OIOS

Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2018/134

Audit of business continuity in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

The Mission needed to identify essential and time-critical business services and determine underlying business processes with continuity strategies and recovery timelines

14 December 2018
Assignment No. AP2017/637/01

Audit of business continuity in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of business continuity in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The objective of the audit was to assess whether MINUSCA had established and implemented adequate and effective procedures to ensure continuity of critical business processes and services at a minimum agreed level following disruptive events. The audit covered the period from April 2016 to May 2018 and included a review of: governance structure and identification of time-critical business services and processes; critical staff and organization resilience focal points; maintenance, exercise and review of the business continuity plan; and reporting and record-keeping of organizational resilience status, including business continuity.

MINUSCA established a two-tier governance structure, developed a business continuity plan, as well as a disaster recovery plan for its information and communication technology systems. The Mission also conducted annual exercises to assess the effectiveness of the plan to continue operations in the event of a disruption. However, business continuity management needed to be strengthened to ensure that MINUSCA was adequately prepared to resume all essential and time-critical business services in event of a crisis or disruption in operations.

OIOS made four recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, MINUSCA needed to:

- Define the Mission's essential and time-critical business services and determine their maximum tolerable periods of disruption, and identify underlying critical business processes, continuity strategies and recovery time objectives;

- Develop appropriate terms of reference for the organization resilience focal points and strengthen monitoring and maintenance of the list of staff with time-critical functions;

- Establish an action plan with target timelines to conduct required organizational resilience management system maintenance, and the exercise and review programme including testing of its business continuity plan and training of staff with business continuity responsibilities; and

- Ensure relevant crisis management, organizational resilience and business continuity documents are regularly prepared and maintained.

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

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Audit of business continuity in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

I.   BACKGROUND

1.   The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of business continuity in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

2.   The General Assembly approved the Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS) approach as the United Nations system-wide emergency management framework on 7 June 2013. The ORMS Policy was promulgated in field missions in August 2015, with full implementation required by June 2016. Business continuity is one of the core elements of ORMS and is the capability of the Organization to continue essential and time-critical services at defined acceptable levels following a disruptive incident. The Chief of Staff has responsibility for business continuity activities in MINUSCA.

3.   MINUSCA operates in 12 locations in the Central African Republic with its head office in Bangui, three sectoral offices in Bria (east), Kaga-Bandoro (centre), and Bouar (west) and five integrated field offices and three sub-offices across the country. The MINUSCA 2017/18 budget provided for the deployment of 10,581 military contingent personnel, 1,680 formed police units personnel, 169 military observers, 311 military staff officers and 400 United Nations police officers. The Mission also had 1,515 authorized staff, as well as 254 United Nations volunteers and 108 government-provided personnel.

4.   Comments provided by MINUSCA are incorporated in italics.

II.   AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

5.   The objective of the audit was to assess whether MINUSCA had established and implemented adequate and effective procedures to ensure continuity of essential and time-critical business services at acceptable levels following disruptive events.

6.   This audit was included in the 2018 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to operational and reputational risks related to the inability of the Mission to continue operations at defined levels and periods following a disruptive event.

7.   OIOS conducted this audit from April to June 2018. The audit covered the period from April 2016 to May 2018. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in business continuity management, which included: governance structure and identification of critical business services and processes; critical staff and organization resilience focal points; maintenance, exercise and review of the business continuity plan; and reporting and record-keeping of organizational resilience status, including business continuity.

8.   The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel involved in business continuity activities, (b) reviews of relevant documentation, (c) analytical reviews of data, and (d) physical observation of desktop exercises on crisis management in Bangui.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Governance structure and identification of critical business services and processes

The Mission had established a two-tier governance structure, but needed to establish essential and time-critical business services and underlying business processes

10. The Secretary-General's report on ORMS (A/67/266) requires MINUSCA to establish a two-tier governance structure comprising a high-level body to make business continuity policy decisions and an operational team to implement these policies and decisions. The report also requires senior management of MINUSCA to define its essential and time-critical business services and determine the maximum tolerable period of disruption[1] for resuming these services following a disruptive event. MINUSCA is also required to determine critical business processes that support its time-critical businesses services and assign appropriate continuity strategies and recovery time objective (RTO) to identified business processes.

11. MINUSCA had established a two-tier governance structure comprising a Crisis Management Team (CMT) and a Crisis Management Working Group (CMWG), as required by the Secretary-General's report on ORMS (A/67/266). The CMT, which was chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and comprised senior managers such as the Deputy SRSGs, Force Commander, Police Commissioner, Director of Mission Support, and the Chief Security Advisor, was responsible for making critical decisions, providing strategic direction, and coordination and liaison during a crisis, as well as ensuring business continuity. Members of the CMT and CMWG had clear roles and responsibilities as indicated in the standard operating procedures and met whenever there was a crisis situation to deliberate on relevant issues including addressing incidents with the potential to disrupt operations. From April 2016 to March 2018, the CMT met 27 times to respond to crises in Bangui and other parts of the country, and during these meetings, provided measures to be implemented to mitigate the risks identified.

12. MINUSCA developed a business continuity plan in August 2015 and in June 2018 the plan was being updated. However, both plans did not reflect overarching essential and time-critical business services based on the Mission's core mandate, including their maximum tolerable periods of disruption, as these had not been defined by senior management. Also, both plans did not cover MINUSCA regional operational units outside Bangui.

13. MINUSCA had identified 118 critical business processes in both its 2015 business continuity plan and the 2018 draft plan. However, there was no assurance that the identified processes were indeed critical and would support the resumption of the Mission's core services since they had not yet been defined. Also, the plans did not identify dependencies on critical information and communication technology (ICT) systems that would be needed to support the recovery of business processes. Although the MINUSCA Geospatial Telecommunications and Information Technology Section (GITTS) had developed a separate disaster recovery plan that identified critical ICT services and infrastructure with assigned RTOs ranging from 0 to 24 hours, there was no link between the critical ICT systems identified in the disaster recovery plan and critical processes identified in the business continuity plans.

14. The above resulted, as MINUSCA had not prioritised its efforts to define and communicate essential and time-critical business services, determine their maximum tolerable periods of disruption, and identify related critical business processes. Consequently, the risk that time-critical business services might not be effectively and timely resumed following a disruptive event was not properly mitigated. Also,

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[1] The time-period senior management considered acceptable to operate without the specified service

resources may be inefficiently utilized on recovery measures for processes that are not critical to the resumption of the Mission's services.

> **(1) MINUSCA should: define its essential and time-critical business services and determine maximum tolerable periods of disruption; identify underlying critical business processes, continuity strategies and recovery time objectives; and ensure that the updated business continuity plan includes all relevant operational units of the Mission.**
>
> *MINUSCA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the business continuity plan (BCP) is being finalized and the final draft will be submitted to the SRSG through the Chief of Staff by 15 December 2018.* Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that MINUSCA has defined its essential and time-critical business services, determined maximum tolerable periods of disruption, identified underlying critical business processes and updated the business continuity plan to include all operational units of the Mission.

B.   Critical staff and organization resilience focal points

<u>Need to identify staff responsible for time-critical functions and develop their terms of reference</u>

15.   In February 2018, MINUSCA identified those staff deemed as critical and essential, but did not implement a process to ensure the list was updated regularly, which is required due to staff turnaround. MINUSCA also did not map staff with their respective time-critical functions. At the same time, the MINUSCA Chief of Staff appointed organizational resilience focal points (ORFP) for each of the core elements of ORMS: (a) business continuity plan; (b) Mission security plan; (c) emergency medical response/mass casualty incident response; (d) information technology disaster recovery; (e) crisis management; (f) staff, survivors, and family support preparedness; and (g) crisis communication preparedness. However, the Chief of Staff did not provide ORFPs with terms of reference to clarify their roles and responsibilities in the specific core element that they were assigned in the event of a disruption. Also, briefing meetings were not regularly held with ORFPs to discuss aspects of the business continuity plan throughout its preparation, including validation exercises and readiness to effectively implement the plan as and when required.

16.   This resulted as MINUSCA did not prioritize up-dating the critical staff list and their assigned time-critical functions and did not dedicate sufficient resources to develop and issue terms of reference for ORFPs. In the absence of identified staff responsible for time-critical functions, MINUSCA may not be able to appropriately and effectively respond to a disruptive event.

> **(2) MINUSCA should develop appropriate terms of reference for the organization resilience focal points and take steps to strengthen monitoring of the list of critical and essential staff and their time-critical functions to ensure accurate and updated records.**
>
> *MINUSCA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that terms of reference for ORMS focal points have been developed. The Mission will establish the list of critical and essential staff including the time-critical functions based on the approved the business continuity plan and these will be monitored once established.* Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that a mechanism is in place to ensure that the list of critical and essential staff and their time-critical functions is being regularly updated.

C.   Maintenance, exercise and review of business continuity plan

<u>Need to establish and implement an action plan for maintenance, exercise, review and testing of business continuity plan</u>

17.   The ORMS framework requires MINUSCA to: conduct an annual awareness campaign to ensure staff and management are aware of emergency management (including business continuity) plans and procedures; conduct annual functional tests of its business continuity plan to validate recovery strategies and arrangements; and train responsible staff.

18.   As part of awareness-raising, MINUSCA conducted two desktop exercises: one in Bouar on 10 August 2017 to test the preparedness of the field office and another in Bangui on 19 May 2018 for the CMT to address business continuity after a serious protection of civilian-related crisis where the Mission's and humanitarian organizations' response were disrupted. GITTS also conducted annual disaster recovery exercises for their systems and services. After-action reviews were conducted subsequent to the exercises to assess and adopt lessons learned.

19.   However, MINUSCA did not conduct annual functional tests to validate the business continuity plan, systems and procedures against established standards and put in place corrective actions to address deficiencies. Other business recovery exercises such as telecommuting, use of peer-to-peer technology and devolution arrangements, where necessary, had not been tested to ensure staff were capable of implementing recovery strategies and identifying and addressing gaps in emergency response plans. In addition, staff responsible for time-critical functions and focal points had not been trained on business continuity arrangements and response procedures.

20.   MINUSCA, while being aware of the requirements, had not prepared an action plan with target timelines to conduct the required ORMS maintenance, exercise and review programme including testing of its business continuity plan and training of staff with business continuity responsibilities in consultation with the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations/Field Support (DPKO/DFS) Organizational Resilience Programme Officer. This reduced the readiness of the Mission to respond to disruptive events.

> **(3) MINUSCA, in consultation with the DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer, should establish an action plan with target timelines to conduct required organizational resilience management system maintenance, exercise and review programme including testing of its business continuity plan and training of staff with business continuity responsibilities.**
>
> *MINUSCA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that feedback from DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer acknowledged that testing in the Mission should be done every six months from the business continuity plan endorsement.* Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the established action plan with target timelines to conduct required ORMS maintenance, exercise and review programme including testing of its business continuity plan and evidence that staff responsible for business continuity have been trained.

D.   Reporting and record-keeping

Need to establish reporting and record-keeping procedures

21.   MINUSCA did not submit the required status updates to the DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer and did not have a crisis management quick reference guide as a handy document in the event of a crisis as required by the code cable dated 8 July 2014 on implementation of ORMS in peacekeeping operations. Additionally, relevant policies, plans and other documents on ORMS and business continuity management were not centrally maintained and backed up on two flash memory drives for recovery. Instead, documents were kept by the various sections/units involved in the process. For example, documents related to crisis management and business continuity were maintained by JOC, and the security plan and information technology disaster recovery-related documents were maintained by the Safety and Security Section and GITTS, respectively.

22.   The above occurred because MINUSCA did not enforce the mechanism for ensuring that required status updates, quick reference guides were prepared and submitted since the responsibility given to the focal points was in addition to their substantive jobs. As a result, designated focal points were not always available for carrying out specified tasks such as submission of status updates, back up of relevant policies, plans and other documents and preparing the quick reference guide. The inability to systematically document and maintain information may adversely affect recovery in times of crisis.

> **(4) MINUSCA should take steps to ensure that: (a) organizational resilience status updates are reported to the DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer in a timely manner; (b) a crisis management quick reference guide is prepared and maintained; and (c) updated copies of the organizational resilience and business continuity relevant policies, plans and checklists are maintained with the Head of Mission or Mission Chief of Staff and the designated focal points.**
>
> *MINUSCA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that: there is a regular contact between the DPKO/DFS ORMS Programme Officer and the ORMS focal points in the Mission; the quick reference guide is in the process of being drafted by the Joint Operations Centre; and the Mission is working with the various focal points to update all relevant ORMS plans.* Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: ORMS status updates are submitted to the DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer in a timely manner; a crisis management quick reference guide is prepared and maintained; and updated copies of the organizational resilience and business continuity relevant policies/plans/checklists are kept with the SRSG or Chief of Staff and the designated ORFPs.

IV.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

(*Signed*) Eleanor T. Burns
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of business continuity in United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[2]/ Important[3]	C/ O[4]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[5]
1	MINUSCA should: define its essential and time-critical business services and determine maximum tolerable periods of disruption; identify underlying critical business processes, continuity strategies and recovery time objectives; and ensure that the updated business continuity plan includes all relevant operational units of the Mission.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that MINUSCA has defined its essential and time-critical business services, determined maximum tolerable periods of disruption, identified underlying critical business processes and updated the business continuity plan to include all operational units of the Mission.	31 January 2019
2	MINUSCA should develop appropriate terms of reference for the organization resilience focal points and take steps to strengthen monitoring of the list of critical and essential staff and their time-critical functions to ensure accurate and updated records.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that a mechanism is in place to ensure that the list of critical and essential staff and their time-critical functions is being regularly updated.	31 March 2019
3	MINUSCA, in consultation with the DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer, should establish an action plan with target timelines to conduct required organizational resilience management system maintenance, exercise and review programme including testing of its business continuity plan and training of staff with business continuity responsibilities.	Important	O	Receipt of a copy of the established action plan with target timelines to conduct required ORMS maintenance, exercise and review programme including testing of its business continuity plan and evidence that staff responsible for business continuity have been trained.	31 July 2019
4	MINUSCA should take steps to ensure that: (a) organizational resilience status updates are reported to the DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer in a timely manner; (b) a crisis management quick reference guide is prepared and maintained; and (c) updated copies of the	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that: ORMS status updates are submitted to the DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer in a timely manner; a crisis management quick reference guide is prepared and maintained; and updated copies of the organizational resilience and	31 March 2019

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[2] 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.

[3] 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.

[4] C = closed, O = open

[5] Date provided by MINUSCA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Audit of business continuity in United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission
in the Central African Republic**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[2]/ Important[3]	C/ O[4]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[5]
	organizational resilience and business continuity relevant policies, plans and checklists are maintained with the Head of Mission or Mission Chief of Staff and the designated focal points.			business continuity relevant policies/plans/checklists are kept with the SRSG or Chief of Staff and the designated ORFPs.	

APPENDIX I

Management Response

United Nations   MINUSCA   Nations Unies

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated
Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies
pour la Stabilisation en République centrafricaine

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM   **MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR**

TO: Mr. Daeyoung Park,
A: Peacekeeping Audit Service
      Internal Audit Division, OIOS

DATE: 10 December 2018

REFERENCE: MINUSCA/OSRSG/033/2018

FROM: Parfait Onanga-Anyanga,
DE: Special Representative of the Secretary-General,
       Head of MINUSCA

SUBJECT: **MINUSCA's response to Draft report on an audit of business continuity in the United Nations**
OBJET: **Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (Assignment No. AP2017/637/01)**

1. Reference is made to your memorandum (OIOS:2018-637-01-05) dated 18 November 2018, on the above captioned subject-matter. Please find attached MINUSCA's comments on the recommendations made in Appendix I of the report. Along with target dates and titles of individuals responsible for implementing the recommendations.

    Attachments: (1) Appendix 1 Management response

CC: Ms. Vivian van de Perre, Chief of Staff, MINUSCA
      Mr. Milan Trojanovic, Director Mission Support, MINUSCA
      Mr. Souleymane Thioune, Deputy Chief of Staff and Field Offices Coordinator, MINUSCA
      Ms. Dorice Omolo, Audit Focal Point, MINUSCA
      Mr. Laud Botchwey, Chief Resident Auditor for MINUSCA
      Mr. Arnold Valdez, Chief, Resident Audit Coordination Section, IAD-OIOS
      Ms. Cynthia Avena-Castillo, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

Management Response

**Audit of business continuity in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in
the Central African Republic**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	MINUSCA should: define its essential and time-critical business services and determine maximum tolerable periods of disruption; identify underlying critical business processes, continuity strategies and recovery time objectives; and ensure that the updated business continuity plan includes all relevant operational units of the Mission	Important	Yes	Chief Joint Operations Centre (JOC)	31 January 2019	The business continuity plan (BCP) is being finalized; the final draft will be submitted to the SRSG through the Chief of Staff by 15 December.
2	MINUSCA should develop appropriate terms of reference for the organization resilience focal points and take steps to strengthen monitoring of the list of critical and essential staff and their time-critical functions to ensure accurate and updated records.	Important	Yes	Organizational resilience management systems (ORMS) Focal Point(s), DPKO/DFS ORMS Programme Officer	31 March 2019	Terms of reference (TORs) for ORMS focal points has been developed and sent as an attachment in August. The Mission will establish the list of critical and essential staff including the time-critical functions based on the approved BCP. These will be monitored once established.
3	MINUSCA, in consultation with the DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer, should establish an action plan with target timelines to conduct required organizational resilience management system maintenance, exercise and review programme including testing of its business continuity plan and	Important	Yes	ORMS Focal Point(s)	31 July 2019	Feedback from DPKO/DFS ORMS Programme Officer acknowledged that testing in the mission should be done every six months from the BCP endorsement.

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[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 business continuity in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in
the Central African Republic**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	training of staff with business continuity responsibilities.					
4	MINUSCA should take steps to ensure that: (a) organizational resilience status updates are reported to the DPKO/DFS Organizational Resilience Programme Officer in a timely manner; (b) a crisis management quick reference guide is prepared and maintained; and (c) updated copies of the organizational resilience and business continuity relevant policies, plans and checklists are maintained with the Head of Mission or Mission Chief of Staff and the designated focal points.	Important	Yes	ORMS Focal Point(s), Chief JOC	(a) Ongoing (b) 31 December 2018 (c) 31 March 2019	(a) There is a regular contact between the DPKO/DFS ORMS Programme Officer and the ORMS focal points in the Mission. (b) The Quick reference guide is in the process of being drafted by JOC. Please note that a separate crisis management (CM) reference guide is not part of the DPKO/DFS CM SOP and no other mission has been asked to produce such a document. (c) The Mission is working with the various focal points to update all relevant ORMS plans