

Internal Audit Division I  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

**Confidential**

TO: Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Special Representative of the  
A: Secretary-General for the Western Sahara

DATE: 11 October 2004

REFERENCE: AUD-7-5:8 (0834/04)

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

FROM: Patricia Azarias, Director  
DE: Internal Audit Division I, OIOS



SUBJECT: **OIOS Audit No. AP2004/628/01: Audit of the Field Security Procedures in the**  
OBJET: **United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)**

1. I am pleased to present herewith our final report on the audit of the above subject, which was conducted during 25 to 28 May 2004. The audit was conducted in accordance with the professional practise of auditing in United Nations organizations.

2. We note from your response to the draft report that MINURSO has generally accepted the recommendations. However, in order for us to close out the recommendations in the OIOS database, we request that you provide us with additional information as indicated in the text of the report and a time schedule for implementing each of the recommendations. Please refer to the recommendation number concerned to facilitate monitoring of their implementation status.

3. IAD is assessing the overall quality of its audit process and kindly requests that you consult with your managers who dealt directly with the auditors and complete the attached client satisfaction survey form.

## I. INTRODUCTION

4 Due to the urgency to issue a consolidated report on security audits in the field, I would appreciate receiving your comments on the report's findings and recommendations by 20 August 2004. Please comment on each audit recommendation indicating whether or not you accept it, and provide an implementation schedule for all accepted recommendations. Also, please note that OIOS considers all recommendations in this report as being of critical importance.

5. The Security Council resolution 690 (1991) of 29 April 1991 established the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara Operation (MINURSO) to help resolve the differences between Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Saguia el-Hamra and

Rio de Oro (Polisario) concerning the territory of Western Sahara. As of 1 June 2004, the total staff strength was 239 uniformed personnel (199 military observers, 27 troops and 13 civilian police), 145 international civilian personnel including 4 security officers and 112 local staff (including 15 local guards). The approved budget for 1 July 2003–30 June 2004 amounts to \$43.4 million including \$379,040 for security.

## **II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES**

6. The main objectives of the audit were to:

(i) Assess whether MINURSO's security arrangements were in compliance with relevant UN guidelines and procedures;

(ii) Assess whether these arrangements effectively protected UN staff and premises against current threats to the UN;

(iii) Identify areas where the UN security procedures as a whole could be improved; and

(iv) Examine the adequacy of security coordination between MINURSO and the Host Countries and Polisario.

## **III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

7. OIOS conducted the audit using the standard audit procedures developed by OIOS in collaboration with the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), DPKO and the Deputy Secretary-General's advisor on security matters. In particular, the audit examined whether proper arrangements were made with host countries for the security of UN staff and premises.

8. The audit reviewed whether MINURSO developed its own security policy, guidance and plans, and whether these were in compliance with DPKO's Mission Security Management Standing Operating Procedures and UNSECOORD Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS). OIOS conducted interviews with the staff responsible for security operations and visited the Tindouf Liaison Office in Algeria. The OIOS auditor also met with the Host Country and Polisario representatives. The audit also examined the justifications for MINURSO's security budget, whether this budget was sufficient to guarantee an adequate security structure, and if the budget was implemented as intended.

## **IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

9. As part of its global audit of the UN field security, OIOS reviewed the security arrangements in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara Operation (MINURSO).

10. The audit found that the roles and authorities of DPKO and UNSECOORD were insufficiently clarified with regard to field security, and that the guidance they provided to the field was not unified. Security arrangements with the Governments of Morocco and Algeria and the Polisario were satisfactory.

11. In addition, there was a lack of guidance by DPKO and UNSECOORD regarding the carrying of weapons by UN security officers. In addition, the Mission should improve its internal

coordination as well as coordination with UNHCR and local authorities for security matters, and should prepare an evacuation plan for the Tindouf Liaison Office through Algeria. Lastly, we found weaknesses in MINURSO's budget for security. The budget did not address major gaps in security as reported by both UNSECOORD and the Mission.

## V. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Policy and guidance

12. OIOS noted some confusion as to which security policy and operational guidelines the Mission should comply with: those of UNSECOORD or DPKO. The Mission Security Management Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) were issued under the authority of the Under Secretary-General, DPKO on 26 September 2003, and are valid for a period of one year, ending September 2004. The 326-page document clarifies the lines of responsibility with regard to security management in peacekeeping missions, provides guidelines for peacekeeping missions' security sections in the discharge of their responsibilities, establishes a mechanism for security risk management, and suggests a basis for resource allocation for security purposes.

13. The SOP addresses the security needs of large, medium or small missions and is the basis for the Chief Security Officers to develop mission-specific standing orders and instructions. OIOS noted that some parts of the SOP are to be read in conjunction with the UNSECOORD Field Security Handbook and Security Operations Manual for missions operating in the same areas as other agencies of the United Nations system. Annex O of the SOP describes in three paragraphs the UNSECOORD Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) as a fundamental security policy for all United Nations field operations.

14. On 15 September 2002, UNSECOORD issued a letter to all Designated Officials, Field Security Coordinators and Security Focal Points stating that "...one of the factors that became extremely clear during the recent risk and threat assessment exercise which was conducted on an inter-agency basis was the fact that many duty stations are still not Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) compliant." In order to urgently determine the extent of country-specific implementation, UNSECOORD requested each duty station to provide by COB on 22 September a detailed report on those areas where the duty station is not MOSS compliant.

15. OIOS noted that the issue of the implementation of MOSS was discussed during the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) meeting in Vienna on 13-17 May 2002. As a result of the IASMN meeting, UNSECOORD issued a note dated 20 June 2002 to all Designated Officials and Security Focal Points including the peacekeeping missions, specifying that all duty stations must be MOSS compliant by 1 January 2003. On 19 November 2002, UNSECOORD issued another MOSS containing five-pages of instructions and more guidance for the development and implementation of a country-specific MOSS.

16. On 16 September 2002, the DPKO Security Focal Point also sent a message to all Chief Security Officers in peacekeeping missions, with reference to the UNSECOORD directive of 15 September 2002, urging them to make sure that there is a clear understanding with the Head of Mission Designated Official for security that UNSECOORD's request only applies to agencies, programmes and funds and it does not apply to the peacekeeping component for which the issuance of directive is the clear prerogative of the Under Secretary-General, DPKO. Moreover, the Security Focal Point informed that DPKO was not involved in the development of the MOSS, although

DPKO believes that the MOSS concept is useful and may be applied to a certain extent to peacekeeping operations; it was used as reference for the start-up mission in Liberia.

17. In OIOS' opinion, the situation described above highlights a lack of clear leadership at Headquarters on field security matters, which creates confusion as to which security standards should be applied in areas where both peacekeeping missions and other organizations of the UN system operate. OIOS believes that the UN should have a unique security standard in order to facilitate its consistent implementation, monitoring and control. Furthermore, since the effectiveness of UNSECOORD for peacekeeping missions is dependent upon DPKO instructing the peacekeeping missions to implement the UNSECOORD recommendations, there should be a decision at the highest level of the Secretariat regarding the delegation of responsibilities for peacekeeping missions' security matters to UNSECOORD and DPKO.

### **B. Security arrangements with the Host Countries and Polisario**

18. MINURSO's headquarter and logistic base are located in Laayoune, Western Sahara. There are also 10 Military Observer Sites in the Northern and Southern Sectors of Western Sahara and a Liaison Office in Tindouf, Algeria. The Government of Morocco is responsible for security in Laayoune and at three of the five Military Observer Sites in each of the Northern and Southern Sectors. The Polisario is responsible for ensuring the security at two of the Military Observer Sites in each of the Northern and Southern Sectors. The security for the Tindouf Liaison Office is the responsibility of the Government of Algeria. During our visit of Tindouf, we observed that the Government of Algeria provided police escort to the Tindouf Liaison Officer, and the Polisario assured the escort service from the Algerian border within its area of responsibility. We also noted a strong presence of police and military personnel in Western Sahara, which demonstrated a high degree of alertness on security issues on the part of the local authorities.

19. OIOS met with representatives of the Polisario and Governments of Morocco and Algeria to obtain their views on the distribution of responsibilities for MINURSO's security. The Police Prefect of South Morocco and the Liaison Officers for Algeria and the Polisario who met with OIOS in May 2004 assured that the efforts related to MINURSO's security would be continued and even increased if necessary, especially during special holidays in Laayoune.

20. However, the MINURSO security officers do not carry weapons. OIOS was informed that this is in compliance with the Host Countries' requirements, but we could not find any documentation regarding this matter at MINURSO. We also learned that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara does not have an armed body guard. DPKO informed us that the decision for security officers to carry weapons is within the responsibility of the Mission. In OIOS' opinion, DPKO, in collaboration with UNSECOORD, should provide peacekeeping missions with specific guidance in this matter, clarifying the conditions for armed security and responsibilities of the missions.

#### **Recommendation 1**

The SRSG should request DPKO, in collaboration with UNSECOORD, to provide specific guidance regarding the carrying of weapons by security officers (AP2004/628/01/01).

21. *SOFA and prevailing security conditions around Area of Responsibility (AOR) does not allow for carrying of weapons in MINURSO. However, once again DPKO and UNSECOORD will*

*be contacted for guidance.* OIOS will keep this recommendation open in its database until documentation on policy guidance on the issue is provided.

### **C. Security coordination by the Mission**

22. There was a need to improve coordination in the area of security at MINURSO. Mission Security Management Team (MSMT) meetings were convened at short notice. In two cases, the members had only one day advance notice. We also noted that the Tindouf Liaison Office, Regional Security Coordinator, Algeria and UNHCR office (which cooperates with MINURSO on the Confidence Building Measures programme) were not represented at the MSMT meetings.

23. Furthermore, concerning the security situation at the country level, we noted that there were no regular reports or feedback from the Military Observer Sites to the MINURSO Chief Security Officer. Similarly, there were no regular security meetings between the Chief Security Officer and local authorities. In particular for Tindouf, which the United Nations has declared a phase 3 security area, this presents a risk that coordination between the Government of Algeria and the United Nations may be insufficient to assure the transfer of non-essential international staff to safe haven countries in case of a deteriorated security situation. Incidentally, we noted that MINURSO started to issue security clearances for visitors to Tindouf only since March 2004. In addition, we were informed that in MINURSO's evacuation plan for the Tindouf Liaison Office, Algeria does not provide for an evacuation through the Liaison Office's Host Country.

#### **Recommendations 2 - 4**

The SRSG should ensure that MINURSO strengthen its security coordination as follows:

(i) Include representatives of the Tindouf Liaison Office, Regional Security Coordinator, Algeria and UNHCR to the Mission Security Management Team, and send invitations to the Mission Security Management Team meetings in time to allow members sufficient preparation (AP2004/628/01/02);

(ii) Coordinate and document feedback concerning the security situation received from Military Observer Sites and local authorities (AP2004/628/01/03); and

(iii) Agree with the Government of Algeria on an alternative way to evacuate the Tindouf Liaison Office through Algeria (AP2004/628/01/04).

24. *Senior Liaison Officer (SLO) Tindouf Algeria is a standing member of Mission Security Management Team (MSMT) AP2004/628/01/02.* OIOS will keep this recommendation open in its database until MINURSO provides documentation showing that all relevant Security Management Meeting members participated in the next meeting, including UNHCR and the Tindouf Liaison Officer.

25. *Routine feedback for Military situation is given by Force Commander (FC) in daily Heads of component meeting (AP2004/628/01/03).* OIOS will keep this recommendation open in its

database until MINURSO provides documentation on feedback and coordination with Military Observer Sites and local authorities.

26. *Our SLO in Tindouf will negotiate the recommendation with the Algerian authorities however due to the remoteness of the area and prevailing security situations, MINURSO has to depend more on its own evacuation plan (AP2004/628/01/04).* OIOS will keep this recommendation open in its database until MINURSO provides documentation on activities and considerations made related to the Algerian evacuation related to the Tindouf Liaison Officer.

#### **D. Security Plan**

27. In light of the prevailing security situation in Western Sahara, in February 2002 UNSECOORD conducted a technical assessment of the MINURSO security arrangements. Although UNSECOORD noted that the newly appointed Designated Official was enforcing positive and visible measures to improve security, UNSECOORD concluded that MINURSO's security structure was understaffed, and poorly organized and managed. Moreover, the perimeter security of the main headquarters compound and the logistic base required urgent actions to improve their security status. UNSECOORD recommended that the staffing of the Security Section be reviewed and increased, a regional Security Officer be assigned to Tindouf on a permanent basis, the perimeter security of MINURSO headquarters and logistic compounds be improved and the replacement of national military personnel by UN security guards be sought urgently. UNSECOORD also recommended that the Mission Security Management Team should include UNHCR.

28. MINURSO's Security Plan for the year 2002 was reviewed by UNSECOORD in August 2002. UNSECOORD commended the Mission's plan for having met all the requirements provided by the security management system. It also stated that the regional security plans specific to each of the sectors of the Mission were well elaborated and outlined the necessary security coordinating measures with UNHCR, the sole UN Agency operating in the mission area. However, UNSECOORD also mentioned that: "Its main recommendation remains the need to reinforce the Security Section with two additional professional Security Officers who have not been yet assigned to the Mission."

29. In updating its Security Plan 2002 into the 2003 Plan, MINURSO included threat perceptions after the events of Casablanca and Baghdad. The 2003 Plan was signed in May 2003 by the Head of Mission (who is also the Designated Official for security). The Mission is currently finalizing the draft plan for 2004-2005. It is expected that the Head of Mission should sign it off shortly after his arrival in July 2004.

30. OIOS noted that MINURSO had made some efforts to implement the UNSECOORD recommendations on security issues; however, most of these recommendations are still pending. For example, security staffing is still insufficient; no permanent Security Officer is assigned at Tindouf; premises at MINURSO headquarters and logistic base still need reinforcements; and coordination with UNHCR still needs improvement. As highlighted by OIOS in other parts of the report (paragraphs 7-10 and 21-23), the insufficient rate of implementation of the UNSECOORD recommendations seems to be the result of DPKO not endorsing the UNSECOORD leadership for security matters and shortcomings in the budgeting of security requirements.

## **Recommendation 5**

The SRSG should ensure that all pending recommendations resulting from the UNSECOORD 2002 technical review are implemented without further delay (AP2004/628/01/05).

31. *Appropriate actions will be taken to implement all the recommendation of the UNSECOORD, however all those recommendations require additional financial resources for the implementation will be subject to the availability of funds. MINURSO will make sure that Budget estimates for 2005-2006 includes these requirements. OIOS will keep this recommendation open in its database until MINURSO provides documentation on full implementation of all UNSECOORD recommendations.*

### **E. Budget**

32. MINURSO's security expenditures are not recorded under a separate cost center or budget line. These expenditures were estimated at \$361,400 and \$379,040 for the budget cycles July 2002-June 2003 and July 2003-June 2004, respectively. OIOS found that MINURSO, in order to strengthen the Mission's security, had originally requested an additional budget increase of around \$3 million for fiscal year 2003-2004 to cover the costs of 22 international staff posts and 45 national staff posts (refer to memorandum dated 26 August 2002 from MINURSO to DPKO: MINURSO Cost estimates for the period 01 July 2003 to 30 June 2004). OIOS did not find documentation evidencing discussions between DPKO and the Mission related to this request, which seemed to have remained unanswered by DPKO.

33. However, there was subsequently a DPKO memorandum instructing the Mission to plan its requirements on the assumption that MINURSO would continue at its current strength to carry out its mandate (refer to memorandum dated 15 May 2003 from Under-Secretary-General, DPKO to MINURSO: Substantive guidance for 2004/2005 budgeting cycle). MINURSO informed the auditor that based on that instruction it finally did not include any increase in security staff in its 2004-2005 budget submission. It also informed that, however, MINURSO will show at the end of 2004 an over-expenditure of the individual contractors account of about \$30,000 since seven extra watchmen and security guards had to be hired to improve the Mission's security.

34. Moreover, MINURSO's Chief Security Coordinator, in an e-mail to the SRSG dated 12 June 2003, had alerted on the weaknesses of MINURSO's security budget. He deplored the lack of separate budget allocation for the security section, the lack of funds for and priority given to hiring security staff and purchasing needed equipment, and delays in essential building management construction works for comprehensive improvement of specific security arrangements at all MINURSO installations, including Sector Headquarters and Team Sites.

35. OIOS agrees with MINURSO that a separate line for security should be included in peacekeeping missions' budgets in order to facilitate the monitoring and control of activities related to security. OIOS also believes that DPKO and MINURSO should, together, review whether DPKO planning assumptions were correctly interpreted by the Mission when it did not include any increase in security staff in its 2004-2005 budget submission, and without further delay update MINURSO's security budget requirements to take into account actual increases and needed additional improvements.

## **Recommendations 6 - 7**

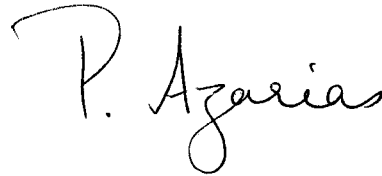
The SRSB should request DPKO, in collaboration with the Controller, to consider including a separate line in peacekeeping missions' budgets for security (AP2004/628/01/06); and

The SRSB, in coordination with DPKO, should review the security requirements of MINURSO and update MINURSO budget accordingly (AP2004/628/01/07).

36. *These Recommendations will be conveyed to controller DPKO UNHQ for MINURSO separate budget line for security section, in order to beef up security requirements.* OIOS will keep these recommendations open in its database until the Controller implements a separate line in peacekeeping missions' budget for security, and MINURSO provides documentation that its security requirements are coordinated with DPKO and aligned with its budget.

## **VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

37. We wish to express our appreciation for the assistance and co-operation extended to the auditors by MINURSO's management and staff.



Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations  
Ms. Hazel Scott, Director, ASD/DPKO  
Mr. Ali Ouni, Chief Administrative Officer/Director of Administration, MINURSO  
UN Board of Auditors  
Programme Officer, OIOS  
Mr. Roland Bill, Chief Resident Auditor, MINURSO





OIOS/IAD Client Satisfaction Survey

The Internal Audit Division is assessing the overall quality of its audit process. A key element of this assessment involves determining how our clients rate the quality and value added by the audits. As such, I am requesting that you consult with your managers who dealt directly with the auditors, and complete the survey below. I assure you that the information you provide will remain strictly confidential.

**Audit Title & Assignment No.: OIOS Audit of Field Security Procedures in MINURSO (AP2004/628/01)**

**By checking the appropriate circle please rate:**

1. The extent to which the audit addressed your concerns as a programme manager.
2. The audit staff's understanding of your operations and objectives.
3. The professionalism of the audit staff (communications, integrity, professional knowledge and responsiveness)
4. The quality of the audit report in terms of:
  - accuracy and validity of findings and conclusions
  - clarity and conciseness
  - balance and objectivity
  - timeliness
5. The extent to which the audit recommendations were appropriate and helpful.
6. The extent to which your comments were considered by the auditors
7. Your overall satisfaction with the conduct of the audit and its results.

	1 (poor)	2	3	4(excellent)
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