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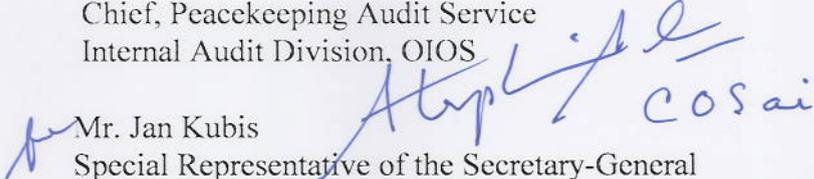
UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN  
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Office of the Special Representative of the Secretarial-General

24 April 2012

**To:** Ms. Eleanor T. Burns  
Chief, Peacekeeping Audit Service  
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

**From:**  Mr. Jan Kubis  
Special Representative of the Secretary-General  
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

**Subject:** Assignment No.AP2011/630/03- Audit of air operations in UNAMA

Reference: Your IAD 12-630-311, dated 10 April 2012.

1. I take this opportunity to thank you for the subject audit observations forwarded to me, and the opportunity to respond to the observations on air operations in UNAMA.
2. Please find the Mission's response provided to in the attachment, Annex 1.
3. Should you require further information or clarification. Please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Best Regards.

**cc:** Ms. Stephani L. Scheer, Chief of Mission Support, UNAMA  
Mr. Christopher Fathers, Chief Technical Services, UNAMA  
Mr. Valentin Gatzinski, Chief of Staff, UNAMA  
Mr. Timothy Crowley, Senior Administrative Officer, UNAMA  
Ms. Amy Wong, Programme Manager, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

**AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**Audit of air operations in UNAMA**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNAMA should ensure that there are adequately trained aviation staff members assigned to regions with the requisite tools to perform their functions effectively. Also, all aviation staff should receive the necessary specialized training to keep their skills up-to-date.	Important	Yes	CAVO	30 June 2012	<p>UNAMA- 23 April 2012.</p> <p>1. UNAMA Aviation Section is in the process of developing a comprehensive database to capture all training attended by staff members within specific periods. This will assist in assessing the additional training needs of each individual involved in air operations related activities and should assist to ensure staff are given training opportunities commensurate to their duties and responsibilities. This database will be completed by 30 June 2012 and updated monthly thereafter.</p> <p>2. Two refresher courses in aviation related topics are planned for this year, as well as instruction on fire safety. The first refresher training in line with this plan was conducted from 3- 5 April 2012 for selected flight coordinators. A second training session is planned from 4 - 6 September 2012 for personnel who did not participate in the first session.</p> <p>3. UNAMA will utilize air operations</p>

<sup>1</sup> Critical recommendations address significant and/or pervasive deficiency or weakness in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>2</sup> Important recommendations address important deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
2	UNAMA should limit the number of special flights by: (a) strengthening the procedures over approving additional flights; and (b) ensuring that staff traveling for training and other reasons make use of regular scheduled flights.	Important	Yes	CAVO	01 May 2012	<p>qualified staff to provide at least the minimum required training in-house. If possible, this training will be supplemented by IATA facilitated specialized courses (Flight Operations Management and Station Ground Handling Management).</p> <p>UNAMA- 23 April 2012.</p> <p>1. All Special Flight Requests (SFR) will be subject to enhanced screening by both the Chief Technical Compliance and Chief Air Operation Center before presentation to CAVO, CTS and CMS for final determination. This refined process will be in place by 01 May 2012.</p> <p>2. Staff traveling on training and for other official business currently utilize regularly scheduled UNAMA flights when this is seen as the most effective, direct and economical means of transport, and it fits in with the training /official business schedule needs. On some occasions commercial travel is seen as the most viable least costly travel means , also taking into account DSA entitlements, as the UN shuttle to Dubai only operates three times a week.</p>
3.	UNAMA should coordinate with the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority to repair the taxiway and remove the disabled aircraft parked near the UNAMA helipad in Mazar-e-Sharif.	Important	Yes	CAVO RAO Mazar	31 Aug 2012	<p>UNAMA- 23 April 2012.</p> <p>1. The repairs to the taxiway will be completed within two weeks. In any event, UNAMA air operations specialists do not believe the erosion of the patch of concrete poses any real threat to our rotary wing aircraft .</p>

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ <sup>1</sup> / important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
4.	UNAMA should ensure that aviation fire safety risks during aviation operations are adequately mitigated by developing fire safety plans and providing adequate firefighting capacity.	Important	Yes	CAVO Fire Safety Unit	31 Aug 2012	<p>UNAMA-23 April 2012.</p> <p>UNAMA aviation section will coordinate with the Fire Safety Unit in the mission to mitigate risk at UNAMA owned HLS. These actions will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of fire extinguishers will be increased and fire protection clothing issued;</li> <li>- Continuous fire safety, prevention and fighting training will be provided and the frequency of visits by both air operations and fire safety unit increased.</li> </ul> <p>A fire safety plan for HLS has been provided..</p>
						<p>2. Suggested flight pattern during takeoff and landing have been reviewed and explained to the Helicopter Crew in Mazar as a means of avoiding flying close to the disabled aircraft. In addition initial contact with the MAZAR Airport Manager has been established with regard to moving/removing the disabled aircraft.</p>

16.68

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES BUREAU DES SERVICES DE CONTRÔLE INTERNE

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION DIVISION DE L'AUDIT INTERNE

**CONFIDENTIAL**

DATE 10 April 2012

✓ TO Mr. Jan Kubis  
A Special Representative of the Secretary-General  
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

REFERENCE IAD: 12-630-311

f FROM Eleanor T. Burns, Chief  
DE Peacekeeping Audit Service  
Internal Audit Division, OIOS



SUBJECT **Assignment no. AP2011/630/03 – Audit of air operations in UNAMA**  
OBJET

**Overall results relating to effective management of air operations in UNAMA were partially satisfactory; however management has yet to initiate necessary steps to address all identified issues**

1. Attached please find the draft report on the above-mentioned audit. The draft report has taken into consideration the comments provided on the detailed audit results. We would appreciate receiving your comments by 25 April 2012.

2. Please provide an action plan with a target date and the title of the individual responsible for implementation of recommendations 1 to 4 as indicated in the attached form (Annex I). **Comments provided on the detailed audit results indicated that recommendations 3 and 4 have not been accepted. In OIOS' opinion however, these recommendations seek to address important risk areas. We are therefore reiterating them and requesting that you reconsider the initial response based on the additional information provided in this report.** Unaccepted recommendations must be supported with appropriate rationale for acceptance of underlying risks. Unaccepted recommendations may be escalated as necessary up to the level of the Secretary-General for reconsideration.

3. In terms of General Assembly resolution 59/272, a Member State may request that the final audit report be made available. It is therefore important that we receive your comments prior to finalizing the report. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/263, OIOS will include your response to this draft report as an appendix to the final report.

cc: Ms. Stephani L. Scheer, Chief of Mission Support, UNAMA  
Mr. Christopher Fathers, Chief Technical Services, UNAMA  
Mr. Valentin Gatzinski, Chief of Staff, UNAMA  
Mr. Timothy Crowley, Senior Administrative Officer, UNAMA  
Ms. Amy Wong, Programme Officer, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

Office of Special Representative of the Secretary-General UNAMA	
<b>Received</b>	
12 APR 2012	
For Action:	CMS
For Info:	OSRSG / COS / OSRSG I&II / CMS
Deadline:	25 APRIL 2012

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## Audit of air operations in UNAMA

### I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of air operations in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).
2. In accordance with its mandate, OIOS provides assurance and advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of the United Nations internal control system, the primary objectives of which are to ensure (a) efficient and effective operations; (b) accurate financial and operational reporting; (c) safeguarding of assets; and (d) compliance with mandates, regulations, and rules.
3. The Aviation Section provides air support to UNAMA's operations. UNAMA's aviation fleet includes five fixed-wing and six rotary-wing aircraft. The air assets are used for transporting passengers, cargo, aero-medical evacuations, and back-up for search and rescue operations. In 2010 UNAMA transported 22,681 passengers and 452 metric tons of cargo, and in 2011, 28,310 passengers and 549 metric tons of cargo. The air asset utilization rate in 2010 was 92.9 per cent and in 2011 was 93.2 per cent. There are 10 airfields and 25 helipads designated as frequently used landing sites. In addition, there are over 10 landing sites that are periodically used.
4. The Aviation Section is headed by a Chief Aviation Officer at the P-4 level who reports to the Chief of Mission Support through the Chief Technical Services. The Chief Aviation Officer is supported by a team of 35 staff including five international staff, four United Nations volunteers, four national professional officers and 22 national staff. The Aviation Section is comprised of the Air Operations Unit, the Air Terminal Unit and the Technical Compliance Unit. The Aviation Safety Unit is headed by a Mission Aviation Safety Officer (MASO) who reports directly to the Chief of Mission Support, and is assisted by a National Aviation Safety Officer.
5. Flight operations in UNAMA have significantly increased since 2010 due to high security concerns for road transportation. UNAMA's flight hours increased from 3,766 in 2009 to 5,626 in 2010 and 6,782 hours in 2011. UNAMA's air operations allotted budget of the financial years 2010 and 2011 was \$43.6 million and \$101.1 million, respectively.
6. Comments provided by UNAMA are incorporated in italics.

### II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

7. The audit of air operations was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of UNAMA governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of air operations**.
8. The audit was included in the 2011 OIOS risk-based work plan due to the high risk nature of air operations in peacekeeping missions.
9. The key controls tested for the audit were: (a) project management; (b) regulatory framework; and (c) safety and security programmes. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined these key controls as follows:

(a) **Project management** - controls that provide reasonable assurance that there is sufficient project management capacity in the Aviation Section to effectively manage air operations to achieve the Mission's mandates.

(b) **Regulatory framework** - controls that provide reasonable assurance that policies and procedures exist and are implemented to effectively manage air operations.

(c) **Safety and security programmes** - controls that provide reasonable assurance that requisite safety and security programmes are implemented by the Mission to ensure the safety of staff, passengers and assets.

10. The key controls were assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1.

11. OIOS conducted this audit from October 2011 to January 2012. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2011.

12. OIOS conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and assess specific risk exposures, and to confirm the relevance of the selected key controls in mitigating associated risks. Through interviews, analytical reviews and tests of controls, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of internal controls and conducted necessary tests to determine their effectiveness. Field visits were made to regional offices in Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat.

### III. AUDIT RESULTS

13. In OIOS' opinion, UNAMA governance, risk management and control processes examined were **partially satisfactory** in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of air operations**.

Table 1: Assessment of key controls

	Key controls	Control objectives			
		Efficient and effective operations	Accurate financial and operational reporting	Safeguarding of assets	Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules
Effective management of air operations	(a) Project management	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory
	(b) Regulatory framework	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory
	(c) Safety and security programmes	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory

14. UNAMA developed aviation support plans that were up-dated to ensure adequate logistical support to UNAMA's operations. However, regional staff members assigned aviation tasks needed further training and tools to perform their functions effectively. The scheduling of special flights, when alternative options are available, needed to be discontinued. Potential risks to landing and departing aircraft at Mazar-e-Sharif needed to be mitigated.

15. OIOS made four recommendations to address the issues identified in this audit. UNAMA indicated that it accepted two recommendations and is in the process of implementing them. OIOS

reiterates the remaining recommendations 3 and 4 that UNAMA develop action plans to satisfactorily address aviation hazards at the helipad in Mazar-e-Sharif and fire safety risks at locations not supported by the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority.

### A. Project management

#### Support plans were developed and updated during 2010 and 2011

16. The Aviation Section developed and updated aviation support plans for the years 2010 and 2011 in line with the Mission's operational plan for logistical support and its mandated aviation tasks. Annual work plans are derived from the aviation support plans that outline the tasks and expected accomplishments for each sub-unit. These plans were reviewed periodically by the Chief Aviation Officer to ensure effective implementation.

#### Lack of adequate resources in the regions

17. The Department of Field Support in its 2011 aviation safety assistance visit report stated that UNAMA's staffing resources in the Aviation Section were inadequate at the current approved level of 36 posts. To address this, seven staff from other sections were loaned to the Aviation Section. However, these staff did not have the requisite skills to adequately support air operations. For example, at regional locations, security and administrative staff were assigned responsibilities such as providing meteorological updates and firefighting. Also, in Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat, an Aviation Assistant was performing multiple tasks, many concurrently, including pre-flight briefings to crew members, meteorological updates, overseeing refueling of aircraft, checking-in passengers and handling cargo.

18. Due to inadequate meteorological equipment, staff relied on the internet, weather forecasts from air traffic control, and/or personal judgment for forecasting weather conditions. Secondary weather information may be inaccurate or outdated exposing the Mission to aviation hazards. The Chief Aviation Officer stated that 35 portable weather stations have been purchased for field offices to ensure accuracy of meteorological data for air operations.

#### Lack of adequate training for aviation staff

19. Aviation staff should receive on-the-job and developmental aviation training. However, 12 of 38 staff (42 per cent) assigned responsibilities for air operations did not receive training on handling of dangerous goods, aviation refresher courses and other specialized aviation training.

20. A training needs assessment to determine specific training requirements for staff had not been prepared. The Chief Aviation Officer stated that budget cuts had adversely affected the annual training programme for aviation staff, and that a training needs assessment was planned for 2012.

**(1) UNAMA should ensure that there are adequately trained aviation staff members assigned to regions with the requisite tools to perform their functions effectively. Also, all aviation staff should receive the necessary specialized training to keep their skills up-to-date.**

21. UNAMA indicated that it accepted recommendation 1, and stated that air operation representatives are being given the necessary tools to perform their duties effectively, and there are plans to increase cross-training at the provincial office level to empower more staff to assist in air operations. Also, a database to capture trainings attended by staff is being developed to assist in assessing the training needs of staff. For 2012, two refresher courses and two in-house specialized courses would be

organized. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that adequate training and tools have been provided to staff working on air operations to enable them to perform their functions effectively.

Processing of special flight requests needs to be strengthened

22. Special flight requests are prioritized based on urgency, nature of activity, requirement and destination accessibility. UNAMA processed 237 special flight requests to support the reconciliation process, joint missions to field offices and security assessment visits, as well as to facilitate staff movement from Kabul to the regions. A review of 30 special flights identified inefficiencies of about \$315,500, as follows:

- Obsolete and damaged information and communication equipment was air-lifted from Mazar-e-Sharif to Kabul costing about \$42,000. Transportation by road, which is possible taking into consideration the security situation, would cost about \$1,400.
- Seven special flights were operated at a cost of \$274,680 for staff travelling for training in Kabul, returning to the duty station, or proceeding to other missions after leave. Staff training and movement of staff should have been scheduled to coincide with regular scheduled flights.

**(2) UNAMA should limit the number of special flights by: (a) strengthening the procedures over approving additional flights; and (b) ensuring that staff traveling for training and other reasons make use of regular scheduled flights.**

23. UNAMA indicated that it accepted recommendation 2, and stated that all special flight requests are subject to serious screening and are presently scrutinized by the MASO and the Chief of Technical Services, before being approved by the Chief of Mission Support. OIOS identified cases where special flights were undertaken that did not adhere to the criteria established by UNAMA. OIOS reiterates its recommendation that UNAMA limits the number of special flights by ensuring that regular scheduled flights are taken for planned travel such as training.

## B. Regulatory framework

Delays in cost recovery of aviation services provided to other agencies

24. During 2010 and 2011, UNAMA provided air transportation services on a cost reimbursable basis to members of the United Nations Country Team, non-government organizations and other agencies valued at \$1.6 million. There were delays of up to seventeen months in recovering the cost of air transportation services provided. For example, as of 31 December 2011, eight cases totaling \$518,061 were outstanding. Two of them, totaling \$338,426, were subsequently absorbed by the Mission, as they were re-classified as mandated activities. For four cases, recoveries of \$163,841 were affected by the end of January 2012, and the remaining two cases totaling \$15,794 were still outstanding. UNAMA advised that in March 2012 it has started indicating dates (three weeks from the date of invoicing) for which payments should be made. Also, a staff member has been assigned to reconcile the data on cost recovery with actual recoveries. OIOS assessed that the new procedure was satisfactory.

Search and rescue plan (SAR) was not updated since June 2009

25. In June 2009, the SAR plan was developed by the Aviation Section in consultation with the International Security Assistance Force (led by NATO). The SAR exercise was conducted in November

2010; however, due to inadequate staffing resources, the plan was not updated to reflect lessons learned from the exercise. Also, due to a change in the fleet composition and rotation of the International Security Assistance Force staff in Afghanistan, important fleet data and staff members' contact details were outdated. *UNAMA advised that the plan had been up-dated as a result of previous exercises.* OIOS verified that the SAR plan had been up-dated as required.

### C. Safety and security programmes

#### Taxiway adjacent to UNAMA helipad in Mazar-e-Sharif needs immediate repair

26. In Mazar-e-Sharif, the old taxiway adjacent to the new UNAMA air terminal and helipad had ditches with loose gravel which may be hazardous to the safety of passengers and air assets. Also, contrary to the DFS Aviation Safety Manual, a disabled aircraft was parked close to the taxiway.

**(3) UNAMA should coordinate with the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority to repair the taxiway and remove the disabled aircraft parked near the UNAMA helipad in Mazar-e-Sharif.**

27. *UNAMA indicated that they did not accept recommendation 3, and stated that the helicopter landing site in Mazar-e-Sharif was in accordance with DFS aviation standards. It has been checked by the Chief Air Terminal Unit and MASO and the risks associated with the identified hazards are assessed as low. Nonetheless, UNAMA will write to the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority regarding the disabled aircraft, but UNAMA cannot enforce its removal. In OIOS' view, in addition to corresponding with the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority on the removal of the disabled aircraft, the condition of the taxiway next to helipad should also be brought to its attention, even though UNAMA considers it a low risk. OIOS reiterates its recommendation that UNAMA ensure that the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority is informed of the potential risks on the Mazar-e-Sharif taxiway that need to be adequately mitigated.*

#### Aviation fire safety risks during flight operations were not adequately mitigated

28. For firefighting, UNAMA relied on the rescue and firefighting services of the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority and the International Security Assistance Force. UNAMA provided fire extinguishers at some airfields/helipads including Kabul, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif for use by its staff as a fire safety measure during the refueling of the aircraft and engine start-up. At Kabul, the UNAMA Aviation Fire Marshal provided fire safety coverage during refueling of aircraft, but no appropriate fire fighting gear and protective clothing. Also, the fire safety coverage at regional offices was not done for fire prevention due to the number of tasks assigned to the one person available during aircraft landing and departure.

29. Moreover, fire safety plans for nine airfields used by UNAMA aircraft were not developed to ensure procedures were in place to mitigate aviation fire safety risks.

**(4) UNAMA should ensure that aviation fire safety risks during aviation operations are adequately mitigated by developing fire safety plans and providing adequate firefighting capacity.**

30. *UNAMA indicated that it did not accept recommendation 4 and stated that it relied on the rescue and firefighting services of the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority and the International Security Assistance Force. For UNAMA aircraft tasked to non-permanent helicopter landing stations where there*

*is no firefighting equipment, advance arrangements are made through the regional office to make fire extinguishers available at the landing site until the aircraft leaves. UNAMA also confirmed that the Aviation Safety Unit is in the process of developing emergency response plans for the regions, in which fire safety plans will be incorporated. In OIOS' view, UNAMA needs to ensure that there are adequate fire safety measures in place for arriving and departing aircraft. An additional staff member assigned to assist in the various tasks required during arrival and take-off of aircraft may mitigate the risk of damage to persons and property in the event of a fire. Moreover, all UNAMA personnel responsible for the fire safety coverage during refueling aircraft need to be provided with standard protective clothing. OIOS reiterates its recommendation that UNAMA ensure that aviation fire safety risks are adequately mitigated.*

#### IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

31. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of UNAMA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of air operations in UNAMA

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ <sup>1</sup> important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? <sup>3</sup> (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNAMA should ensure that there are adequately trained aviation staff members assigned to regions with the requisite tools to perform their functions effectively. Also, all aviation staff should receive the necessary specialized training to keep their skills up-to-date.	Important				
2	UNAMA should limit the number of special flights by: (a) strengthening the procedures over approving additional flights; and (b) ensuring that staff traveling for training and other reasons make use of regular scheduled flights.	Important				
3.	UNAMA should coordinate with the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority to repair the taxiway and remove the disabled aircraft parked near the UNAMA helipad in Mazar-e-Sharif.	Important				
4.	UNAMA should ensure that aviation fire safety risks during aviation operations are adequately mitigated by developing fire safety plans and providing adequate firefighting capacity.	Important				

<sup>1</sup> Critical recommendations address significant and/or pervasive deficiency or weakness in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

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