



OIOS

Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

AUDIT REPORT

UNIFIL air operations

Lack of formalization and implementation of policies in the areas of air operations could impede UNIFIL's economical use of air assets and air safety.

16 March 2009

Assignment No. AP2008/672/01

United Nations  Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES · BUREAU DES SERVICES DE CONTRÔLE INTERNE
INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION · DIVISION DE L'AUDIT INTERNE

TO: Major General Claudio Graziano
A: Force Commander and Head of Mission
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

DATE: 16 March 2009

FROM: Fatoumata Ndiaye, Acting Director
DE: Internal Audit Division, OIOS



REFERENCE: IAD: 09-02291

SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AP2008/672/01 - Audit of UNIFIL air operations**
OBJET:

1. I am pleased to present the report on the above-mentioned audit.
2. Based on your comments, we are pleased to inform you that we will close recommendations 1, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, and 16 in the OIOS recommendations database as indicated in Annex 1. In order for us to close the remaining recommendations, we request that you provide us with the additional information as discussed in the text of the report and also summarized in Annex 1.
3. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its recommendations, particularly those designated as high risk i.e., recommendations 5,6, 10 and 14 in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.

cc: Mr. Girish Sinha, Director of Mission Support, UNIFIL
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors
Ms. Maria Gomez Troncoso, Officer-in-Charge, Joint Inspection Unit Secretariat
Mr. Seth Adza, Audit Response Team, Department of Field Support
Mr. Moses Bamuwanye, Chief, Oversight Support Unit, Department of Management
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INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

FUNCTION

“The Office shall, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations examine, review and appraise the use of financial resources of the United Nations in order to guarantee the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, ascertain compliance of programme managers with the financial and administrative regulations and rules, as well as with the approved recommendations of external oversight bodies, undertake management audits, reviews and surveys to improve the structure of the Organization and its responsiveness to the requirements of programmes and legislative mandates, and monitor the effectiveness of the systems of internal control of the Organization” (General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNIFIL Air Operations

OIOS conducted an audit of air operations in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The overall objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls over air operations. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

OIOS identified the following areas where UNIFIL's air operations could be improved:

- There were significant variances between budgeted and actual flight hours. The actual passenger shuttle and VIP delegation flights were much higher than planned whereas actual flight hours for patrolling the Blue Line, observation and defense were considerably lower. In OIOS' view, there was a risk that flight hours for patrol, observation and defense were not sufficient.
- The Mission's aviation standard operating procedures were not in line with the DPKO Aviation Manual regarding the: (a) establishment of a joint Air Operations Center; (b) minimum number of passengers required for shuttle services; (c) emergency response plan; and (d) quality assurance process.
- The Mission had not established an air traffic control function. Therefore, it could not track and control the operations of its aircrafts.
- The Mission did not maintain pilot training records. As a result, it was not clear if pilots had been appropriately trained.
- There were no procedures in place for identifying non-UN flight hours. Therefore, the Mission was precluded from recovering the accurate cost of fuel used on non-UN flights.
- Helipads were not properly maintained and equipped to ensure that they were operationally safe.

OIOS made a number of recommendations to strengthen existing controls and contribute toward better air operations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of air operations in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.
2. UNIFIL's 2006-2007 expenditures and 2007-2008 apportionments for air operations are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Expenditure and apportionment for air operations

Budget lines	2006/07	2007/08
	Expenditures (\$000)	Apportionment (\$000)
Rental and operation	4,364.4	6,268.4
Liability insurance	288.4	258.1
Others	874.6	1,124.1
Total	5,527.4	7,650.6

3. UNIFIL operates nine rotary-wing aircrafts, eight military and one commercial helicopters. The military aircrafts are used for patrolling the Blue Line, transporting VIPs and delegates, and conducting casualty/medical evacuation and search and rescue operations. The commercial helicopter generally operates flights between Naqoura, Sector East, Sector West and Beirut twice a day for five days each week. During 2007-2008, the aircrafts flew about 3,800 sorties for 2,500 hours and transported more than 21,000 passengers and 46,000 kilograms of cargo.
4. Under the overall responsibility of the Mission's Integrated Support Services, the Aviation Section is responsible for air operations. The Supply Section is responsible for the administration and replenishment of aviation fuel.
5. Comments made by UNIFIL are shown in *italics*.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

6. The main objectives of the audit were to assess:
 - (a) The efficiency of air operations in meeting the Mission's 2007-2008 expected accomplishments; and
 - (b) The adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls over air operations to ensure compliance with UN Regulations and Rules and other instructions.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The audit included air operations during the fiscal years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, with focus on the latter period.
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8. The audit methodology comprised: (a) a review of pertinent records and applicable memorandum of understanding, letters of assists, and contracts; (b) analysis of data; (c) interviews with responsible personnel; and (d) an assessment of internal controls.

IV. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Air operations

Actual passenger and VIP flights significantly exceeded the budget

9. During the 2007-2008 fiscal year, UNIFIL conducted a total of 2,453 flight hours, 20 per cent of which was dedicated to patrolling the Blue Line and over 75 per cent for shuttle services, training and transportation of VIPs and delegations.

10. An analysis of flying hours disclosed variances, as summarized in Table 2, between budgeted and actual flying hours.

Table 2: 2007-2008 budgeted and actual air operations

Outputs	Budget proposal 2007-2008		Variance	%
	Budgeted Hrs.	Actual Hours		
1. Logistics Support/Cargo	705	11	694	98
2. Passengers/Flights for Liaison	631	1,555	(924)	(146)
3. Patrol, Observation & Defense	747	533	214	29
4. CAS/MED, Search & Rescue	84	26	59	70
5. Others (Logistics, Trainings)	-	319	(319)	
Gross requirements	2,167	2,443	(276)	(13)

11. The actual flying hours for passenger and VIP flights significantly exceeded budgeted hours. On the other hand, the actual flight hours for patrol, observation, defense and logistics support were much lower than the budgeted hours. Significant increase in the flight hours for passenger and VIP flights occurred after the Mission's expansion resulting from increase in the number of daily air shuttles and the number of visiting officials to UNIFIL. The low number of flying hours for operational purposes gives an indication that activities mandated by Resolution 1701 of the General Assembly had not been given the required priority. In OIOS' view, there was a risk that flight hours for patrol, observation and defense were not sufficient.

12. The Mission stated that it had no reasonable basis for estimating the time required for patrolling when the budget was prepared 12 months in advance. Therefore, the actual flight hours may not match the budgeted flight hours. Moreover, the Mission explained that its reporting of logistics support and liaison flights to the Department of Field Support (DFS) changed during fiscal year 2007-2008 to include a new category 'Others' relating to logistics support and training. The Mission had reported actual flight hours based on the new reporting format, but continued to report budgeted flight hours as specified in the budgets.

Recommendation 1

(1) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should perform appropriate analyses, at the time of reporting, to ensure that flight performance reports present actual flight hours that could be meaningfully compared with budgeted hours.

13. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 1 and provided a copy of the budget for 2008-2009 and the cost estimates for 2009-2010 prepared in accordance with the new task categories.* Based on the action taken by UNIFIL, recommendation 1 has been closed.

Standard operating procedures not in line with DPKO Aviation Manual

14. The standard operating procedures (SOPs) of the Mission's Air Operations Center (AOC), which was published in June 2007, do not specify the role of the AOC and that of the Chief Aviation Officer (CAVO). AOC primarily carried out the air operations in UNIFIL. The Aviation Section has been revising the standard operating procedures since 2007 in order to align them with the DPKO Aviation Manual, which covers the management of military aviation assets, as well as the roles of the AOC and CAVO. However, these have not been finalized. There was thus a risk that Mission's practices are not in compliance with relevant policy.

Recommendation 2

(2) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should formally align the Aviation standard operating procedures with the DPKO Aviation Manual and create a joint Air Operations Center with clear reporting lines to the Chief Aviation Officer.

15. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the new SOP was pending the formal approval of the Force Commander. The SOP reflects the organizational structure described in the DPKO Aviation Manual where the AOC is part of the Aviation Section and reports to CAVO.* Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of the copy of approved SOP.

The Aviation Section needs to establish Air Traffic Control functions

16. Air traffic control functions include tracking aircraft in-flight, recording all operational and non-operational events related to the movement of aircraft and maintaining radio contact and relaying departure and arrival times. UNIFIL's air tower was completed at the cost of \$34,500 and equipped in September 2007. An Air Traffic Control Supervisor (ATC) was deployed in February 2008. At the time of the audit, air traffic control was not operational as the posts of Flight Following Assistants had not been filled. The Aviation Section was initially loaned two national general service posts from the Transport

Section. However, these posts had also not been filled. OIOS was informed that the Section was considering engaging six military staff to man the air tower.

17. At the time of the audit, Italian Air was performing the same Flight Following functions free of charge to UNIFIL. Italian Air does not maintain radio contact and track the other helicopter flights. The Aviation Section monitors the use of aircraft for UN tasks based on the Air Tasking Orders (ATO) issued. However, it does not verify the accuracy of actual flight times recorded by aircraft providers.

18. In OIOS' opinion, the inability of the Aviation Section to perform air traffic control functions exposes the Mission to risks of faulty air safety and security. Furthermore, the inability of the Mission to properly monitor actual flying times may result in non-recovery of costs related to non-UNIFIL flights.

Recommendation 3

(3) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should fill the Flight Following Assistant posts without further delay and ensure the air traffic control function is established and operational.

19. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 3 and stated that the Mission was waiting for the deployment of six military staff to permanently resolve the issue of establishing Air Traffic Control operations. In the interim, the Mission had deployed a Flight Following Assistant on temporary duty and the air traffic control tower had been operational since 14 January 2009. Flight following logs were posted daily on the Aviation network shared drive. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of confirmation that all positions have been filled and the air traffic control function is fully operational.*

Air tasking procedures to be followed in all cases

20. OIOS noted cases relating to the travel of the Head of Mission where the Air Mission Request was raised and approved after the actual flight dates. This is contrary to the established procedures on flight tasking. OIOS was informed that due to security concerns, the relevant documentation for the flights of the Head of Mission is usually not completed before the actual flight starts, but verbal approvals are taken.

21. While the prevailing security situation may warrant verbal approvals for the Head of Mission, failure to follow the UN air tasking procedures poses insurance risks for the assets and personnel on board. It may also result in the Mission not informing the Lebanese Armed Force/Israeli Defense Force (LAF/IDF) of the travels of the Head of Mission. OIOS suggested that electronic air tasking of flights could achieve the twin objective of compliance with established procedures and ensuring the security of flights by the Head of Mission. While initially UNIFIL was positive about the suggestion, on reflection, it mentioned that would not be practical due to the 24/7 hour nature of UNIFIL air operations and the often unpredictable and changing operational requirements.

However, UNIFIL confirmed that no flight is launched without prior approval (verbal or written) and a published ATO including those of the Head of Mission. ATOs are disseminated in a timely fashion to all concerned, including the Lebanese Armed Force and Israeli Defense Force.

No policy for shuttle operations regarding the minimum number of passengers

22. UNIFIL's commercial aircraft, which has a seating capacity of 21 passengers, is primarily used for shuttle services. During 2007-2008, the aircraft made 1,458 shuttle sorties spending 816 flight hours. Forty-five per cent of the flights carried less than five passengers but accounted for 46 per cent of the total flight hours. Moreover, the shuttle sorties are generally under-utilized and carried only 8 passengers on average against the capacity of 21 passengers. In a number of cases the passengers did not show up for the flight and did not inform the Movement Control Section (MovCon) in advance to cancel the flight. Table 3 shows the number of passengers per shuttle flight.

Table 3: Aircraft capacity utilization

No. of Passengers	No. of sorties	%	Flight hours	%
0 < 2	296	20	162	20
3 < 5	358	25	211	26
6 < 8	290	20	166	20
9 < 11	183	13	99	12
12 < 14	151	10	78	10
15 < 17	87	6	47	6
18 < 20	80	5	44	5
21 < 24	13	1	9	1
Total:	1,458	100	816	100

* Note: The above data is for each leg of the shuttle flight.

23. As per Section 3.2.6.4 of the Aviation Manual, the Mission is responsible for developing aviation SOPs regarding shuttle operations and flight cancellations. However, UNIFIL's aviation's procedures had not developed appropriate SOPs for shuttle operations. There was also no evidence that the Mission has established a policy for the minimum number of passengers required per shuttle flight.

Recommendation 4

(4) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should establish and implement appropriate standards and procedures for the operation of shuttle flights.

24. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 4 and stated that a new SOP for Passenger/Cargo Movement by Air had been drafted and was pending the Director of Mission Support's (DMS) formal approval. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of the copy of the approved SOP.*

Lack of clear delegation on authorization of Movement of Personnel (MOP)

25. In accordance with paragraph 3.2.6 of the Aviation Manual, the Movement of Personnel (MOP) must be approved by an authorized official, i.e. the CAO/DMS. The duly approved MOP should then be submitted to the MovCon for confirmation of flight. OIOS' review of a sample of seven days MOPs disclosed that:

- Four officers approved MOPs originating from Naqoura Force HQ on separate occasions although there was no evidence that they had the delegation of authority to do this; and
- MOPs for four cases were not approved by any official.

26. Manifesting of passengers without properly approved MOPs may result in unauthorized individuals using the UN aircraft. This exposes the Mission to liability in the event of death or injury of unauthorized passengers and may negatively impact the reputation of the United Nations. An appropriate electronic system for the processing of MOPs could help ensure compliance with passenger manifest procedures. However, such a system had not been implemented.

Recommendation 5

(5) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should establish an electronic movement of personnel approval system with proper authorization levels and access controls so as to comply with the passenger manifest procedures.

27. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 5 and stated that using experiences and practices of other missions, UNIFIL is in the process of developing an electronic MOP. It was expected that the project would be completed by the end of 2009.* Recommendation 5 remains open pending verification by OIOS of the successful implementation of an electronic MOP system.

Management of training flights and pilot training records

28. As per Section 30.5.3 of the Aviation Manual, the Mission's air operations are required to maintain records of familiarization and currency for each crew member. However, the Aviation Section did not maintain records of training flights and pilot training. As shown in Figure 1, training flights for pilots during the year 2007-2008 represented 14.5 per cent of the actual flying hours.

29. The Aviation Section explained that since UNIFIL has a total of 32 pilots for its nine aircrafts, it was not possible for it to maintain training records. The Section informed OIOS that pilot training records are maintained by the respective aircraft commanders and that the Aviation Section reviews those records before tasking pilots. OIOS noted that the Spanish pilots had been tasked although they did not meet their training requirements.

30. It is important for the Aviation Section to maintain pilot training flight records as required by the above-mentioned UN aviation policy. Moreover, the number of night landing sites has increased requiring more training flights. The Section has also implemented new training flight routes and combined patrols flights with day training flights in order to reduce the number of training flight hours. Accordingly, the Aviation Section has budgeted 480 training flight hours for 2009-2010 fiscal year. There is a need for these to be monitored against actual flight hours.

31. The Aviation Section's inadequate tracking of the pilot training records may lead to unauthorized flying hours, and pilots who have not met the familiarization and currency requirements putting passengers at risk.

Recommendation 6

(6) The UNIFIL Aviation Section should maintain pilot training records and periodically review them to ensure that all UNIFIL aircraft pilots have met the familiarization and currency requirements.

32. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the UN training requirements for the next rotation of ItalAir pilots will be organized and coordinated by the Aviation Section. The records will be maintained by the Section and kept in the AOC.* Recommendation 6 remains open pending submission of the training plan and sample copy of training records kept.

Newly constructed air tower may not be used

33. The air tower used by the Italian Air was constructed in September 2007 at a cost of \$34,506. The ATC Supervisor expressed concerns that the function could not be efficiently performed at the tower due to poor visibility of the landing site. Consequently, the Mission was planning to relocate the ATC to a new site. No alternative use of the old air traffic tower had been identified.

Recommendation 7

(7) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should ensure that the air tower is utilized for other appropriate purposes such as an observation post.

34. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 7 and stated that with the establishment of Air Traffic and Flight Following services in January 2009, the ATC tower was being fully utilized.* Based on the action taken by UNIFIL, recommendation 7 has been closed.

Aviation Section's work planning process is deficient

35. The Aviation Section had no clear guidelines for the preparation of its work plans. The Section's first work plan of the Aviation Section was developed for the period 2008-2009 based on the Integrated Support Services' (ISS) work

plan. However, there were no links between the ISS work plan and the Aviation Section's work plan. Moreover, there was no evidence that the work plan was approved nor was there a process in place for a systematic review and monitoring of the work plan implementation.

36. A deficient work planning process limits the Section's ability to manage its performance including the systematic monitoring and measurement of the achievement of its goals and objectives.

Recommendation 8

(8) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should ensure that the Aviation Section improves its work planning process by establishing measurable performance indicators that are aligned to the Mission's mandate.

37. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 8 and stated that the work plan for 2009-2010 will be prepared to coincide with the commencement of a new e-PAS cycle. Recommendation 8 remains open pending receipt of the new work plan and the process to enable its systematic monitoring and review.*

B. Aircraft contractual arrangements

Replacement of Super Pumas with Bell 205s

38. On 31 August 2008, Spain replaced the Super Pumas with two Bell 205s without evidence of formal approval from DFS and against the desire of the Mission. While UNIFIL accepted the two Bell 205s, the operational capacity of Sector East (Spanish HQ) was significantly reduced as these aircraft cannot operate over water and are not cleared for night flying. In September 2008, the Mission started to review bids to acquire one medium lift helicopter. However, the helicopter will not adequately compensate for the reduction in operational capacity especially to be able to respond in an emergency.

Recommendation 9

(9) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should explore alternatives to restore its operational capacity following the withdrawal of the Super Pumas by the Government of Spain.

39. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 9 and stated that following the decision of the Spanish Government to withdraw the two Super Puma aircraft, the Mission requested the deployment of an additional medium-sized helicopter. A second Mi-8 commercial aircraft arrived in UNIFIL on 9 December 2008. Based on the action taken by UNIFIL, recommendation 9 has been closed.*

Unclear transfer of authority delayed air tasking of Spanish aircraft

40. Goods and services provided to the UN must be based on valid contract. OIOS observed that neither the Letter of Assist (LoA) nor the transfer of authority (TOA) had been finalized before the Spanish aircraft were handed over to UNIFIL. Spain signed the LoA on 3 June 2008 for the provision of 2 Super Pumas for a period of one year from 21 September 2007 to 20 September 2008, but the Pumas actually arrived in the Mission on 30 July 2007 and started their familiarization flights, which continued till 24 August 2007.

41. Similarly, in February 2008, the Italian Government replaced AB-205s with AB-212s to meet UNIFIL's operational requirements under the same terms and conditions agreed in the LoA covering Italian air AB-412s pending finalization of a new LoA specifically for AB-212s. The Mission stated that it was precluded from inspecting the AB-212 as the related LoA had not been finalized. Without a contract, the UN is exposed to various risks associated with the performance of the contractor.

Recommendation 10

(10) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should ensure the aircraft contracts are in place and the authority over the assets is transferred to the Mission before availing services.

42. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 10 and stated that the authority for the preparation and signing of LoA rested solely with UNHQ. Delays resulted from protracted negotiations and late agreement. The Mission's involvement was limited to sending regular reminders to the Aviation Transport Section at UNHQ urging appropriate and timely action.* OIOS is aware that there can be delays in signing LoAs and note that appropriate action was taken by UNIFIL in following-up with UNHQ. Recommendation 10 has been closed.

C. Aircraft usage reports

Deficient aviation fuel recovery process

43. The cost of fuel must be recovered by the Mission for all non-UN flights undertaken. For the M18 commercial aircraft, fuel cost is recovered for test flights. Therefore, it is important that non-UN and test flights are properly identified in the aircraft usage report (AUR). The Aviation Technical Compliance Officer certifies the summary of flying hours based on the Liaison Officer's signed verification of the summary. For non-UN and test flights, the quantity of fuel consumed is determined using an average consumption rate per flying hour.

44. A review of a sample of AURs disclosed that the number of flying hours for the non-UN flights was not reported. Moreover, the Aviation Section did not have access to helicopter logs and did not carry out the flight following function. Therefore, it was not clear how the Section verified non-UN flights hours. The first recovery of fuel costs from Spanish helicopters for non-UN flights

undertaken during August 2007-March 2008 was initiated only on 26 May 2008. Recovery for non-UN flights during April-June 08 had not been initiated as of 4 September 2008.

Recommendations 11 and 12

(11) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should: (a) establish procedures to identify non-UN flight hours for all UNIFIL aircraft covered by the Letters of Assist and contracts; and (b) ensure that the Mission is able to raise accurate fuel recovery claims in a timely manner.

(12) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should review all recovery claims raised during 2007-2008 to ascertain their accuracy and to recover any under-claimed costs for the non-UN and the test flights.

45. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 11 and stated that all non-UNIFIL flights were being duly recorded and identified on the ATO. Further, the Aviation Section had been able to maintain flight following logs containing the actual take-off and landing timings since January 2009. All non-UN hours are clearly stated in AUR reports and verified against the flight following logs. Copies of ATO, flight following log and AUR for January 2009 were also provided. Based on the action taken by UNIFIL, recommendation 11 has been closed.*

46. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 12 and stated that in the absence of an established Flight Following service, fuel recoveries for non-UN flights launched in 2007-2008 was done quarterly on the basis of the monthly AUR reports provided by the carriers and the respective ATO. OIOS notes UNIFIL's acceptance of recommendation 12, but the response does not address the recommendation. Recommendation 12 remains open pending confirmation that a review of the claims has been done and recovery initiated, if necessary.*

Air operations monitoring needs to be improved

47. The Aviation Section has been primarily monitoring the total flying hours for each aircraft against the budgeted flying hours. The Section also maintains monthly aviation reports showing the number of passengers, the quantity of fuel consumed, categories of tasks, and safety information. The Section updates the budget performance data annually and compares the actual flying hours, tasks undertaken and amounts spent with the budgetary figures.

48. The Aviation Section does not monitor passenger occupancy and fuel consumption rates of aircrafts. Based on the Section's aircraft flying hours statistics, OIOS carried out an analysis to assess the operational efficiency of the aircraft and found that on average, the aircrafts carried only 38 per cent of the passenger capacity. Moreover, OIOS found that AB-412 aircrafts consumed 20-

24 per cent more fuel than the average rates. The Mission was unable to clarify the high differential in the fuel consumption rate.

Recommendation 13

(13) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should inquire into the high fuel consumption rate of AB-412s aircraft.

49. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 13 and stated that according to the AB-412 Operations Manual, the average fuel consumption for an AB-412 can be as high as 509 liters per hour and provided a copy of the same. This justified the high consumption rate. Based on the action taken by UNIFIL, recommendation 13 has been closed.*

D. Aviation safety

Operational condition and inspection of helipads

50. A visit to 8 helipads found the following:

- Fire extinguishers at three of the eight helipads were not properly sheltered and most of the fire extinguishers did not have any inspection sticker indicating that their functionality had not been tested.
- Three landing lights were not functional at Position 1-0A, which is a Class A helipad. A number of construction materials were also stored in close vicinity of the helipad.
- Obstacles within the vicinity of the helipads were observed in UN positions 1-0A, 5-66, 8-31 and 8-30. Some of the images of the obstacles are shown below:





UNP 1-0A



UNP 5-66



UNP 8-31

- All eight helipads visited did not always maintain open radio communication to facilitate easy contacts in the event of emergency.
- Air Liaison Officers at 6 of the 8 locations had either not been identified or trained.

51. Although the Mission Aviation Safety Officer had also identified most of the issues and reported them in the June 2008 helipad survey report, there was no evidence of any action taken to rectify the deficiencies. Inadequately maintained helipads and air operations equipment may result in accidents during landing and take off.

Recommendation 14

(14) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should immediately address deficiencies identified in Mission Aviation Safety Officers inspection reports in order to ensure that UNIFIL helipads are equipped, maintained, and are operationally safe.

52. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 14 and stated that the majority of the concerns raised had been addressed. Further the Mission plans to start the construction of shelters for fire extinguishers from March 2009. An order for the assignment of Battalion Air Liaison Officers was pending Force Commander's approval. This will enhance the quality and safety of air operations, and improve coordination and reporting.* Recommendation 14 remains open pending completion of the shelter construction for fire extinguishers and implementation of the Force Commander's instruction.

Emergency Response Plan not in place

53. A timely and coordinated Emergency Response Plan (ERP) to handle aircraft accidents is important. The Aviation Section is responsible for formulating ERP and establishing procedures to implement them. OIOS' review of the draft ERP disclosed the following deficiencies:

- Contact details of the Crisis Management Team and the Response Team were not included.

-
- Section 1.3 on operational environment of the ERP does not address the responsibilities in case an incident/accident happens in flights to Israel or to Cyprus.
 - List of key personnel/agencies to be notified in case of aircraft emergency was not updated with Call Signs and home addresses; and
 - ERP does not include peculiarities of individual UN positions or sectors as required under Section 5.5.1 of the Safety Manual.

54. Non-existence of a tested emergency response plan diminishes the ability of the Mission to deal with the accidents/incidents involving aircraft in a well coordinated manner. Roles and responsibilities of each person and team may also not be clear.

Recommendation 15

(15) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should finalize the Emergency Response Plan addressing the deficiencies, and update the Plan regularly based on periodic tests.

55. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 15 and provided a copy of the Emergency Response Plan which had been signed on 16 February 2009. Based on the action taken by UNIFIL, recommendation 15 has been closed.*

Aviation Safety Council should have more regular meetings

56. The Aviation Safety Council is an important part of the UN Aviation Safety Programme for obtaining agreement on safety related problems. As per Section 1.5.3.2 of the Aviation Safety Manual, Aviation Safety Council meetings should be scheduled as a regular event and on a monthly basis. However, during the period from January 2007 to September 2008, the Council met only four times on 17 April 2007, 31 July 2007, 29 January 2008, and 27 May 2008. The gap between the last three meetings was 6-4 months and there were no minutes of the last meeting. The next meeting was scheduled to be held in October 2008.

57. In the absence of regular Aviation Safety Council meetings, management may not be able to review accidents, incidents, hazard reports and consequently the Mission may not be fully updated on aviation safety matters.

Recommendation 16

(16) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should ensure that the Aviation Safety Council meets more frequently in order to review aviation safety matters, incidents, accidents and hazard reports.

58. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 16 and stated that the Aviation Safety Council will meet every three months. It last met on 27 November 2008, and provided the minutes of this meeting. The next meeting is*

scheduled for the beginning of March 2009. Based on the action taken by UNIFIL, recommendation 16 has been closed.

Quality assurance process not put in place

59. Section II Chapter 5 of the Aviation Manual provides for an aviation quality assurance process. This process is designed to assess the competencies of aviation and related support services based on international and DPKO standards. It is necessary that an aviation quality assurance function is established to monitor services provided by air carriers, troop contributing countries and the Aviation Section. The Aviation Section's Technical Compliance Unit is responsible for conducting quality assurance reviews.

60. No quality assurance reviews had been undertaken. As a result, the Mission was precluded from identifying problems with aviation services and from taking corrective or preventive measures to address the aviation safety.

Recommendation 17

(17) The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should establish the quality assurance process and implement it with immediate effect.

61. *The UNIFIL Administration accepted recommendation 17 and stated that the quality assurance process is outlined in the draft aviation SOP and based on the guidelines provided in the Aviation Manual.* Recommendation 17 remains open pending receipt of the copy of approved SOP and documentation showing implementation of the quality assurance process.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

62. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of UNIFIL for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O ¹	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²
1.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should perform appropriate analyses, at the time of reporting, to ensure that flight performance reports present actual flight hours that could be meaningfully comparable with budgeted hours.	Financial	Medium	C	Action taken.	Implemented
2.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should formally align the Aviation standard operating procedures with the DPKO Aviation Manual and create a joint Air Operations Center with clear reporting lines to the Chief Aviation Officer.	Governance	Medium	O	UNIFIL to provide the copy of approved SOP.	Not provided
3.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should fill the Flight Following Assistant posts without further delay and ensure the air traffic control function is established and operational.	Human resources	High	O	UNIFIL to provide confirmation that all the positions have been filled and the air traffic control is fully operational.	Not provided
4.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should establish and implement appropriate standards and procedures for the operation of shuttle flights.	Operational	Medium	O	UNIFIL to provide the copy of approved SOP for Passenger/Cargo Movement by Air and the implementation plan.	Not provided
5.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should establish an electronic movement of personnel approval system with proper authorization levels and access controls so as to comply with the passenger manifest procedures.	Compliance	Medium	O	UNIFIL to provide a demonstration on how the new electronic MOP system will work and confirm its implementation.	31 December 2009
6.	The UNIFIL Aviation Section should maintain pilot training records and periodically review them to ensure that all UNIFIL aircraft pilots have met the familiarization and currency requirements.	Operational	High	O	UNIFIL to provide copy of the training plan and sample copy of training records kept	1 April 2009
7.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support	Operational	Medium	C	Action taken.	Implemented

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O ¹	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²
	should ensure that the air tower is utilized for other appropriate purposes such as an observation post.					
8.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should ensure that the Aviation Section improves its work planning process by establishing measurable performance indicators that are aligned to the Mission's mandate.	Governance	Medium	O	UNIFIL to provide the new work plan and the process to enable its systematic monitoring and review.	1 April 2009
9.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should explore alternatives to restore its operational capacity following the withdrawal of the Super Pumas by the Government of Spain.	Strategy	Medium	C	Action taken	Implemented
10.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should ensure the aircraft contracts are in place and the authority over the assets is transferred to the Mission before availing services.	Governance	High	O	Action taken.	Implemented
11.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should: (a) establish procedures to identify non-UN flight hours for all UNIFIL aircraft covered by the Letters of Assists and contracts; and (b) ensure that the Mission is able to raise accurate fuel recovery claims in a timely manner.	Operational	Medium	C	Action taken.	Implemented
12.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should review all recovery claims raised during 2007-2008 to ascertain their accuracy and to recover any under-claimed costs for the non-UN and the test flights.	Financial	Medium	O	UNIFIL to provide confirmation of the review of 2007-08 recovery claims for and the review results.	Not provided
13.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should inquire into the high fuel consumption rate of AB 412s aircraft.	Operational	Medium	C	Action taken.	Implemented
14.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should immediately address deficiencies identified in Mission Aviation Safety	Operational	High	O	UNIFIL to provide confirmation of completion of the shelter construction for fire extinguishers and implementation of	1 May 2009

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O ¹	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²
	Officers inspection reports in order to ensure that UNIFIL helpads are equipped, maintained, and are operationally safe.				the FC's order.	
15.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should finalize the Emergency Response Plan addressing the deficiencies, and update the Plan regularly based on periodic tests.	Operational	Medium	C	Action taken.	Implemented
16.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should ensure that the Aviation Safety Council meets more frequently in order to review aviation safety matters, incidents, accidents and hazard reports.	Operational	Medium	C	Action taken.	Implemented
17.	The UNIFIL Office of Mission Support should establish the quality assurance process and implement it with immediate effect.	Operational	Medium	O	UNIFIL to provide the copy of approved SOP and documentation showing implementation of the quality assurance process.	Not provided

C = closed, O = open