



## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

# REPORT 2014/112

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Audit of recruitment of national staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

Overall results relating to the effective management of recruitment of national staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur were initially assessed as unsatisfactory. Implementation of one critical and five important recommendations remains in progress

**FINAL OVERALL RATING: UNSATISFACTORY**

24 November 2014  
Assignment No. AP2014/634/04

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# AUDIT REPORT

## Audit of recruitment of national staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

### I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of recruitment of national staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).
2. In accordance with its mandate, OIOS provides assurance and advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of the United Nations internal control system, the primary objectives of which are to ensure: (a) efficient and effective operations; (b) accurate financial and operational reporting; (c) safeguarding of assets; and (d) compliance with mandates, regulations and rules.
3. The UNAMID Human Resources Section assisted by its Post Management and National Staffing Unit at the Mission Headquarters was responsible for the recruitment of national staff. The Human Resources Section was headed by a Chief Human Resources Officer at the P-5 level, supported by 5 international staff, 1 United Nations volunteer and 13 national staff at the Mission Headquarters and a further 26 human resources staff in the sectors reporting to the Human Resources Section at the Mission Headquarters. The UNAMID budget for national staff for fiscal year 2013/14 was \$60.2 million with an approved staffing table of 2,970 posts. The budget for fiscal year 2012/13 was \$74.9 million with a staffing table of 3,355 posts.
4. Comments provided by UNAMID are incorporated in italics.

### II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

5. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of UNAMID governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of recruitment of national staff in UNAMID**.
6. The audit was included in the 2014 OIOS risk-based work plan due to the operational and financial risks related to recruitment of national staff.
7. The key controls tested for the audit were: (a) human resources targets and strategies; and (b) recruitment policies and procedures. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined these key controls as follows:
  - (a) **Human resources targets and strategies** - controls that provide reasonable assurance that human resources targets and strategies are set to ensure the recruitment and retention of competent staff; and
  - (b) **Recruitment policies and procedures** - controls that provide reasonable assurance those recruitment policies and procedures exist to guide the recruitment of national staff and are implemented consistently.

8. The key controls were assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1. Certain control objectives in Table 1 were not relevant to the scope defined for this audit.

9. OIOS conducted this audit in March and April 2014. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2014.

10. OIOS conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and assess specific risk exposures, and to confirm the relevance of the selected key controls in mitigating associated risks. Through interviews and analytical reviews, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of internal controls and conducted necessary tests to determine their effectiveness.

### III. AUDIT RESULTS

11. The UNAMID governance, risk management and control processes examined were initially assessed as **unsatisfactory**<sup>1</sup> in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of recruitment of national staff in UNAMID**. OIOS made six recommendations to address the issues identified. This included the need for UNAMID to ensure: (a) the recruitment process was conducted in a timely manner; (b) the pre-approved roster of candidates is updated and used on a regular basis; (c) staff that were reassigned to other positions after their posts were abolished had relevant qualifications, experience and skills; (d) programme managers complied with recruitment procedures; (e) a Mission Review Panel or other mechanism was established to provide adequate oversight of the recruitment process; and (f) recruitment files were complete.

12. The initial overall rating was based on the assessment of key controls presented in Table 1. The final overall rating is **unsatisfactory** as implementation of one critical and five important recommendations remains in progress.

**Table 1: Assessment of key controls**

Business objective	Key controls	Control objectives			
		Efficient and effective operations	Accurate financial and operational reporting	Safeguarding of assets	Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules
<b>Effective management of recruitment of national staff in UNAMID</b>	(a) Human resources targets and strategies	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Not assessed	Partially satisfactory
	(b) Recruitment policies and procedures	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Not assessed	Unsatisfactory
<b>FINAL OVERALL RATING: UNSATISFACTORY</b>					

<sup>1</sup> A rating of “**unsatisfactory**” means that one or more critical and/or pervasive important deficiencies exist 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.

## A. Human resources targets and strategies

### Recruitment processes took much longer than the established timelines

13. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support (DPKO/DFS) standard operating procedures for staff selection system for peacekeeping operations and special political missions required UNAMID to fill job openings within 83 and 98 days for job posting durations of 15 and 30 days respectively, and to initiate recruitments for known vacancies no more than a month from a post becoming vacant.

14. A review of 50 of 166 recruitment cases completed during the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 January 2014 indicated that UNAMID took an average of 490 days to complete the recruitment process (i.e. from the date the vacancy arose to the date the offer letter was issued to the selected candidate). Further analysis indicated that it took an average of 226 days from the time the vacancy arose to the time programme managers initiated the recruitment process. The delays in the initiation and completion of recruitment cases resulted mainly due to programme managers not completing related tasks in a timely manner, and because the Human Resources Section was not adequately monitoring the recruitment process. Delayed recruitment resulted in staff not being available when required.

**(1) UNAMID should implement procedures that require the Human Resources Section to coordinate with programme managers and monitor the recruitment process in accordance with the required timelines.**

*UNAMID accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the National Staff Administration Unit was coordinating with programme managers on the recruitment of national staff. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the procedures implemented relating to evidence of regular monitoring of the recruitment process and OIOS verification of achieved timelines.*

### The pre-approved roster of candidates was not updated and used on a regular basis

15. UNAMID standard operating procedures for the selection of locally recruited staff required the Human Resources Section to include candidates that were approved by the Director of Mission Support but not selected for advertised posts, on a pre-approved roster of candidates that the programme managers were required to select candidates from, for similar functions at the same level.

16. A review of 50 of 166 recruitment cases indicated that UNAMID had not placed 19 candidates that had been successful in the interview process on the list of pre-approved candidates. The lack of an updated pre-approved roster was due to the absence of a mechanism in the Human Resources Section to ensure that candidates recommended but not selected were added to a centralized pre-approved roster. Consequently, programme managers were not using the roster to fill vacancies, which contributed to the delays in the recruitment process as highlighted in the preceding section and disadvantaged candidates that had successfully gone through a recruitment exercise but did not reapply.

**(2) UNAMID should regularly update the centralized roster with the names of recommended candidates from recruitment exercises and ensure that programme managers are utilizing the roster.**

*UNAMID accepted recommendation 2 and stated that where feasible, it would maintain a roster of prequalified candidates that have been successful in interviews. However, the success of the roster system would depend on the quality of candidates that apply to positions and not all openings would*

*yield qualified candidates for placement on the roster. Nevertheless, it had implemented the recommendation. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the 19 candidates that were successful in the interview process are included on the roster.*

Staff members affected by abolished posts were reassigned to fill vacancies without adequate training

17. DFS standard operating procedures on staffing table and post management of United Nations peace operations prescribed that the Director of Mission Support may laterally move staff already serving in the Mission to vacant posts at the same level and in the same function, in accordance with established Mission procedures.

18. The Director of Mission Support established a Task Force on 18 March 2013 to review the abolishment of 304 language assistant posts resulting from a civilian staffing review in September 2012. The Task Force was required to identify language assistants with transferable skills to be considered for vacant posts, at the same level and within the same job family in the Mission. In addition, the Task Force was to coordinate with the Integrated Mission Training Centre in providing relevant training to affected staff members that needed to upgrade their skills.

19. The Integrated Mission Training Centre was not requested to train language assistants that needed to upgrade their skills relevant to the positions they were assigned to. For instance, 80 language assistants were assigned as security guards without prior security training, a pre-requisite for the job. This impacted on their effectiveness to perform new functions.

**(3) UNAMID should conduct a skills gap analysis of language assistants that were assigned to other positions and ensure that they are adequately trained to perform their assigned functions effectively.**

*UNAMID accepted recommendation 3 and stated that on the job training of staff was conducted by the receiving sections and classification of national posts would be conducted. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that language assistants have been formally trained to upgrade their skills for their new functions.*

## **B. Recruitment policies and procedures**

Irregularities noted in recruitment cases

20. The UNAMID standard operating procedures for the selection of locally recruited staff required the Human Resources Section to screen out applicants that did not meet the criteria prescribed in job openings.

21. Documentation pertaining to 50 recruitment cases showed that selected candidates in all but four cases met the criteria prescribed in the job opening. Programme managers interviewed and subsequently recommended for recruitment four candidates (two professional and two general service staff) that had been screened out by the Human Resources Section as they did not meet the relevant education, experience, skill and language requirements, as follows:

- For recruitment of a National Professional Officer, the Human Resources Section shortlisted 5 out of 43 applicants that had the relevant education, experience and language skills. The programme manager requested two additional applicants be shortlisted. This included: (a) an applicant already working in the function as a team assistant at the GL-4 level that did not meet

the relevant education and skills requirements; and (b) an external applicant that did not meet the relevant education, skills and experience requirements. The programme manager invited the external candidate, who did not meet the requirements, for interview and subsequently selected the individual for the position;

- The interview panel for another National Professional Officer post in El Fasher did not recommend any of the three candidates interviewed. The programme manager, in the interview notes, recalled a previous recruitment process of 1 September 2010 for a similar position in Nyala, which had resulted in candidates being placed on a roster. The programme manager therefore selected one of the rostered candidates. However, a review of the recruitment case file for the position in Nyala indicated that the Human Resources Section shortlisted eight applicants for interview as meeting the required criteria; but the panel interviewed nine candidates. This discrepancy resulted, as the ninth candidate was introduced by the programme manager to the shortlist of candidates to be interviewed. This candidate was subsequently selected for the position in El Fasher and recruited;

- The Human Resources Section shortlisted 40 out of 121 candidates that had relevant education and experience for the post of an office assistant at the GL-3 level. The programme manager requested for an additional candidate, a UNAMID staff member at the GL-2 level to be shortlisted. The Human Resources Section raised concerns over the inclusion of this staff member, as the applicant did not meet the required experience to be shortlisted. However, the programme manager interviewed and subsequently selected the GL-2 staff member for the post; and

- The Human Resources Section received 13 applications and shortlisted 4 candidates that met the requisite criteria for the post at the GL-5 level. The programme manager invited three of the four shortlisted candidates. The programme manager also included another individual on the shortlist that had not applied for the position during the period for which it was advertised. The programme manager informed that the additional candidate had applied on time but had been inadvertently left out of the list. However, there was no evidence supporting that the candidate had submitted an application before the deadline. The candidate was interviewed and subsequently selected for the job.

22. The above conditions of non-compliance with the recruitment process and indications of favouritism resulted as the Human Resources Section did not implement a sufficiently robust review process to ensure that the recruitment process and subsequent decisions made by programme managers were in accordance with UNAMID standard operating procedures. This impacted on the effectiveness and credibility of the recruitment process.

**(4) UNAMID should review for appropriate action the irregularities in the local recruitment of staff and implement measures to ensure the recruitment process is complied with, including closer monitoring by the Human Resources Section of recruitment actions conducted by programme managers.**

*UNAMID accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it continuously reviewed the national staff selection system with the view of enhancing it. The standard operating procedures were being further reviewed to ensure that workflow and control monitoring mechanisms were included. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of the results of the review on the irregularities noted by OIOS and subsequent action taken, as well as a copy of the revised standard operating procedures that includes workflow and control mechanism.*

Mission Review Panel for locally recruited staff had not been constituted

23. UNAMID standard operating procedures required the establishment of a Mission Review Panel consisting of six voting members with equal representation of staff members selected by the Director of Mission Support and the National Staff Association. The Mission Review Panel was responsible to ensure that candidates were evaluated on the basis of criteria stipulated in the job openings and that proposals by hiring managers were reasoned and objectively justified.

24. UNAMID had not constituted a Mission Review Panel due to the lack of action by Mission management. As a result, non-compliance with recruitment processes and procedures were not identified and corrected. For example, a review of documentation pertaining to 50 recruitment cases indicated that: 38 vacancy announcements were not posted for a sufficient period of time; 10 candidate evaluation forms were not attested by human resources officers; and 9 uncompetitive recruitments were conducted without written justifications by programme managers. In OIOS view, the absence of an independent Mission Review Panel contributed to these lapses and impacted the competitiveness and integrity of the recruitment process.

**(5) UNAMID should establish a Mission Review Panel in accordance with its standard operating procedures on the selection of locally recruited staff to ensure that standard recruitment processes are complied with.**

*UNAMID accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it would establish a Mission Review Panel for the recruitment of locally recruited staff. This measure would be put in place pending the issuance of a new staff selection policy that would include national staff in its scope. UNAMID added that it was in the process of reducing staff and pending the establishment of the Mission Review Panel, the comparative review committee that would be set up could also be used to review national staff for selection. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of documentation and verification by OIOS that a Mission Review Panel or its equivalent has been established and is functioning as intended.*

Recruitment files were incomplete

25. UNAMID standard operating procedures required the Mission to maintain adequate records of the recruitment process to support selection decisions by programme managers.

26. A review of 50 out of 166 recruitment case files indicated inadequate documentation to support recruitment decisions. For example:

- Seven files did not contain evaluation matrices and comparative reports;
- Five files did not contain the job opening;
- Three files did not contain interview reports;
- Four files did not contain offer letters;
- All 50 files did not contain independent confidential references from previous employers and authentication of academic and professional certificates by educational institutions; and
- In 48 cases, there was no indication that candidates were given interview notice of five days.



27. As a result of the missing documents, the recruitment process and selection decisions made by programme managers were not always supported to show compliance with standard operating procedures.

**(6) UNAMID should implement procedures to ensure that human resources officers maintain recruitment case files with all requisite documentation.**

*UNAMID accepted recommendation 6 and stated that it would ensure that recruitment files are properly maintained with all documents pertaining to the recruitment process for each job opening. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence of procedures implemented and OIOS verification of recruitment files for completeness.*

#### **IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

28. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of UNAMID for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

(Signed) David Kanja  
Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of the recruitment of national staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	C/ O <sup>3</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>4</sup>
1	UNAMID should implement procedures that require the Human Resources Section to coordinate with programme managers and monitor the recruitment process in accordance with the required timelines.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of regular monitoring of the recruitment process and OIOS verification of achieved timelines.	31 October 2015
2	UNAMID should regularly update the centralized roster with the names of recommended candidates from recruitment exercises and ensure that programme managers are utilizing the roster.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the 19 candidates that were successful in the interview process are included on the roster.	30 June 2014
3	UNAMID should conduct a skills gap analysis of language assistants that were assigned to other positions and ensure that they are adequately trained to perform their assigned functions effectively.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that language assistants have been formally trained to upgrade their skills for their new functions.	1 July 2015
4	UNAMID should review for appropriate action the irregularities in the local recruitment of staff and should implement measures to ensure the recruitment process is complied with, including closer monitoring by the Human Resources Section of recruitment actions conducted by programme managers.	Critical	O	Receipt of the results of the review on the irregularities noted by OIOS and subsequent action taken, as well as a copy of the revised standard operating procedures that includes workflow and control mechanism.	31 October 2014
5	UNAMID should establish a Mission Review Panel in accordance with its standard operating procedures on the selection of locally recruited staff to ensure that standard recruitment processes are complied with.	Important	O	Receipt of documentation and verification by OIOS that a Mission Review Panel or its equivalent has been established and is functioning as intended.	31 December 2014

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

<sup>2</sup> Important recommendations address important deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>3</sup> C = closed, O = open

<sup>4</sup> Date provided by UNAMID in response to recommendations.

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of the recruitment of national staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	C/ O <sup>3</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>4</sup>
6	UNAMID should implement procedures to ensure that human resources officers maintain recruitment case files with all requisite documentation.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of procedures implemented and OIOS verification of recruitment files for completeness.	1 April 2015

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNAMID



UNITED NATIONS

الأمم المتحدة

**African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur**

*Office of the Joint Special Representative*

To: Ms. Eleanor T. Burns,  
Director  
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

Date: 23 November 2014

From: Abiodun Bashua  
Acting JSR/JCM a.i.

23/11  
2014

Subject: **Draft Report on an audit of the recruitment of national staff in UNAMID African Union- United Nation Hybrid Operation in Darfur (assignment No. AP2014/636/04)**

1. With reference to your memorandum of 07 September 2014, on the captioned-subject matter, please find attached UNAMID's revised response (Appendix 1) to the draft report for your consideration and records.

Thank you.

cc. Mr Anthony Nweke, Acting Director Mission Support, UNAMID  
Ms Vevine Stamp, Chief, Operations and Services, UNAMID  
Mr. Aggrey Kedogo, Chief Human Resources Officer, UNAMID  
Mr. Prances Sooza, Chief, Resident Auditor, OIOS/UNAMID  
Mr. Velayuntham Gopal, Audit Focal Point, UNAMID  
Ms. Cynthia Avena-Castillo, Professional Practices Section, IAD, OIOS, UNHQ

## Management Response

## Audit of recruitment of national staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNAMID should implement procedures to ensure that the Post Management and Staffing Unit coordinate with programme managers and monitor the recruitment process in accordance with the timelines.	Important	Yes	Head National Staff Unit/Post Manager	31 October 2014	Already, the National Staff Administration Unit coordinates with Programme Managers on the recruitment of national staff. Post Management does not handle recruitment, other than confirming the validity of the post. It should be clarified that there are no Organization wide standard operating procedures for selection of national staff in Peacekeeping Missions. UNAMID's national staff selection system is based on its own developed operating procedures.
2	UNAMID should regularly update the centralized roster with the names of recommended candidates from recruitment exercises and ensure that programme managers are utilizing the roster.	Important	Yes	Head National Administration Unit	30 June 2014	Where feasible, UNAMID will maintain a roster of prequalified candidates that have been successful in interviews. However, it should be noted that the success of the roster system depends on the quality of candidates that apply to the positions and not all openings will yield qualified candidates for placement on the roster. This recommendation has been implemented, therefore, it should be closed.

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

<sup>2</sup> Important recommendations address important deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

## Management Response

## Audit of recruitment of national staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
3	UNAMID should conduct a comprehensive performance evaluation of language assistants that did not have relevant education and skills that were assigned to other positions to ensure that they are adequately trained to perform their assigned functions effectively and find means to ensure that their pay grades are in line with the level of post encumbered.	Important	Yes	Chief/IMTC/Section Chiefs where staff members were deployed	1 July 2015	On the job training of staff members was conducted by the receiving Sections and completed. Classification of national posts is yet to be implemented.
4	UNAMID should review for appropriate action the irregularities in the local recruitment of staff and should implement measures to ensure the recruitment process is complied with, including closer monitoring by the Human Resources Section of recruitment actions conducted by programme managers.	Critical	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	31 October 2014	UNAMID continuously reviews the selection system of the national staff with the view of enhancing it. The SOP is undergoing further review to ensure that workflow, control monitoring and control mechanism as re included.
5	UNAMID should establish a Mission Review Panel in accordance with its standard operating procedures on the selection of locally recruited staff to ensure that standard recruitment processes are complied with.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	31 December 2014	UNAMID accepts the recommendation. In particular, UNAMID will establish a Mission Review Panel in accordance with its standard operating procedures on the selection of locally recruited staff to ensure that standard recruitment processes are complied with. This measure will be put in place pending the issuance of a new Staff selection policy which includes national staff in its scope or until such time, the SOP is amended. UNAMID further notes that the Mission is in the

## Management Response

## Audit of recruitment of national staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						processing of reducing staff and pending the establishment of the Mission Review Panel, the comparative review committee that will be set up could also be used to review national staff for selection.
6	UNAMID should implement procedures to ensure that human resources officers maintain recruitment case files with all requisite documentation.	Important	Yes	Head of National Staff Administration Unit/Human Resources Section	1 April 2015	UNAMID will ensure that recruitment files are properly maintained with all documents pertaining to the recruitment process for each job opening.