; (b) guiding principles for mandate implementation; and (c) mission objectives, priorities, key assumptions and risks. The mission concept is, therefore, a management tool for strategic planning, communication and resource allocation that brings clarity, coherence and synergy for senior mission leadership. Furthermore, it directs the mission concept of operations, which outlines key security objectives, requirements and tasks for a mission military component (and police, where applicable).

15. In July 2020, UNMHA documented a HOM Intent, which provided a background to the mission and its intent, including, good offices, patrolling/monitoring and expansion of UNMHA's operations in Government of Yemen territory. It also stated that mission resources, capacity and internal structures needed to be reviewed to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness in achieving its objectives. However, the HOM Intent did not list key assumptions and risks.

16. UNMHA developed a draft mission concept in 2020, which had not been finalized. The absence of an up-to-date Mission concept made it difficult to determine whether key mission substantive and support priorities and constraints had been adequately identified and that these priorities were being consistently implemented. The Mission stated that in 2021, it developed a political engagement strategy, in collaboration with OESGY and DPPA, that laid out the goals, objectives and activities in support of mandate implementation as stipulated in Security Council resolution 2534 (2020). It was accompanied with a timebound, 'living' action plan that monitored implementation and a risk and assumption registry.

17. In October 2022, UNMHA shared with OIOS a draft mission concept that had yet to be signed off by the HOM. It had been prepared following the Mission' mandate renewal in resolution 2543 (2022) and

the Security Council's support on various emerging and realigned priorities including UNMHA's expanded footprint to the south of the Governate, UNMHA's strengthened mine action role and expansion of its patrolling. The mission concept listed key elements such as the Mission's guiding principles, overall objectives and priorities, core outputs, assumptions and risks and timelines. The Mission stated that the mission concept had been endorsed by Mission leadership and would be sent to OIOS.

The Mission was finalizing the mission military concept of operations

18. UNMHA documented its military concept of operations in 2019. The concept of operations links the mission mandate to key objectives including strategic intent; organization and deployment; security/force protection; rules of engagement; command and control; and administration and logistics.

19. UNMHA had an authorized strength of 75 United Nations military observers or 'monitors' for deployment in Hudaydah, who were tasked with conducting patrols in Hudaydah City, Salif, Ra's Isa and other districts. However, there were currently only three monitors deployed as 26 monitors provided by Member States were repatriated to their home countries as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded. Six monitors who were outside the mission area on leave were unable to return to UNMHA and were either separated or repatriated prior to the end of their tour of duty. Consequently, due to visa restrictions and limitations on movement, the monitors were not present in the mission area.

20. In April 2020, the Government of Yemen suspended its participation in the RCC, following the death of a Government of Yemen liaison officer after an 11 March 2020 shooting incident at a Hudaydah frontline observation post. This resulted in the trilateral engagement between the United Nations and the two parties to the conflict being transformed into multi bilateral engagements. Additionally, on 12 November 2021, forces loyal to the Government suddenly and unexpectedly pulled out from their positions around Hudaydah to further south by approximately 200 kilometers, effectively redrawing the lines of conflict. This change in the lines of conflict altered the area for ground liaison, monitoring and patrols, leading to UNMHA headquarters being located within an area under the control of one party only. Consequently, there was a critical need to adjust the Mission posture to have sustained physical presence in the territory of both parties along the frontlines of Hudaydah, to enable equal and impartial access and dialogue across both sides. The Mission was therefore working to establish a secondary location in the territory of the Government of Yemen.

21. Upon the withdrawal of the Government of Yemen, the area left vacant was found to be mined, requiring a course of action to survey, mark and clear explosive remnants of war, including landmines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices. The Mission contracted mine action services through the United Nations Office for Project Services. As detailed in the 2022 proposed programme budget (A/76/6 (Sect.3) Addendum 4, dated 28 May 2021), a post for a Programme Management Officer at the P-4 level was proposed for demining expertise in Hudaydah City. This position was to lead the demining function embedded in the Mission.

22. UNMHA also developed, in December 2021, a revised patrol plan to address evolving realities on the ground following the Government of Yemen withdrawal. A Patrolling Taskforce was established in August 2022 to address recurring challenges particularly on the Mission's freedom of movement. Building on these processes, UNMHA stated that it was finalizing a revised military concept of operations to formulate its military objective, taking into account the evolving realities and political obstacles confronted with both parties in progressing the Mission's expanded and intensified monitoring role across the Governate.

B. Programme planning and implementation of mandated activities

There was a need for the Mission to develop annual work plans

23. Except for the Office of the Chief of Mission Support, UNMHA did not document the annual work plans of its organizational units for years 2019 to 2021

24. A key purpose of work plans is to support the HOM in implementing his compact with the Secretary-General by prioritizing UNMHA's mandated activities and assigning them to relevant organizational units for implementation. They also serve as a tool to monitor and measure organizational performance against UNMHA's programme of work. The work plans should state outputs to be delivered, timing, priority and responsibility for relevant activities, and applicable monitoring mechanisms.

(1) UNMHA should develop annual work plans for Mission components to facilitate monitoring and achievement of results

UNHMA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Mission management would ensure that in the 2023/24 period, all work plans are uploaded within three months of the start of the period.

Efforts were made to address operational constraints through third party contracts

25. The conflict in Yemen has created one of the largest humanitarian emergencies in the world. One important aspect for addressing the crisis was to maintain operation of the ports in Hudaydah, as most commercial and humanitarian imports came into Yemen through Hudaydah. As the fighting was nearing Hudaydah, there was the threat that the ports could be damaged or destroyed. To address this threat, the Stockholm Agreement was reached on 13 December 2018 between the Government of Yemen and the Houthis, under the auspices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. It was agreed that a joint and agreed upon RCC, chaired by the UNMHA HOM and composed of, but not limited to, members of the parties, shall be established to oversee the ceasefire and redeployment.

26. Since then, however, there had been several changes to the operating environment:

- a) In April 2020, the Government of Yemen suspended its participation in the RCC, and on 12 November 2021 pulled out its forces from their positions around Hudaydah to further south.
- b) In the first quarter of 2020, the Joint Coordination Centre also stopped functioning. The Centre, comprising two appointed members of each party co-located along with UNMHA personnel, facilitated immediate communication between the parties and direct contact in support of monitoring and de-escalation efforts on the ground.
- c) To monitor compliance of the parties to the ceasefire in Hudaydah, UNMHA had been authorized 75 military observers or monitors. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 32 monitors had been repatriated to their respective countries and as of March 2022, there were only three monitors on the ground. This was due to the non-issuance of required visas and or clearances by the Yemeni authorities.
- d) When patrolling, UNMHA was required to notify the local authorities and obtain their agreement up to two weeks in advance. Patrolling was limited, resulting in receipt of daily on-ground reports coming from only the Houthis.

- e) Following the 1 April 2020 Secretariat-wide recruitment freeze, the Mission had to effectively cease its recruitment campaign, intended to ramp up its operational capacity. This freeze and the incidence of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impeded the Mission's good offices with the parties and capacity to effectively coordinate with partners and undertake local level engagement to advance Agreement implementation.

27. Given the limited number of monitors on the ground, restrictions on their movement, non-issuance of visa and permits for staff to arrive in the mission area of operations by the concerned Yemini authorities, UNMHA focused on obtaining information from third-party providers. It entered a contract with a service provider for the provision of public information reporting services. The service provider was responsible to provide a report every 24 hours, which included data on armed violence in the Hudaydah Governate and real-time information on ceasefire de-escalation mechanisms, as well as technical support for up to seven days per month. The contract initially signed in July 2019 was effective through March 2022.

28. Subsequently, OSESGY and UNMHA entered a contract with a second service provider, for the provision of media monitoring analysis services on 1 July 2022, for a maximum period of two years. The contract required the collection and analysis of data and reports on the armed conflict in Hudaydah, including assessing and recording incidents of armed conflict and projecting potential outbreaks of violence. Given the importance of timely information and the restrictive environment in which the Mission operates, these contractual arrangements were necessary for obtaining vital information.

C. Management of mission support functions

OSESGY was addressing visa and other constraints and their impact on its operations

29. The accommodation facilities in Hudaydah were limited. UNMHA medical contractors resided within mission premises, thus limiting the accommodation capacity for civilian staff and monitors. The Mission could only accommodate a maximum of 50 personnel, and the non-availability of additional office and residential accommodation premises in Hudaydah posed a significant challenge for the Mission to increase staffing levels. Delays in obtaining entry visas for new staff by the Government of Yemen and the Houthi authorities also posed a significant challenge to increasing staffing levels. While efforts were underway to recruit for vacant positions (of the 124 vacant positions, 30 posts were being recruited for or onboarded), the vacancy rate was still high at 31 percent as of October 2022.

30. UNMHA stated that it had addressed code cables to Headquarters outlining the challenges in relation to the issuing of visas particularly by the Government of Yemen and the impact of these delays on Mission operations. Further, the issue had been central in the HOM' engagements with his Yemini counterparts including through formal correspondence, Security Council members, regional actors and the diplomatic community at large. Given the efforts to date, a recommendation is not being made.

UNMHA achieved gender parity for international staff category

31. Discussions with UNMHA management and staff noted that the Mission was actively trying to identify suitable females for job positions. For instance, in cases of retirement, and where posts were proposed to be created, the Mission actively sought female candidates from both within and outside the Organization. The gender distribution as of October 2022 showed that parity has been achieved for international staff, but not for other categories of personnel (see Table 1).

Table 1: UNMHA gender distribution as of October 2022

Gender distribution	Male (%)	Female (%)
Professional staff	56	44
P-5 and above	50	50
Field service	50	50
Overall international	53	47
National – General service	89	11
National – National officer	100	0
Overall national	89	11
Overall civilian	74	26
Military observers	100	0

Source: Compiled using data provided by UNMHA

32. Noting the hardship location and the efforts being made by the Mission in recruiting female candidates in all categories of personnel, OIOS is not making recommendation in this matter.

Mandatory training needed to be completed

33. The Secretary-General’s bulletin on United Nations mandatory programmes (ST/SGB/2018/4) defines the mandatory training requirements for all staff members of the United Nations Secretariat. Staff members are required to complete the mandatory learning programmes within six months of joining the Organization.

34. As of December 2022, the completion rate for all mandatory courses was 98 per cent. UNMHA stated that it continued to send broadcast reminders to staff and was monitoring the performance dashboard on mandatory training. Given the mandatory training completion rate and management’s assertion that it continued to monitor the performance dashboard, a recommendation is not being made.

UNMHA was compliant with the staff performance evaluation process

35. The completion rate of staff performance evaluations for the cycles 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 were 100, 94 and 94 per cent, respectively. UNMHA stated that it strived to maintain a 100 per cent completion rate and was monitoring the management dashboard on e-performance. OIOS concluded that UNMHA was satisfactorily managing the e-performance evaluation process.

UNMHA fleet of vehicles were adequate

36. At the time of preparing this report UNMHA had 47 vehicles, including 37 in the mission area, 5 in transit to Aden and 5 that were in stock at the United Nations Global Service Centre in Brindisi, Italy. Of the 14 vehicles in Brindisi, four were delivered to Aden and five were being shipped to Aden at the time of reporting.

37. According to the Department of Operational Support’ Standard Cost Ratio Manual (SCRM), UNMHA’s standard vehicle allocation was 40 vehicles. Therefore, the actual allocation of 47 armoured vehicles was higher than the SCRM determined requirement. Of the seven extra vehicles, one was an armoured ambulance, while the remainder were earmarked for security requirements of regular road convoys.

38. UNMHA explained that as per an interim guidance from United Nations Headquarters on the global vehicle fleet dated February 2016, armoured vehicles were not considered when calculating the light

passenger vehicles components of a mission's vehicle establishment. OIOS concluded that UNMHA was satisfactorily managing its fleet of vehicles.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

39. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNMHA 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 Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	UNMHA should develop annual work plans for Mission components to facilitate monitoring and achievement of results.	Important	Yes	Receipt of work plans for all Mission components for 2023.	31 March 2023

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.

³ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁴ Date provided by UNMHA in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNMHA should develop annual work plans for Mission components to facilitate monitoring and achievement of results.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 March 2023	UNMHA management will ensure that all workplans are finalized and uploaded in Inspira before the end of the performance period, and that in the 2023/24 period all workplans are uploaded within 3 months of the start of the period

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.