

Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on peace operations for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014

A/69/308 (Part II)

**Statement to the Fifth Committee by the
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
Carman L. Lapointe
6 May 2015**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Fifth Committee,

I am pleased to introduce the report on the Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for peace operations for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014 (A/69/308 Part II).

To begin with, the General Assembly resolution 69/253 now allows OIOS to publish internal audit and evaluation reports on a continuing basis. OIOS appreciates that this resolution will further foster transparency and accountability by providing Member States and the general public with easily accessible insight into the operations and work of the Secretariat.

The report before you provides an overview of the work of the three Divisions: Internal Audit, Investigations, and Inspection and Evaluation. The Office issued 191 oversight reports related to peace operations in 2014. The reports included 495 recommendations, 46 of which were classified as critical to the Organization.

During the reporting period, the Internal Audit Division continued to make greater use of thematic audits to identify systemic strengths and weaknesses across peace operations. In 2014, thematic audits were completed in air operations; field central review bodies and the staff selection process in selected field missions; movement control operations; and administration of entitlements and benefits of uniformed personnel. This approach has helped highlight the need for overarching policy reviews and procedural changes as well as facilitated knowledge sharing across missions.

In the Investigations Division, apart from issuing 115 reports, the focus has been on finalizing the restructuring of the Division, including the staffing of investigator positions at field offices. In addition, significant efforts were dedicated to developing a training strategy and delivering training for investigators and lay panels appointed from outside OIOS to investigate prohibited conduct.

During the reporting period, the Inspection and Evaluation Division pursued a workplan based on the comprehensive risk-based workplan initiated the previous year. The exercise identified 53 discrete peacekeeping topics, including cross-cutting themes, for evaluation. The Division's activity included the completion of an evaluation of the implementation and results of the protection of civilians mandate in United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/68/787). The report concluded that, while efforts to prevent conflict and mitigate its effects appeared to be

achieving results, peacekeeping operations frequently lack the capacity and willingness to intervene effectively in active conflicts to protect civilians under attack.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) remains an area of significant concern, which continues to mar the reputation of peacekeeping efforts. Unfortunately, it is less the levels of reported incidents and more the likelihood of underreporting that worries me most. As long as victims are unable to reasonably access complaint community-based mechanisms and assistance, the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy will not be seen as being credibly implemented.

Finally, on staffing matters, efforts to address vacancy rates throughout OIOS continued, through enhancement of recruitment strategies and increased use of rosters for staff selection. The OIOS vacancy rate as at the end of April was 15 per cent overall and 20 per cent for peacekeeping. The vacancy rate will continue improve upon completion of the on-boarding procedures for candidates, in particular in the Investigations Division.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all OIOS staff for their dedication to the work of OIOS, and for their commitment to the ideals of the United Nations.

I would also like to express appreciation to all Member States for your interest in and support for our work.

I thank you and welcome your questions on any subject matter.