



## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

### REPORT 2016/177

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Audit of archives and records  
management in the United Nations  
Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

The Mission needed to adequately coordinate  
its archiving and records management  
activities and improve physical conditions of  
records in storage

21 December 2016  
Assignment No. AP2016/640/03

# **Audit of archives and records management in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over the management of records and archives in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The audit covered the period from July 2015 to October 2016 and included reviews of: planning and implementation of the records management programme; file classification and retention; records management sensitization programme; management of electronic records; and records storage facilities.

UNOCI implemented adequate controls over the: (a) transfer of inactive records to the Mission's record centres; (b) destruction of records; and (c) transfer of electronic records from its shared drives to the Archives and Records Management Section in New York. However, UNOCI needed to ensure that its sections/units adequately coordinated their archiving and records management activities and improve the physical condition of storage facilities.

OIOS made three important recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UNOCI needed to:

- Ensure all sections/units coordinate their archiving and records management activities with the Records Management Unit to ensure compliance with the United Nations Archives and Records Management Toolkit;
- Enforce the requirements to archive official electronic mail prior to staff leaving the Mission; and
- Implement measures to ensure that its records storage facilities conform to the United Nations records management standards.

UNOCI accepted the recommendations and has initiated steps to implement them.

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# **Audit of archives and records management in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of archives and records management in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).
2. The Security Council by resolution 2284 (2016) authorized the complete withdrawal of all uniformed and civilian components of UNOCI by 30 April 2017, and to liquidate the Mission by 30 June 2017.
3. Archives and records management is governed by a set of guidelines and procedures, including: (a) the United Nations Archives and Records Management Toolkit; (b) the file classification scheme; (c) the Peacekeeping and Political Operations Retention Schedule (PORS); and (d) the Secretary-General's bulletin on recordkeeping and the management of the United Nations archives (ST/SGB/2007/5).
4. The UNOCI Records Management Unit (RMU), in the General Services Section, is responsible to: (a) implement records management standards across the Mission; (b) train and sensitize staff on records management; and (c) regularly monitor recordkeeping practices throughout the Mission to ensure adherence to established policies and guidelines. The Unit is headed by a staff at the Field Service-5 level, who is supported by one United Nations volunteer and seven national staff. The Unit's 2015/16 budget was \$403,500.
5. Comments provided by UNOCI 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 the management of records and archives in UNOCI.
7. This audit was included in the 2016 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risk of loss or inaccessibility of records of UNOCI during the liquidation and post-liquidation phases.
8. OIOS conducted this audit from September to November 2016. The audit covered the period from July 2015 to October 2016. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks in the management of UNOCI archives and records, which included: planning and implementation of the records management programme; file classification and retention; records management sensitization programme; management of electronic records; and storage facilities.
9. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel, (b) reviews of relevant documentation, (c) judgmental sample testing; and (d) physical observation of record storage facilities in Abidjan.

## **III. OVERALL CONCLUSION**

10. UNOCI: (a) implemented adequate controls over the destruction of records and transfer of inactive records to its records centres; (b) provided training to records management focal points; and (c) took adequate steps to ensure the transfer of electronic records from its shared drives to the Archives and

Records Management Section (ARMS) in New York. However, UNOCI needed to: (a) ensure that all sections/units coordinated their archiving and records management activities in accordance with the United Nations Archives and Records Management Toolkit; (b) enforce the requirements to archive official e-mails prior to staff leaving the Mission; and (c) ensure that its records storage facilities conform to United Nations records management standards.

## IV. AUDIT RESULTS

### A. Planning and implementation of records management programme

There was a need for section/unit heads to coordinate with the Records Management Unit

11. The United Nations Archives and Records Management Toolkit requires UNOCI management to provide resources and support necessary to implement the Mission's archives and records management programme.

12. A review of UNOCI records management programme planning process and RMU work plans for 2015/16 and 2016/17 showed that the Mission's programme was compliant with relevant United Nations requirements. The programme had clear objectives, goals and included comprehensive retention schedules. However, OIOS review of relevant documents relating to the implementation of the 2015/16 records management programme showed that heads of sections/units did not always inform RMU of changes to/replacement of their records management focal points.

13. The above occurred because the Office of the Chief of Mission Support was not monitoring the Mission's records management programme and taking corrective action, if needed. RMU issued a communication to heads of sections/units reminding them to inform RMU of any changes or replacement of records management focal points. However, if focal points do not effectively coordinate their activities with RMU, there is a risk that important records will not be properly retained and archived.

**(1) UNOCI should implement effective measures to ensure all sections/units adequately coordinate with the Records Management Unit in their archiving and records management activities.**

*UNOCI accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it would reinforce monitoring of its records management programme, ensure full implementation of the programme, and organize a workshop on archiving and records management for relevant staff including focal points in all sections/units to analyze, assess and discuss the current archiving process and procedures. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that adequate action has been taken to ensure all sections/units are properly implementing, in coordination with RMU, their records management programme.*

### B. File classification and retention

Need to use a proper file classification scheme and retention schedule

14. The United Nations Archives and Records Management Toolkit and PORS require UNOCI to use a file classification scheme to guide the classification, codification, retention and disposition of the Mission's records.

15. A review of records classification and retention of eight sections/units with sensitive records showed that records management focal points were not always complying with the Toolkit and PORS guidelines. For example: (a) only two sections/units used the classification scheme for hard copy archives; (b) only one section complied with the Toolkit and classification scheme for electronic records; and (c) only two sections consistently used PORS.

16. The above occurred because the Office of the Chief of Mission Support was not monitoring and evaluating the Mission's records management programme. As a result, there was inaccurate classification of records, non-compliance with retention schedules, and inconsistent disposal of records throughout the Mission. This also resulted in accumulation of records without any archival value in offices and records storage facilities. The UNOCI implementation of recommendation above would result in improved compliance with the Toolkit, file classification scheme and PORS. Therefore, OIOS did not make an additional recommendation.

There were adequate controls over the transfer of inactive records to the Mission's record centres

17. Various sections/units of UNOCI are required to implement adequate controls over the transfer of records to the Mission's record centres.

18. UNOCI prepared inactive records to be transferred to its records centres based on instructions from ARMS). During the audit period, there were 16 transfers to the Mission's records centres comprising 65 boxes and 3,447 folders from the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, procurement, movement control, and human resources sections to inactive records centres located in the Mission's logistic base and at its Headquarters. OIOS review of documentation related to these transfers showed that: they were properly authorized; a comprehensive matrix of transferred records was prepared to facilitate identification and retrieval of records; and the concerned sections/units used the standard forms issued by RMU to request transfer of their records.

19. OIOS concluded that there were adequate controls over the transfer of inactive records to the Mission's record centres and to United Nations Headquarters.

There were adequate controls over the destruction of records

20. The United Nations Records Management Toolkit requires records destruction to be: (a) authorized by ARMS and the concerned UNOCI sections/units; and (b) appropriate and documented so that there is a history of what has been destroyed.

21. UNOCI destroyed 360 boxes of records as of October 2016. OIOS review showed that 64 per cent of the boxes were shredded and the other 36 per cent were destroyed by incineration in compliance with the requirements of the Toolkit and authorized by ARMS. For incineration, RMU adequately coordinated with the Property Disposal Unit to dispose of these records in an environmental manner. RMU adequately notified owners of records that were identified for destruction and obtained approvals from ARMS and owners prior to destruction. Destruction certificates were issued by RMU in case of shredding or the Property Disposal Unit in case of incineration.

22. OIOS concluded that UNOCI had implemented adequate controls over the destruction of its records.

## **C. Records management sensitization programme**

### Focal points for records management were adequately trained

23. RMU work plans require the Unit to provide training for newly appointed records management focal points and refresher training when required.

24. UNOCI appointed 96 records management focal points, including 8 for sensitive and vital records. During the period from March 2015 to August 2016, RMU organized two training sessions in each of its three sectors. OIOS review of relevant training records showed that 83 (86 per cent) of the 96 focal points had attended training on archiving and records management. At the time of the audit, as part of the upcoming liquidation process, UNOCI provided training to all newly designated records management focal points.

25. OIOS concluded that UNOCI had taken the necessary steps to ensure adequate training of all records management focal points.

## **D. Management of electronic records**

### Adequate steps were taken for the transfer of electronic records from shared drives to ARMS at Headquarters

26. The Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support standard operating procedures on managing information on shared drives require UNOCI to develop a plan for the migration of records from shared drives to other systems.

27. UNOCI electronic records were maintained by the respective sections/units on shared drives, backed up at the United Nations Global Service Centre. OIOS discussion with relevant staff and review of documents showed that the Communication and Information Technology Section (CITS) and RMU had planned for the transfer of electronic records from the Mission's shared drives to ARMS. As of October 2016, RMU had finalized all necessary steps for the transfer of the Mission's electronic records in Sectors East and West scheduled to close by March 2017 and was in the process of finalizing steps for transfer of similar records at UNOCI headquarters by June 2017.

28. OIOS concluded that UNOCI had taken adequate actions for the transfer of its electronic records stored in shared drives.

### There was a need for an action plan for archiving e-mails

29. The Secretary-General's bulletin on record-keeping requires UNOCI to properly identify, manage and store its e-mail records. The United Nations Archives and Records Management Toolkit requires UNOCI to save important e-mails into ARMS-approved Electronic Document and Record Management System or printed and filed in paper forms.

30. OIOS review of records management practices in eight sections/units with sensitive and vital information and discussion with staff of RMU and CITS indicated that e-mail records of separated staff were not being archived. This was because UNOCI did not take appropriate actions to ensure these e-mails were identified and stored properly. As a result, there was risk that sensitive and vital information may be lost.

31. In November 2016, UNOCI issued a broadcast informing staff that e-mails older than 60 days would be deleted automatically and advising departing staff to archive their e-mails and transfer them to personal storage media. This measure was taken as e-mail accounts of personnel leaving the Mission would be deleted upon check-out. However, this broadcast does not address the requirement for UNOCI to save important e-mails into an ARMS-approved records management system or to print and file in paper forms.

**(2) UNOCI should take steps to enforce the requirement to archive official e-mails prior to staff leaving the Mission.**

*UNOCI accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Office of the Chief of Staff would ensure that broadcasts were sent to all staff to remind them to regularly archive their official e-mails and save them in the shared drives. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that official e-mails that include important and vital records are being archived prior to staff leaving the Mission.*

## **E. Record storage facilities**

There was a need to periodically check the condition of records storage facilities

32. The United Nations Archives and Records Management Toolkit requires UNOCI to: restrict entry in record rooms to authorized personnel; take measures to prevent deterioration and destruction of documents by fire, flood or any other disaster; organize and store records in a manner that allows timely retrieval; and maintain proper environmental conditions and temperature for records.

33. OIOS visits to seven archive and record rooms indicated that these were adequately safeguarded to prevent unauthorized access. However, the following deficiencies related to the maintenance of the archive rooms were observed:

- Boxes were stacked on the floor in the Offices of the Force Commander, Chief of Staff, and the Finance Section due to insufficient shelves in the record rooms;
- The Finance Section's archive room had a leaking pipe, resulting in damaged files;
- Two storage facilities were not maintained at the required temperature;
- There were water, gas, and electric supply lines visible in one archive room; and
- At five locations, records were not properly filed making it difficult to retrieve documents.

34. The above occurred because RMU did not periodically check record rooms to ensure the Office of the Chief of Mission Support took effective corrective action to address identified deficiencies. As a result, there was a risk that records may be damaged or lost.

**(3) UNOCI should implement measures to ensure that its records storage facilities conform to the United Nations records management standards.**

*UNOCI accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it would minimize the storage of records in offices and transfer inactive records to the Mission's records centres where all relevant standards would be complied with. The leakage in the Finance Section's archive room was addressed and humidity and temperature controls would be installed in the Procurement Section's archive room. Recommendation 3*



remains open pending receipt of evidence that: only active records are maintained in offices, inactive records are transferred to the Mission's records centres, and humidity and temperature controls are installed in all archive rooms.

## **V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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

*(Signed)* Eleanor T. Burns  
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## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of archives and records management in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Rec. 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	UNOCI should implement effective measures to ensure all sections/units adequately coordinate with the Records Management Unit in their archiving and records management activities.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that adequate action has been taken to ensure all sections/units are properly implementing, in coordination with RMU, their records management programme.	31 January 2017
2	UNOCI should take steps to enforce the requirements to archive official e-mails prior to staff leaving the Mission.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that official e-mails that include important and vital records are being archived prior to staff leaving the Mission.	9 December 2016
3	UNOCI should implement measures to ensure that its records storage facilities conform to the United Nations records management standards.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that only active records are maintained in offices, inactive records are transferred to the Mission's records centres, and humidity and temperature controls are installed in all archive rooms.	31 January 2017

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

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

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**

## Management Response

## Audit of archives and records management in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNOCI should implement effective measures to ensure all sections/units adequately coordinate with the Records Management Unit in their archiving and records management activities.	Important	YES	Chief General Service Section (CGSS) And Chief Records Management Unit (CRMU)	31 January 2017	<p>UNOCI Mission support management will reinforce the monitoring of the Mission records management programmes and ensure its full implementation in conjunction with General Services Section (GSS)/Records Management Unit (RMU) by having focal points assigned at the offices and trained in the records management programmes; and by assisting on a case by case in the implementation of the records management programmes.</p> <p>Furthermore ONUCI has organized a workshop on archiving and records management to be held in December 2016 in order to analyze, assess and discuss the current archiving process and procedures and its impact in the liquidation of the mission with a view to refining the process using principles of lean six-Sigma business process improvement. The targeted audience is records management focal points mission-mission wide and the participation of ARMS-NY has been requested.</p>

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 archives and records management in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
2	UNOCI should take steps to enforce the requirements to archive official e-mails prior to staff leaving the Mission.	Important	YES	Acting Chief of Staff	09 December 2016	The Office of the Chief of Staff (in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General) will ensure, through Communications and Information Technology Section that broadcasts are sent to all staff, to regularly archive their official emails (which communicate decisions and actions or provide evidence of business transactions) and save them as PDF documents in the shared drives (S-Drives).
3	UNOCI should take adequate measures to ensure that its records storage facilities conform to the United Nations records management standards.	Important	YES	Chief General Service Section (CGSS) And Chief Records Management Unit (CRMU)	31 January 2017	ONUCI management in conjunction with General Services Section (GSS)/Records Management Unit (RMU) will take actions by ensuring offices: Implement records retention schedules in order to destroy records in-situ and minimize the storage of records in the offices, keeping only active records in cabinets. Transfer their semi active and inactive records to the Mission records centre where RMU complies with Archives and Records Management Section (ARMS) physical standards and provides efficient tools to retrieve records when needed. Additionally, although Finance section has fixed the leakage in its office archive room, it will be recommended to move Finance archive to RMU records centre at

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Audit of archives and records management in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						AK-Camp. Humidity and Temperature controls will be installed in Procurement Archive; Force Commander and Police Commissioner archives will be transferred to RMU records centre after implementation of records retention schedules.