



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2022/030

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

The Mission needed to significantly improve misconduct prevention, ensure a prompt and coordinated approach to adequately assess and address all reported allegations, and strengthen community awareness raising and victim assistance mechanism

15 July 2022

Assignment No. AP2021-635-01

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of measures implemented by UNISFA to manage conduct and discipline in the Mission. The audit covered the period from January 2019 to December 2021 and reviewed the following areas: prevention of misconduct, enforcement of standards of conduct, and remedial action.

The Mission needed to significantly improve misconduct prevention, ensure a prompt and coordinated approach to adequately assess and address all reported allegations, and strengthen community awareness raising and victim assistance mechanism.

OIOS made 9 recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UNISFA needed to:

- Establish effective measures, including accountability through the performance management system, to ensure completion of mandatory ethics and integrity related training by all staff;
- Establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure that all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training;
- Strengthen misconduct risk management by: (a) adequately planning risk assessment site visits; and (b) developing and implementing a mechanism to monitor the status of risk mitigation measures arising from misconduct risk assessments;
- Implement measures to ensure all national staff are systematically vetted prior to onboarding;
- Develop an action plan to address the issues identified in the staff welfare assessments and task the Conduct and Discipline Team to attend the welfare committee meetings in an advisory capacity;
- Ensure that a fully functional and reliable email and telephone hotline system is in place and messages are systematically reviewed for appropriate action on cases of possible misconduct;
- Implement necessary controls to ensure that all reported misconduct allegations are duly recorded in the Case Management Tracking System;
- Implement a monitoring system to track all allegations of misconduct to ensure appropriate follow-up action and accountability for wrongdoing; and
- Establish community-based complaints mechanisms and enhance community outreach to better inform the general population about the United Nations standards of conduct, reporting misconduct, and assistance available to victims.

UNISFA accepted the recommendations and has initiated action to implement other recommendations. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

2. Core values and principles to be upheld by staff members are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, whereby every staff member is called upon to uphold “the highest levels of efficiency, competence and integrity.” The Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service¹ delineate fundamental values and principles and establish the standards of conduct for all personnel. The United Nations field personnel are also guided as to their conduct by the policy on “Accountability for Conduct and Discipline in Field Missions”² that focuses on how they are to be held accountable for misconduct and lack of discipline.

3. The Secretariat’s commitment to ensuring that all United Nations personnel, whether civilian, police or military, are accountable for their conduct while in the service of a United Nations field mission was reinforced in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative launched jointly with Member States. Strengthening the conduct of peacekeeping operations and personnel is a core part of this initiative. The United Nations has adopted a three-pronged strategy of addressing misconduct through prevention, enforcement, and remedial action. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) is responsible for enforcing United Nations policies on conduct in peacekeeping missions and special political missions and works closely with the Departments of Peace Operations and Peacebuilding and Political Affairs. The conduct and discipline function for all field missions is overseen by the Under-Secretary-General, DMSPC.

4. Misconduct refers to the violations of the United Nations standards of conduct (under the Charter, the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, or other relevant administrative issuances or policy documents developed for specific categories of personnel) or failure to observe the Standards of Conduct expected of an international civil servant. There are two categories of misconduct: (i) serious misconduct; and (ii) misconduct. Serious misconduct includes sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), serious and complex fraud, abuse of authority, conflict of interest, all cases involving risk of loss of life, serious criminal acts, gross mismanagement, and waste of substantial resources.

5. The Mission’s Conduct and Discipline Team (CDT) serves as the principal advisor to the Head of Mission for all matters related to conduct and discipline, including SEA involving all categories of personnel. CDT is responsible for providing guidance and technical advice to the Mission on issues relating to conduct and discipline; assisting the Mission in developing strategies to prevent, identify and respond effectively to misconduct; and ensuring that all United Nations policies, procedures and guidelines on addressing misconduct are adequately disseminated to personnel in the Mission.

6. UNISFA CDT is headed by a Chief at the P-5 level who reports to the Head of Mission. The Chief, CDT is assisted by one staff member at P-4 level. The CDT budget for 2019/20 and 2020/21 was \$608,000 for each year.

7. Comments provided by UNISFA are incorporated in italics.

¹ <https://icsc.un.org/Resources/General/Publications/standardsE.pdf>

² <https://conduct.unmissions.org/documents-standards>

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of measures implemented by UNISFA to manage conduct and discipline in the Mission. The audit focused on the three-pronged strategy for addressing conduct and discipline issues in peace operations and addressed three main audit questions:

- a) To what extent has the Mission established adequate measures to prevent misconduct?
- b) To what extent has the Mission established effective mechanisms for reporting, recording and timely addressing cases of misconduct?
- c) To what extent has the Mission taken adequate remedial action in cases of substantiated misconduct?

9. This audit was included in the 2021 risk-based work plan of OIOS because of the immediate and detrimental consequences of some misconduct types on the victims and other stakeholders. It was also due to the high operational and reputational consequences of lapses in conduct and discipline, notably on overall organizational culture in motivating staff to deliver their best effort.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from September 2021 to April 2022. The audit covered the period from January 2019 to December 2021. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas, which comprised: prevention of misconduct, enforcement of standards of conduct, and remedial action.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel; (b) review of the 2021 UNISFA risk register and the misconduct risk register; and (c) analysis of training and vetting records of 30 out of 87 newly onboarded staff; (d) review of one quarterly report on conduct and discipline activities and other relevant documentation; (e) analysis of all 33 misconduct allegations recorded in the Case Management Tracking System (CMTS) as of December 2021; and (f) review of welfare activities in the Mission. This audit was conducted remotely, and therefore, no on-site visits were made.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Prevention of misconduct

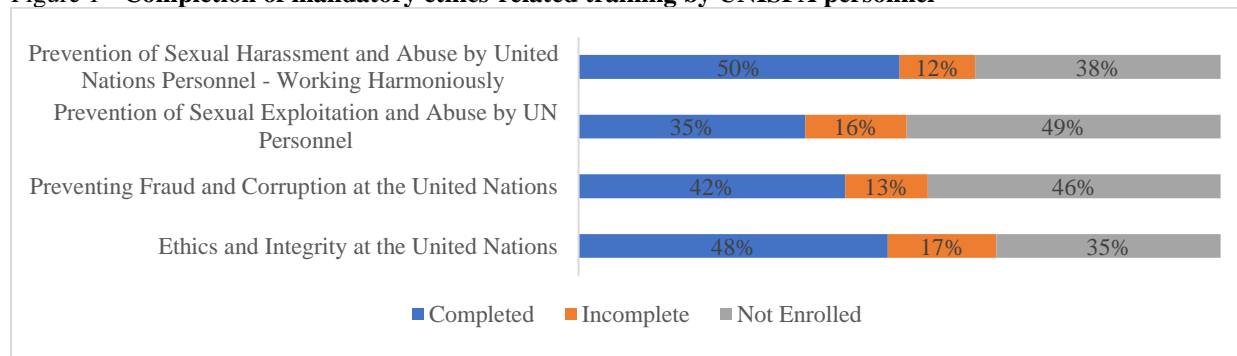
Need to ensure that all personnel complete mandatory training

13. The Secretary-General made a commitment towards creating a culture of prevention through pursuing initiatives designed to reconnect all personnel to the core values of the United Nations. The Mission is required to create an environment that promotes ethical conduct, and all personnel are expected to adhere to the highest standards of behavior.

14. One of the ways the Mission communicates and promotes shared values and expectations of conduct is through awareness raising and training. As part of awareness raising efforts, UNISFA CDT posted awareness raising messages and materials on the Mission's intranet and disseminated videos, brochures and pamphlets on prevention and reporting of SEA during induction trainings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mission management issued two broadcasts in April and June 2020 and conducted two workshops in April and June 2021 to sensitize staff on conduct and discipline matters.

15. There are four mandatory training courses for staff at all levels, which relate to ethics and integrity. Completion rates of mandatory courses are published on the management dashboards (see Figure 1) and are included in the senior managers' compacts. On average, 44 per cent of UNISFA staff had completed all four ethics and integrity related mandatory courses as of 5 October 2021. Completion rates were lower at the senior management level, with 25 per cent of staff at the D-1 and above level having completed the courses.

Figure 1 - Completion of mandatory ethics-related training by UNISFA personnel



Source: Management dashboard (accessed on 5 October 2021)

16. An OIOS survey³ showed that about 36 of 66 (55 per cent) UNISFA staff believed that standards on ethics and integrity have been somewhat or extremely effectively communicated, while the rest were either neutral or believed that they were communicated somewhat or extremely ineffectively. About 44 per cent of staff believed that training surrounding ethical standards and integrity has been sufficient, while 56 per cent were either neutral or thought it was somewhat or totally insufficient. (See Figures 2 and 3.)

Figure 2 - Staff perception of how effectively the standards on ethics and integrity are communicated

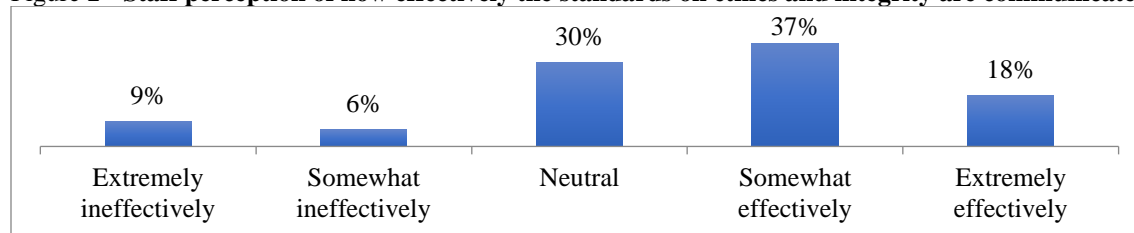
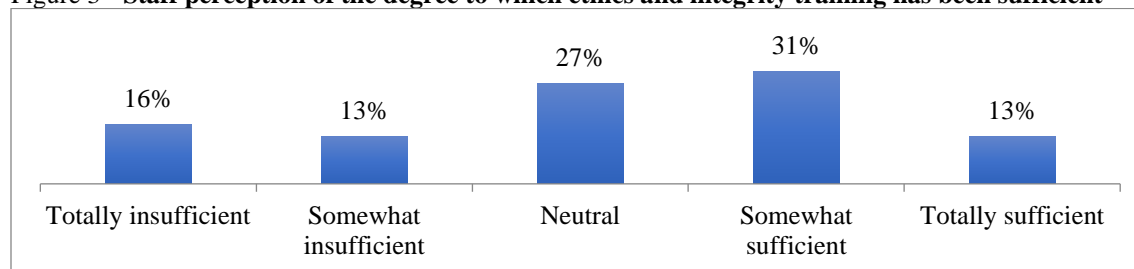


Figure 3 - Staff perception of the degree to which ethics and integrity training has been sufficient



³ Online staff survey was conducted as part of the OIOS Evaluation of the United Nations accountability system and included an assessment of adequacy of communication on ethics and integrity; perception of personnel of the Mission's leadership commitment to ethical values and standards of conduct; and of handling conduct and discipline matters. Overall response rate to the survey was 37 per cent. Although UNISFA had a lower mission-specific response rate (approx. 25 per cent), the survey results were used as appropriate to corroborate other audit evidence.

17. Discussions with UNISFA Integrated Mission Training Centre (IMTC) indicated that staff cited lack of time and slow internet speed that made it difficult to complete online courses. In response, UNISFA allocated two hours a week for learning and development, and efforts were underway to increase the internet speed along with broadcast campaigns to encourage course completion. However, these efforts were not targeted at staff who had not completed mandatory courses, and more effective measures needed to be implemented to ensure full compliance, including through the performance management system.

18. IMTC and CDT jointly conduct mandatory induction training for mission personnel on the United Nations standards of conduct and core values, policies and procedures on preventing and addressing misconduct. The Mission held monthly induction trainings between January 2019 to March 2020, when it was interrupted by the COVID-19 lockdown. Monthly virtual induction trainings resumed in 2021. However, the Mission was unable to provide evidence that all newly deployed personnel attended the induction because IMTC attendance records were not complete. Upon OIOS request, IMTC sought confirmation from 87 staff newly deployed from January 2019 to December 2021. Of 51 staff who responded to IMTC enquiry, only 28 (55 per cent) stated that they had attended the mandatory conduct and discipline induction training. Further, the records maintained by IMTC could only support attendance for 6 of the 28 personnel.

19. The above occurred due to absence of coordination mechanisms to identify newly onboarded personnel who had not attended the mandatory induction training, and the lack of effective measures to ensure completion of mandatory ethics and integrity related training by all staff, including through the performance management system.

(1) UNISFA should establish effective measures, including accountability through the performance management system, to ensure completion of mandatory ethics and integrity related training by all staff.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Mission has implemented a spreadsheet register to monitor and ensure the completion of mandatory ethics and integrity training.

(2) UNISFA should establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure that all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Integrated Mission Training Centre has implemented a register of all mandatory training attendees as a means to monitor and ensure that all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory training.

The Mission needed to improve the effectiveness of misconduct risk management

20. Effective prevention activities constitute a solid foundation for ensuring that all personnel deployed in field missions always maintain the highest standards of conduct and integrity. An important way of preventing misconduct is identifying risks before misconduct occurs. Missions are expected to develop risk management plans, which should look at the level of risk and specific risk factors linked to possible misconduct by their personnel, with particular emphasis on SEA.

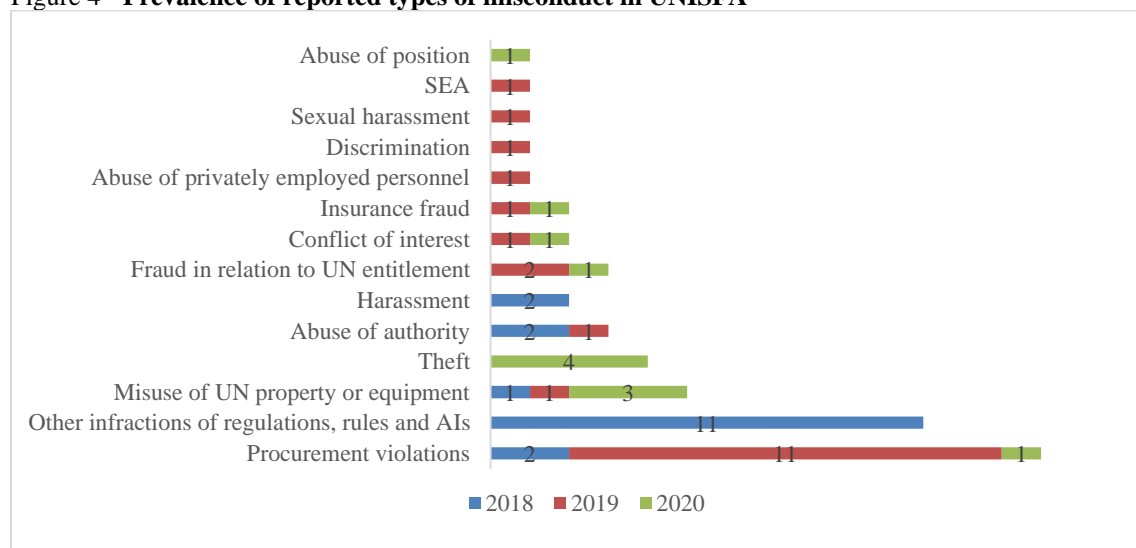
21. UNISFA developed its misconduct risk register in 2021 which identified 11 risks associated with different categories of Mission personnel along with risk mitigation measures. However, there was no evidence that the risks were identified through analysis of historical trends. Also, CDT did not conduct risk assessment visits to 20 UNISFA field offices/team sites outside Abyei, where most (81 per cent) of military personnel were deployed. Further, while the Mission developed a misconduct risk register, it did not adopt

an integrated mission-wide approach to risk management, including involving all relevant stakeholders to ensure that all pertinent misconduct risks were identified and managed in a holistic way.

22. Consequently, the effectiveness of misconduct risk management was impacted. The register included risks that were not relevant to UNISFA and had references to risk factors of another mission. For example, it considered international personnel living outside of United Nations compounds, whereas all UNISFA international personnel reside within designated compounds. Also, the risk of fraternization and mingling with the Sudanese population was rated as high due to cultural similarities of troops from surrounding countries, whereas in UNISFA the single troop-contributing country (TCC) had a different language than that spoken in Sudanese communities.

23. Furthermore, while violations in procurement, regulations and rules and misuse of United Nations property were the most common types of misconduct recorded in CMTS (see Figure 4), these risks were not included in the misconduct risk register. The misconduct risk register was not aligned with the Mission’s risk register, which is reviewed by the Mission components during an annual workshop. A third (13 of 42) of risk mitigation measures in the misconduct register, including for high-risk areas, had not been implemented and there was no evidence that these had been discussed or communicated to the respective risk owners for adequate action and follow-up.

Figure 4 - Prevalence of reported types of misconduct in UNISFA



Source: <https://conduct.unmissions.org/other-misconduct-data> (accessed on 2 December 2021)

24. The above occurred due to a lack of oversight over conduct and discipline matters and insufficient planning of misconduct risk management activities. The short-term tenure of the acting Head of Mission, who also doubles as the Force Commander and rotates on an annual basis, contributed to the oversight gap. In addition, working dynamics and inter-staff relations indicated a culture of different units operating in silos. As a result, the Mission has not been sufficiently effective in addressing key misconduct risks.

(3) UNISFA should strengthen the misconduct risk management by: (a) adequately planning and conducting risk assessment site visits; and (b) developing and implementing a mechanism to monitor the status of risk mitigation measures arising from misconduct risk assessment.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that the Mission would implement this recommendation subject to adequate human resources to effectively conduct site visits in 23 areas

where UNISFA has presence. The Mission further stated that the current Conduct and Discipline Team structure of one P5 and one P4 was inadequate to carry out effective site visits.

National staff were not vetted prior to recruitment

25. The United Nations seeks to ensure that only individuals with the highest standards of integrity, competence and efficiency are hired. To prevent individuals who have previously engaged in any form of substantiated misconduct from being rehired, the Mission conducts mandatory vetting clearance of candidates prior to onboarding.

26. A review of recruitment records of 30 (22 international and 8 national staff) out of 87 staff onboarded during the period January 2019 to December 2021 indicated that all 22 international staff were vetted prior to onboarding. At the request of UNISFA, DMSPC centrally vetted the newly recruited staff and confirmed to the Mission the absence of prior record of misconduct. However, the Mission did not vet any of the eight national staff that were recruited. The Human Resources Unit, which has responsibility for recruitment and vetting, informed OIOS that recruitment of national staff was done manually outside of the Inspira system (which has in-built workflow prompts for vetting control checks), and the Mission was not aware of the requirement to vet all national staff. This presented a risk of rehiring personnel with misconduct history.

(4) UNISFA should implement measures to ensure all national staff are systematically vetted prior to onboarding.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Human Resources Unit has now updated its checklist used for recruiting and onboarding of national staff to include the requirement for vetting clearance to be obtained before onboarding of national staff.

Need to strengthen oversight of staff welfare activities

27. Provision of welfare and recreation activities for mission personnel is important in promoting adequate working and living conditions for staff often deployed in hardship environments and under stressful post-conflict conditions. Welfare and recreation activities strengthen the morale and discipline of United Nations personnel and play an important role in misconduct prevention.

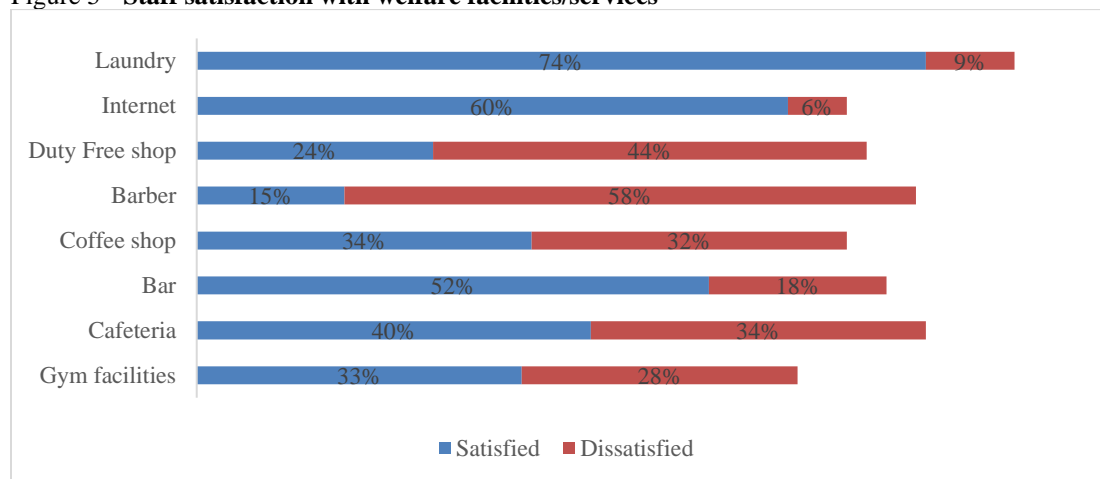
28. Significant improvements in the camp living and welfare facilities were noted. For example, the Mission has installed recreation facilities including gymnasiums and basketball courts and established weekly welfare flights to enable staff better utilize their rest and recuperation entitlement. The Mission was also providing internet services to military contingents, which was viewed as critical welfare facilitation that enabled personnel to communicate with their families. Review of all 14 TCC self-sustainment reports prepared in 2021 indicated that TCC welfare facilities were of acceptable standards.

29. However, some improvements were needed in the oversight of welfare activities. The welfare programme was allocated \$274,000 and \$259,000 from the Mission budget for 2019/20 and 2020/21, respectively. Additionally, the Welfare Unit had some \$75,000 in self-generated revenues. However, the welfare funds were not fully utilized in part due to disruptions created by the pandemic and insufficient monitoring of planned welfare projects and activities. The Staff Welfare and Recreation Committee (SWRC) did not hold any meetings in 2019 and 2020, however three meetings were held in March, May and October 2021. A review of the minutes indicated that action plans for matters arising were developed, alongside expected deadlines; however, there was no evidence that actions were monitored for implementation. Further, CDT was not actively involved in its advisory capacity in planning and organizing

welfare and recreation matters to align activities to help achieve the misconduct prevention goals of the Mission.

30. In anticipation of the increased formed police units and civilian personnel deployment, the Mission carried out a welfare recreation facilities assessment review in February 2021, which indicated a need to enhance facilities in all 14 field locations. The results of this assessment were corroborated by a subsequent survey conducted by SWRC in September 2021, which indicated overall low staff satisfaction with welfare activities in UNISFA, as shown in Figure 5. However, while welfare survey results were analysed, SWRC had not developed an action plan to implement proposed enhancements to address all identified shortcomings, such as the need for better emotional and mental support, and adequate gymnasium facilities in Kadugli, as the old equipment that was damaged by electrical power surge more than two years ago had not been replaced.

Figure 5 - Staff satisfaction with welfare facilities/services



Source: 2021 UNISFA welfare survey results

31. To address the above, in September 2021, UNISFA senior management established a new welfare committee comprising 19 members from military, police and all civilian personnel categories, including representation from the remote offices of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (Kadugli, Gok Machar and Diffra), and appointed a welfare officer. Three sub-committees were established to oversee gymnasiums and sports, cafeteria and PX and recreational activities.

(5) UNISFA should: (a) develop an action plan to address the issues identified in the staff welfare assessments; and (b) task the Conduct and Discipline Team to attend the welfare committee meetings in an advisory capacity to ensure activities are aligned with the overall conduct and discipline objectives of the Mission.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that, the Conduct and Discipline Team was ready to provide any advice and attend welfare committee meetings as deemed necessary.

B. Enforcement of standards of conduct

Misconduct reporting channels were not functioning, and all reported allegations were not recorded

32. The functions of reporting and analysing misconduct have been identified as high-priority activities by the Secretary-General and Member States as they are critical to strengthened accountability in the overall handling of misconduct. It is the duty of all United Nations personnel, whether they are civilian, military or police, to report misconduct to officials whose responsibility is to take appropriate action. All reporting of allegations of misconduct in the Mission should be centrally captured for prompt assessment, referral for investigation and timely follow-up.

33. Results of the 2019 Staff Engagement Survey indicated that most staff (89 per cent) in UNISFA knew what to do and whom to approach to report unethical behavior or wrongdoing. While UNISFA has put in place channels for reporting misconduct, they were not operating effectively. The Mission had telephone and email hotlines for reporting misconduct; however, they were not functional. The telephone hotline was a mobile number which has not been monitored since June 2021 due to prolonged absence of responsible staff. The email was also only accessible by the same staff member. As of March 2022, there were 3,454 unread emails, and there was no evidence that the Chief of CDT was aware of the volume of unattended emails or phone calls. There was also no evidence of any cases recorded in CMTS during the audit period that could have been reported via the established hotlines.

34. The lack of monitoring of the misconduct reporting hotlines indicated that the number of misconduct allegations may have been significantly underreported, impacting the Mission's efforts to ensure accountability. In addition, considering the confidential nature of misconduct information and the turnover of Mission personnel, there was a need to regularly review access to misconduct allegations.

35. Furthermore, CDT did not record all allegations of misconduct reported in the Mission during the audit period in CMTS. Of the 15 cases of alleged misconduct referred by OIOS, CDT did not record 10 cases. Similarly, of the seven cases referred to CDT by the UNISFA Special Investigations Unit (SIU) for further assessment, only one was recorded in CMTS. The database was not maintained consistently as key fields such as incident date, information receipt date, case referral date and the remarks fields were not populated for most (90 per cent) of the cases.

36. The above occurred mainly because CDT was not effectively carrying out its core functions, and it was not sufficiently coordinating and collaborating with investigative bodies (i.e., SIU and OIOS/Investigations Division) as there had been no formal engagements on conduct and discipline matters in the Mission since January 2019, including reviewing the status of cases reported. This impacted the information flow and knowledge sharing thus limiting visibility and awareness by CDT on misconduct cases reported in the Mission. In addition, OIOS was informed that the short-term tenure of the acting Head of Mission created an oversight gap and did not allow for timely addressing lapses in the CDT operations. Inconsistent and incomplete recording of all reported allegations of misconduct impacts the Mission's ability to promptly and adequately assess and address wrongdoing. Also, the Mission's risk management activities may not be fully effective as misconduct-related data that provide key management information may be inaccurate and incomplete.

<p>(6) UNISFA should: (a) ensure a fully functional and reliable email and telephone hotline system is in place and ensure messages are systematically reviewed for appropriate action on cases of possible misconduct; and (b) implement procedures for periodic review of user access to misconduct reporting hotlines to ensure only authorized staff are granted access.</p>

UNISFA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the Mission has implemented functional email for reporting misconduct and that the telephone hotline was now active.

(7) UNISFA should implement necessary controls to ensure that all reported misconduct allegations are duly recorded in the Case Management Tracking System.

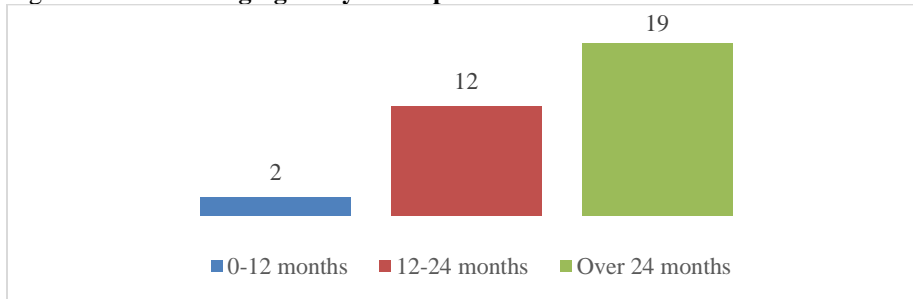
UNISFA accepted recommendation 7 and stated that the Mission was currently recording all reported allegations in the Case Management Tracking System.

UNISFA did not promptly follow-up and address allegations of wrongdoing

37. Knowing that misconduct is disciplined fairly and consistently re-enforces the culture of accountability for wrongdoing and strengthens staff morale. Timely and proper assessment of alleged wrongdoing is critical to demonstrating the Mission’s overall commitment to create a culture of “zero-tolerance” to misconduct.

38. CDT did not adequately follow-up on reports of alleged wrongdoing to ensure that they were properly addressed. Of the 33 cases recorded in CMTS during the audit period, 15 (45 per cent) had no documented evidence of any action taken. In addition, four cases referred to CDT by SIU were not recorded in CMTS and were therefore not followed up by CDT. UNISFA did not act on any of the 15 cases referred by OIOS during the audit period.

Figure 6 - UNISFA aging analysis of open cases in CMTS as of 31 December 2021

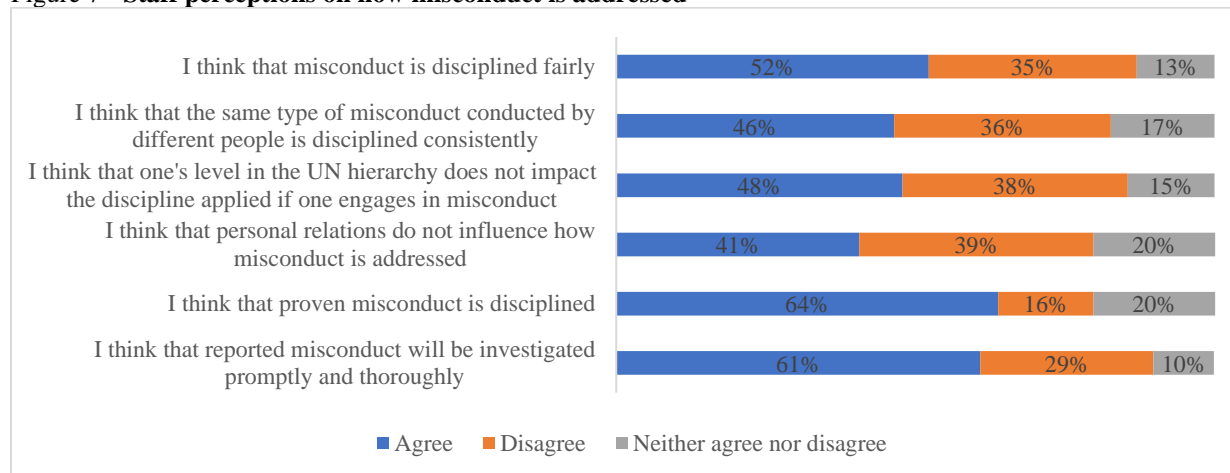


Source: UNISFA CMTS (extracted on 4 March 2022)

39. As a result, misconduct cases were long outstanding - all 33 cases recorded in CMTS since January 2019 were still open as of March 2022. Of these, more than half (57 per cent) were outstanding for more than two years. Inaction on cases reported can propagate a perception of culture of impunity in the entity. The OIOS evaluation of the organization culture in peacekeeping operations⁴ showed that there was a perception by personnel at various levels that a “culture of impunity” was widespread, as senior leaders and managers did not sufficiently enforce accountability for performance and misconduct. As shown in Figure 7, 35 per cent of staff members did not agree that misconduct is disciplined fairly and 39 per cent did not believe that personal relations do not influence how misconduct is addressed.

⁴ Evaluation of the organizational culture in peacekeeping operations (A/75/803)

Figure 7 - Staff perceptions on how misconduct is addressed



40. The above occurred due to inaction by CDT and a lack of coordination within UNISFA to ensure that all reported cases were satisfactorily addressed, in compliance with policies. Notably, there was a breakdown in the working relationship between CDT and the Safety and Security Unit, which impeded knowledge sharing between the two units. Lack of capacity in CDT due to long absences of the CDT Chief and the staff created a gap in the oversight over conduct and discipline matters in the Mission. UNISFA management did not also give enough attention to ensure continuity of such a critical function.

(8) UNISFA should implement a monitoring system to track all allegations of misconduct to ensure appropriate follow-up action and accountability for wrongdoing.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 8 and stated that the Conduct and Discipline Team would continue tracking allegations of misconduct using the Case Management Tracking System.

C. Remedial action

Need to significantly improve community awareness raising and victim assistance mechanism

41. The United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel calls for the United Nations system to provide, in a coordinated manner, assistance to individuals with needs directly arising from an incident of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse. Targeted awareness-raising and external communications activities help to inform the general population about the United Nations standards of conduct, reporting misconduct, and assistance available to victims.

42. The Mission had not established any channels to enable misconduct reporting by the Sudanese population. Outreach activities to the local communities on prohibited conduct and available victim assistance and support were limited. OIOS was informed that guidance and broadcasts materials were distributed by hard copy during community activities, through United Nations system implementing partners, and on the UNISFA website, with information on victims' assistance for the affected population. However, no records were maintained to document these activities, or the magnitude of the audience reached, and if any effort was made to reach more vulnerable groups like women and children. CDT explained that due to COVID-19 related movement restrictions, training and workshops were only conducted for staff and uniformed personnel.

43. During the audit period, UNISFA assisted one victim by providing social support, medical, counselling and arranging relocation. However, UNISFA had not finalized the mapping of services, service providers and referral pathways, which are critical to providing timely and effective support to victims.

44. The above occurred because UNISFA had not taken the initiative to establish the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) network with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) due to insufficient CDT staffing capacity. The Mission needed to address the lack of community-based complaints mechanisms (CBCMs) to enable local communities to bring forward known cases of misconduct as they contribute to better prevention, detection and reporting of misconduct by United Nations personnel. In the absence of an established rule of law, and with no alternative complaints reporting mechanism, this could have also partly contributed to the low number of SEA cases recorded. Since 2018, the Mission recorded only two cases of SEA and sexual harassment.

45. Following an audit inquiry, in November 2021, UNISFA convened a meeting of the UNCT to lay a foundation for a unified approach on PSEA. A review of the meeting minutes showed that participants from the International Organization for Migration, World Food Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs discussed missing links that needed to be factored in establishing CBCMs, including having focal points within the United Nations agencies and developing reporting mechanism that factors in the special status of the Abyei area and the sensitivity of the area. The Mission also informed that an additional two posts were being requested for CDT in the 2022/23 budget proposal to support establishment of the PSEA network, outreach to the communities and victims' rights assistance.

(9) UNISFA should establish community-based complaints mechanisms and enhance community outreach to better inform the general population about the United Nations standards of conduct, reporting misconduct, and assistance available to victims.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 9 and stated that the Mission would implement this recommendation subject to adequate human resources to effectively conduct community outreach activities in the 23 areas where UNISFA has presence. The Mission further stated that the current Conduct and Discipline Team structure of one P5 and one P4 was inadequate to carry out effective community outreach activities.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Internal Audit Division,
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁵ / Important ⁶	C/ O ⁷	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁸
1	UNISFA should establish effective measures, including accountability through the performance management system, to ensure completion of mandatory ethics and integrity related training by all staff.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of measures implemented to ensure that all staff, including senior managers, have completed mandatory ethics and integrity related training.	June 2023
2	UNISFA should establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure that all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training.	Important	C		July 2022
3	UNISFA should strengthen the misconduct risk management by: (a) adequately planning risk assessment site visits; and (b) developing and implementing a mechanism to monitor the status of risk mitigation measures arising from misconduct risk assessment.	Important	O	Receipt of: (a) an updated misconduct risk register developed based on the outcome of consultations with relevant stakeholders; and (b) status of implementation of recommended actions to mitigate the identified misconduct risks.	June 2023
4	UNISFA should implement measures to ensure that all national staff, are systematically vetted prior to onboarding.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the revised procedures for the recruitment of national staff have been fully implemented and that all national staff are vetted prior to recruitment.	June 2023
5	UNISFA should: (a) develop an action plan to address the issues identified in the staff welfare assessments; and (b) task the Conduct and Discipline Team to attend the welfare committee meetings in an advisory capacity to ensure activities are aligned with the overall conduct and discipline objectives of the Mission.	Important	O	Receipt of a copy of the action plan to address the issues identified in the staff welfare assessments, and receipt of evidence of engagement of the Conduct and Discipline Team with the UNISFA welfare committee on welfare activities.	June 2023

⁵ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

⁶ Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

⁷ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁸ Date provided by UNISFA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of conduct and discipline activities in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁵ / Important ⁶	C/ O ⁷	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁸
6	UNISFA should: (a) ensure a fully functional and reliable email and telephone hotline system is in place and systematically reviewed for appropriate action on cases of possible misconduct; and (b) implement procedures for periodic review of user access to misconduct reporting hotlines to ensure only authorized staff are granted access.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the Mission has established fully functional and reliable email and telephone hotlines for reporting misconduct and that access to misconduct reporting hotlines is timely reviewed and deprovisioned as needed.	June 2023
7	UNISFA should implement necessary controls to ensure that all reported misconduct allegations are duly recorded in the Case Management Tracking System.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that all reported misconduct allegations are duly recorded in the Case Management Tracking System.	June 2023
8	UNISFA should implement a monitoring system to track all allegations of misconduct to ensure appropriate follow-up action and accountability for wrongdoing.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that all misconduct allegations are tracked to ensure appropriate follow-up action and accountability for wrongdoing.	June 2023
9	UNISFA should establish community-based complaints mechanisms and enhance community outreach to better inform the general population about the United Nations standards of conduct, reporting misconduct, and assistance available to victims.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of established community-based complaints mechanisms and enhanced community outreach on the United Nations standards of conduct, reporting misconduct, and assistance available to victims.	June 2023

APPENDIX I

Management Response

INTER OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: 6 JULY 2022

REFERENCE:UNISFA/MHQ/HOM/014/2022

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

From: Major General Benjamin Olufemi Sawyerr
Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander
UNISFA



Subject: Draft report on an audit of conduct and discipline activities in UNISFA
(Assignment No. AP2021-635-01)

1. Reference is made to your IOM dated 2 June 2022 on the above subject.
2. As requested, please find attached the Mission's response to the recommendations in the draft report.
3. Thank you for the opportunity and best regards.

cc: Mr. Kemal Karaseki, OIOS
Ms. Maya Fridman, OIOS
Mr. Robert Kirkwood, CMS
Mr. Alexander Stephane Gerard, Chief of Staff
Ms. Aine Joyce, CCDT

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNISFA should establish effective measures, including accountability through the performance management system, to ensure completion of mandatory ethics and integrity related training by all staff.	Important	Yes	Chief IMTC	Implemented	UNISFA IMTC has implemented an excel spreadsheet database to monitor and ensure the completion of mandatory ethics and integrity-related training. A screenshot of the consolidated mandatory training compliance record database is attached as Annex-A for reference.
2	UNISFA should establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure that all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training.	Important	Yes	Chief IMTC	Implemented	UNISFA IMTC has implemented an excel spreadsheet database effective January 2022 to monitor and ensure all newly deployed personnel receive mandatory induction training. For the period between January 2022 to June 2022, 458 personnel attended various training organized by the IMTC. Summary of training provided and screenshot sample of an excel spreadsheet database maintained by IMTC is attached as Annex-B for reference.
3	UNISFA should strengthen the misconduct risk management by: (a) adequately planning risk assessment site visits; and (b) developing and implementing a mechanism to monitor the status of risk mitigation measures arising from misconduct risk assessment.	Important	(a) Yes (b) Yes	Chief CDT	June 2023	Implementing this recommendation is subject to adequate human resources to effectively conduct site visits in 23 areas where UNISFA has a presence (3 are temporary and absorbed into permanent sites during the rainy season) and considering the new multinational dimension of the TCC/mission with diverse needs. The current CDT structure is 1 P5 and 1 P4 which is inadequate to fulfil the recommendation.
4	UNISFA should implement measures to ensure that all national staff, are systematically vetted prior to onboarding.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Unit	Implemented	Implemented. Copy of the revised checklists attached as Annex-C includes the requirement for vetting approval before onboarding of the national staff. UNISFA does not have an independent standard operating procedure for recruiting the national staff as the Mission is guided by the

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/Important	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
5	UNISFA should: (a) develop an action plan to address the issues identified in the staff welfare assessments; and (b) task the Conduct and Discipline Team to attend the welfare committee meetings in an advisory capacity to ensure activities are aligned with the overall conduct and discipline objectives of the Mission.	Important	b) Yes	Chief CDT	June 2023	relevant administrative instruction on staff selection. CDT is ready to provide any advice and to attend the welfare committee meetings as necessary.
6	UNISFA should: (a) ensure a fully functional and reliable email and telephone hotline system is in place and systematically reviewed for appropriate action on cases of possible misconduct; and (b) implement procedures for periodic review of user access to misconduct reporting hotlines to ensure only authorized staff are granted access.	Important	a) Yes b) Yes	Chief CDT	a) Implemented b) Implemented	(a) UNISFA CDT has implemented a fully functional email and the telephone hotline is active. (b) As above.
7	UNISFA should implement necessary controls to ensure that all reported misconduct allegations are duly recorded in the Case Management Tracking System.	Important	Yes	Chief CDT	Implemented	UNISFA CDT records all reported allegations in the CMTS.
8	UNISFA should implement a monitoring system to track all allegations of misconduct to ensure appropriate follow-up action and accountability for wrongdoing.	Important	Yes	Chief CDT	Implemented and ongoing with CMTS	As above; UNISFA CDT records and updates all the allegations in the CMTS. However, the responsibility for investigation and disciplinary action is the purview of OHR, OIOS, and other offices.
9	UNISFA should establish community-based complaints mechanisms and enhance community outreach to better inform the general population about the United Nations standards of conduct, reporting misconduct, and assistance available to victims.	Important	Yes	Chief CDT	June 2023	The implementation of this recommendation is subject to the provision of adequate human resources to effectively conduct site visits in 23 areas where UNISFA has a presence (3 are temporary and absorbed into permanent sites during the rainy season) and considering the new multinational dimension of the TCC/mission with diverse needs. The current CDT structure is 1 P5 and 1 P4 which is inadequate to fulfil the recommendation.