



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2015/177

Audit of child protection activities in
the United Nations Organization
Stabilization Mission in the Democratic
Republic of the Congo

Overall results relating to the effective
management of child protection activities in
the United Nations Organization Stabilization
Mission in the Democratic Republic of the
Congo were initially assessed as partially
satisfactory. Implementation of two
important recommendation remains in
progress

FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY
SATISFACTORY

16 December 2015
Assignment No. AP2015/620/04

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AUDIT REPORT

Audit of child protection activities in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of child protection activities in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).
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. MONUSCO child protection activities are governed by 11 resolutions of the Security Council (1999 to 2015) relating specifically to the protection of children affected by armed conflict (CAAC).
4. The Child Protection Section is responsible for implementing child protection activities in MONUSCO. The Section is headed by a staff at the P-5 level, who reports to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Operations and Rule of Law. The Section has 33 posts: 15 international staff, 13 national staff and 5 United Nations volunteers. The Section has seven regional and field offices in the east of the country.
5. The 2013/14 and 2014/15 budgets for child protection activities were \$3.7 million and \$3.3 million respectively.
6. Comments provided by MONUSCO are incorporated in italics.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

7. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of MONUSCO governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of child protection activities in MONUSCO**.
8. The audit was included in the 2015 risk-based work plan of OIOS because of the operational and reputational risks related to the non-implementation of the child protection mandate in MONUSCO.
9. The key controls tested for the audit were: (a) risk assessment and planning; and (b) coordinated management. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined these key controls as follows:
 - (a) **Risk assessment and planning** - controls that provide reasonable assurance that risks related to MONUSCO child protection activities are identified and assessed; appropriate actions are taken to mitigate or anticipate these risks; and plans are in place to guide MONUSCO child protection activities.
 - (b) **Coordinated management** - controls that provide reasonable assurance that potential overlaps in the performance of the child protection activities in MONUSCO are mitigated, and

that issues affecting or involving other United Nations partners and actors are identified, discussed and resolved timely and at the appropriate forum. This key control includes regular meetings among United Nations partners and actors involved in child protection activities, and other tools, forums or mechanisms to discuss issues.

10. The key controls were assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1. One control objective noted as “not assessed” was not relevant to the scope of this audit.

11. OIOS conducted this audit from August to October 2015. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 August 2015.

12. 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

13. The MONUSCO governance, risk management and control processes examined were initially assessed as **partially satisfactory**¹ in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of child protection activities in MONUSCO**. OIOS made three recommendations to address the issues identified. MONUSCO adequately: planned and monitored its child protection activities; trained its child protection staff; implemented a National Action Plan; and identified and implemented child protection priorities. However, MONUSCO needed to: (a) ensure the train-the-trainer programme benefited contingents; (b) implement adequate controls over the database of cases on violations of rights of CAAC and related reporting; and (c) periodically review the roles of users and ensure access to the database of cases on the violations of the rights of CAAC was granted on a need-to-know and need-to-do basis.

14. The initial overall rating was based on the assessment of key controls presented in Table 1. The final overall rating is **partially satisfactory** as implementation of two 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
Effective management of child protection activities in MONUSCO	(a) Risk assessment and planning	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Not assessed	Partially satisfactory
	(b) Coordinated management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not assessed	Satisfactory
FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY					

¹ A rating of “**partially satisfactory**” means that important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies exist in governance, risk management or control process, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

A. Risk assessment and planning

The Mission implemented adequate controls over the planning and monitoring of its child protection activities

15. The United Nations results-based budget framework requires MONUSCO to prepare periodic work plans and monitor the implementation of such plans to ensure the achievement of its mandate for the protection of CAAC. The plans should include objectives, expected accomplishments, indicators in relation to expected accomplishments, outputs and timelines for completion of outputs.

16. A review of the work planning and monitoring processes for the protection of CAAC and related records and interviews with child protection advisors in four of seven field offices indicated that MONUSCO prepared a strategic plan and annual work plans, which were aligned to its mandate for the protection of CAAC. Child protection advisors in field offices prepared their specific work plans as well as daily, weekly and monthly reports of their activities, which they distributed to various stakeholders in the Mission. The Child Protection Section used these periodic reports to prepare its annual performance reports on the protection of CAAC, summarizing the actual activities implemented against the annual work plan. The Section held annual retreats to assess the implementation of its activities and overall performance, and established the work plans for subsequent years.

17. OIOS concluded that MONUSCO implemented adequate controls over the planning and monitoring related to the protection of CAAC.

MONUSCO implemented adequate controls related to the training of its child protection staff

18. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)/Department of Field Support (DFS) policy on mainstreaming the protection, rights and well-being of CAAC within peacekeeping operations requires MONUSCO to train child protection advisors in areas such as: monitoring and reporting mechanisms for the protection of CAAC; the DPKO Child Protection Policy; relevant Security Council resolutions; and the requirements of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the protection of CAAC.

19. Interviews with 13 child protection officers in four field offices and review of training records indicated that MONUSCO adequately planned and trained child protection advisors and officers. For example, during 2014, nine child protection officers attended a training in Entebbe on the protection of CAAC and three others attended similar training in Vienna prior to their deployment to the Mission. These training courses covered the required topics. The Child Protection Section allocated 5 per cent of its time to training.

20. OIOS concluded that MONUSCO implemented adequate controls to ensure the training of its child protection advisors and officers.

Need for monitoring and follow-up of the train-the-trainer programme of military contingents

21. Various Security Council resolutions such as 2225 (June 2015) require MONUSCO to mainstream child protection in its operations. Additionally, the MONUSCO Force Commander's directive dated 4 November 2014 requires all military personnel to be trained on child protection issues.

22. Interviews with staff of the Child Protection Section, Military Training Cell and Women Protection Advisory Section, and a review of documents, including the Mission Concept of Operations,

budgets, integrated provincial and regional plans for four provinces, and Joint Assessment and Inspection Teams' reports, rotation plans, training programmes and observation of a training session held in Goma indicated that the Mission:

- Integrated child protection concerns into its protection of civilian networks and tools such as the Early Warning Cells, Joint Protection Teams and Joint Assessment Missions;
- Incorporated child protection activities in its vetting of the national army to ensure that the Organization only supported forces that had not previously committed violations of the rights of CAAC;
- Appointed child protection focal points in key sections to ensure work plans and activities of these sections took into account the protection of CAAC;
- Briefed civilian personnel on child protection during their induction in Goma; and
- Provided adequate training on the protection of CAAC to military observers.

23. However, there was insufficient evidence that MONUSCO provided adequate training to all military personnel on the protection of CAAC. While child protection advisors delivered train-the-trainer sessions to contingent officers during rotations and follow-up sessions when requested by the Military Training Cell, there was no evidence that these trainers in turn delivered training sessions to their respective contingents. This was because MONUSCO had not established monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. As a result, there was a risk that contingents were not aware of their role in the protection of CAAC.

(1) MONUSCO should implement monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to ensure that the train-the-trainer programme is effectively used to train contingent personnel on matters related to the protection of children affected by armed conflict.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Integrated Mission Training Cell would coordinate with the Military Training Cell and the United Nations Police to obtain statistics and relevant evidence to monitor the training delivered to all uniformed personnel by the trained trainers. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has implemented mechanisms to ensure that the train-the-trainer programme is effectively used to train contingent personnel on the protection of CAAC.

MONUSCO implemented adequate controls related to implementation of a National Action Plan

24. Security Council resolution 1882 (2009) on the protection of CAAC requires MONUSCO to assist the forces and security services of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to prepare and support the implementation of action plans to prevent the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations of the rights of CAAC.

25. Interview with the MONUSCO Chief Child Protection Advisor, review of the terms of reference and related minutes of the Special Team of the United Nations headed by MONUSCO and another United Nations agency indicated that MONUSCO:

- Assisted the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in developing the National Action Plan to prevent the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations of

the rights of CAAC, which was signed by the Government and the United Nations on 4 October 2012;

- Assisted in developing three other action plans at the provincial level;
- Supported the implementation of the national and provincial action plans by helping to establish, advise and coordinate the meetings of the Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) comprising the Prime Minister and representatives from nine other government ministries and security forces and JTWGs in four provinces. A review of the terms of reference and minutes for 12 of 24 meetings of the JTWG and 10 of 25 meetings of provincial JTWGs indicated that MONUSCO had been effective in ensuring that meetings of these groups were held;
- Assisted in identifying and appointing focal points in the army and security services; and
- Obtained unrestricted access to military facilities in order to screen recruits and release children held in detention centres.

26. OIOS concluded that MONUSCO implemented adequate controls related to the establishment and implementation of action plans on the prevention and the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations of the rights of CAAC.

Need for accurate reporting of cases of violations of the rights of children affected by armed conflict

27. Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) requires MONUSCO to monitor and report the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations of the rights of CAAC by forces and armed groups in the quarterly report of the Security Council Joint Working Group on CAAC (Global Horizontal Notes), and in the annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly. The DPKO Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism Manual requires MONUSCO to verify and adequately document all reported cases and ensure that these reports are factual and accurate.

28. A review of the database of cases of violations of the rights of CAAC indicated that MONUSCO recorded all essential data for 1,000 cases for the period January 2014 to August 2015. Additionally, interviews with child protection advisors in four out of seven child protection field offices and a review of: 30 daily, weekly and monthly activity reports of the Child Protection Section; all 6 quarterly Global Horizontal Notes of the Joint Working Group on CAAC of the Security Council; and the annual report of Secretary-General to the General Assembly indicated that MONUSCO contributed to the Global Horizontal Notes and the report of the Secretary-General. However, MONUSCO did not always accurately report on grave violations of the rights of CAAC. For example, MONUSCO reported 108 abduction cases in the 2014 annual report of the Secretary-General while the database used in preparing the report had only 63 cases for that period. The Mission was unable to reconcile the difference.

29. The above resulted because the Child Protection Section did not monitor and properly supervise staff responsible for entering information in the database and also did not implement adequate procedures to ensure accurate reporting of cases. As a result, there was a risk of disputes with the Government, which may diminish the ability of the Mission to effectively implement its mandate.

(2) MONUSCO should implement adequate: monitoring and supervisory controls over the entry of child protection cases in the relevant database used for reporting these cases; and procedures to ensure accurate reporting of the cases.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it had: finalized the recruitment of a staff in November 2015 as a lasting solution for monitoring and reporting child protection cases; and implemented quality procedures, backlog clearance and regular updates of the database. Based on the action taken by MONUSCO and OIOS verification of evidence provided, recommendation 2 has been closed.

Need to review and promptly update access in the database on the violations of the rights of children affected by armed conflict

30. The DPKO Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism Manual requires MONUSCO to maintain the confidentiality of cases on CAAC during the gathering, storage and reporting processes.

31. A review of the list of users of the database of cases on the violations of the rights of CAAC as of October 2015 and interviews with staff of the Child Protection Section and the database administrator indicated that MONUSCO did not promptly disable user accounts of staff that had separated from the Mission. For instance, 5 of the 32 individuals on the list of users had either left the Mission or been reassigned to other sections. In addition, other users had not been assigned access rights on a need-to-know and need-to-do basis. This occurred because MONUSCO neither periodically reviewed user access nor established procedures to ensure access to the database was granted to individuals on a need-to-know and need-to-do basis. As a result, there was a risk that confidentiality of information on CAAC may be compromised.

(3) MONUSCO should periodically review the roles of staff and implement procedures to ensure access to the database of cases of violations of the rights of children affected by armed conflict is granted to individuals on a need-to-know and need-to-do basis.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it: had completed a thorough review of the roles of staff and was periodically monitoring to ensure that access to the database of cases of violations of the rights of CAAC were accurate and appropriate; and would conduct monthly reviews to ensure that staff were granted access only on a need-to-know and need-to-do basis. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has periodically reviewed the roles of staff to ensure appropriate access to the database of cases of violations of the rights of CAAC.

MONUSCO implemented adequate controls relating to sensitization of communities on child protection issues

32. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's instructions on the protection of CAAC dated March 2014 requires MONUSCO to undertake campaigns against the recruitment of children by armed forces and groups.

33. Interviews with staff of the Child Protection Section and partner non-government organizations (NGOs) in three field offices, and a review of work plans and records of the Child Protection Section indicated that MONUSCO adequately planned and implemented sensitization activities. These activities included: (a) distributing compact discs and posting on Youtube of songs by two popular Congolese musicians; (b) facilitating a concert involving Congolese musicians in Goma in July 2015; (c) commemorating three international days for children; and (d) leading the national radio and television campaign called "No Child Soldier" as part of the National Action Plan on CAAC.

34. OIOS concluded that MONUSCO implemented adequate controls relating to the sensitization of communities on the need to prevent the recruitment of children and other grave violations of the rights of CAAC.

B. Coordinated management mechanisms

MONUSCO implemented adequate controls related to the identification and implementation of child protection priorities

35. The DPKO/DFS policy on mainstreaming the protection, rights and well-being of CAAC within peacekeeping operations requires MONUSCO to jointly identify and implement child protection priorities with members of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), national actors and NGOs.

36. A review of the minutes of meetings of the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism of the UNCT and international NGOs for 2014 and 2015, and interviews with Child Protection Section staff and concerned NGOs indicated that MONUSCO: (a) implemented an adequate joint oversight mechanism with members of the UNCT and concerned NGOs to monitor and report grave violations against CAAC; (b) established Child Protection Working Groups in four provinces, comprising government officials, representatives from MONUSCO substantive sections, a United Nations agency, and local and international NGOs to discuss operational and emerging issues and identifying child protection priorities; (c) worked with a United Nations agency to establish a network of national NGOs in Bunia, Goma, Bukavu, Walikale, Beni and Kalemie to provide temporary shelter to children separated from armed forces and groups; and (d) conducted joint visits with Government officials and NGOs to Congolese army camps to screen troops and separate children. Between 2014 and 2015, 7,843 troops were screened, resulting in the separation of one child.

37. OIOS concluded that MONUSCO implemented adequate controls for the joint identification and implementation of child protection priorities with members of the UNCT, national actors and NGOs.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

38. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of MONUSCO 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 child protection activities in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	MONUSCO should implement monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to ensure that the train-the-trainer programme is effectively used to train contingent personnel on matters related to the protection of children affected by armed conflict	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has implemented mechanisms to ensure that the train-the-trainer programme is effectively used to train contingent personnel on the protection of CAAC.	31 March 2015
2	MONUSCO should implement adequate: monitoring and supervisory controls over the entry of child protection cases in the relevant database used for reporting these cases; and procedures to ensure accurate reporting of the cases	Important	C	Action taken	Implemented
3	MONUSCO should periodically review the roles of staff and implement procedures to ensure access to the database of cases of violations of the rights of children affected by armed conflict is granted to individuals on a need-to-know and need-to-do basis.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has periodically reviewed the roles of staff to ensure appropriate access to the database of cases of violations of the rights of children affected by armed conflict.	12 October 2015

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 MONUSCO in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response



MONUSCO

Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies
pour la Stabilisation en République
démocratique du Congo

United Nations Organisation Stabilization
Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

12, Avenue des Aviateurs - Gombe
Kinshasa, RD Congo - BP 8811

Tél. +243 81 890 5000
+243 81 890 6000

PROTECT

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CONSOLIDATE PEACE

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

8 December 2015

Ref. ODMS/15/OM/04441

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

From: Guy Siri
Director of Mission Support

Subject: **Mission Response to the Draft Audit Report on Child Protection Activities in MONUSCO
(Assignment No. AP2015/620/04)**

1. Thank you for your interoffice memorandum reference IAD-15-27 dated 23 November 2015 forwarding the subject audit report.
2. Attached please find the Mission response in respect of the recommendations in the report. Supporting documents will be provided to the Resident Audit Team only.

Kind regards.

Cc Mr. David Gressly, Deputy SRSG, Operations and Rule of Law, MONUSCO
Mr. Ian Sinclair, Mission Chief of Staff, MONUSCO
Mr. Bolton Tarleh Nyema, Chief, Peacekeeping audit Service, IAD, OIOS
Ms. Dée Brillenburg Wurth, Chief, Child Protection Section, MONUSCO
Mr. James Okwakol, Chief Resident Auditor for MONUSCO, IAD, OIOS
Ms. Kerry Zillner, Audit Focal Point, MONUSCO
Ms. Cynthia Avena-Castillo, Professional Practices Section, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

Attachment: Appendix 1 - Mission Response

Peace it!

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Management Response

Audit of child protection activities in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	MONUSCO should implement monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to ensure that the train-the-trainer programme is effectively used to train contingent personnel on matters related to the protection of children affected by armed conflict.	Important	Yes	Chief, IMTC	31 March 2015	The Mission confirms that there are mechanisms in place to ensure the effective implementation of the train-the-trainer program for all uniformed personnel i.e. military troops, military observers and UN police. For example, the FC Training Directive requires the Brigades/Sectors to provide feedback to the Military Training Cell (MTC) confirming that the trained trainers have completed further training of all members of the contingents in various Brigades/Sectors. The training subjects to be completed include: child protection, sexual exploitation and abuse awareness, stress management, human rights, international humanitarian law, mine awareness, gender training, medical brief and HIV/AIDS awareness. To monitor feedback on the training statistics for courses delivered to all uniformed personnel by the trained trainers, the Integrated Mission Training Cell (IMTC) will coordinate with and remind the MTC and UNPOL to submit these statistics and any relevant evidence to be maintained at IMTC Mission Level. These statistics and evidence will be shared with the Audit Team.
2	MONUSCO should implement adequate: monitoring and supervisory controls over the entry of child protection cases in the relevant database used for reporting these cases; and procedures to ensure accurate reporting of the cases.	Important	Yes	Reporting Officer	16 November 2015	The Mission has finalized the recruitment of a staff member as a lasting solution for monitoring and reporting of ITEM. The staff member with the title Coordination and Reporting Officer reported to the Child Protection Section on 16 November 2015. With the arrival of the staff strategic planning on quality check procedures, backlog clearance and regular updates of ITEM has been initiated and will continue in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the staff. Supporting document has been provided to the Audit Team.

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.

Management Response

Audit of child protection activities in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
3	MONUSCO should periodically review the roles of staff and implement procedures to ensure access to the database of cases of violations of the rights of children affected by armed conflict is granted to individuals on a need-to-know and need-to-do basis.	Important	Yes	Reporting Officer	12 October 2015	Thorough review has been completed as well as periodical monitoring with CITS (ITEM developer) to ensure that the ITEM users within Child Protection Section are accurate and with the appropriate access rights. Periodic reviews will be conducted on a monthly basis to ensure that only staff with a need-to-know and need-to-do basis have access to the system. Supporting documents have been provided to the Audit Team.