



## INTELLIGENCE IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS

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A case study of the All Sources Information Fusion Unit in MINUSMA

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**Publisher:** A joint publication of the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment and the Norwegian Defence International Centre. Kjeller/Oslo, Norway. 2017.

**ISBN:** 978-82-93114-02-4

**Cover photo:** A vehicle from the All Source Information Fusion Unit of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) makes an operational halt during a sand storm. © Kjetil Meringdal 2015



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## List of Acronyms

AFC	Analysis fusion cell
AJP	Allied joint publication
ASIFU	All Sources Information Fusion Unit
CCIRM	Collection, coordination and intelligence requirement management
CM	Collection management
COS	Chief of Staff
FC	Force commander
FHQ	Force headquarters
HUMINT	Human intelligence
ICP	Information collection plan
IED	Improvised explosive device
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Centre
JOC	Joint Operations Centre
LNO	Liaison officer
MHQ	Mission headquarters
MINUSMA	The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OSINT	Open source intelligence
POC	Protection of civilians
PIR	Prioritised information requirement
PMESII	political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure
SHQ	Sector headquarters
SMG	Senior Management Group
SOP	Standing Operating Procedures
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SUR	Statement of unit requirements
UAV	Unmanned aerial vehicle
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan

# 1 Introduction

More than a decade ago, the United Nations established a model for integrated missions – organising all assets under one leadership function – in order to facilitate comprehensive and coordinated mission efforts. This model creates a considerable span of control, with relatively few decision-making nodes. In turn, it requires information and decision support to reach decision-makers at the different levels of the organisation in a timely manner. One of the organisational steps taken to support decision-making was the establishment of the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) in 2005. The All Source Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU) – an additional reinforcement to mission analysis capacity – was launched in Mali as a pilot in 2014. The purpose of the ASIFU was to provide intelligence on operational levels below the JMAC. The ASIFU was an intelligence entity that was part of the military component, under the command and control of the Force Commander (FC).

This report demonstrates that the development of an intelligence community in integrated UN peace operations faces many of the challenges that other similar organisations have experienced. These include compression of organisational levels (the blurring of the lines between strategic, operational and tactical levels), challenges in disseminating and sharing products, an exaggerated and unrealistic belief in the use of technical sensors, and organisational changes that do not yield the desired results.

While ASIFU is a recent invention, the introduction of intelligence structures in the UN is not new. Chesterman argued that efficient use of intelligence is a potential success factor from the strategic UN headquarters level down to the tactical level in peace operations (2006). Conversely, Dorn showed as early as 1999 the limitations of intelligence in UN peacekeeping. Ten years later, he considered that many of the same challenges remained, although intelligence, especially human intelligence (HUMINT), had been successful in supporting strong UN operations in Haiti to stabilise the gang-dominated slum areas (Dorn, 2009). Cammaert (2003) provided detailed recommendations on how intelligence in UN operations might be improved. For instance, he stressed the importance of competence standards for intelligence personnel, the utilisation of all assets and personnel for information gathering, and the reliability and consistency of the intelligence system and products. Although intelligence at all levels of the UN appears fraught with challenges, a near unanimous assessment from the existent literature is that an intelligence function is required in UN peace operations.

The UN has increasingly acknowledged the need for intelligence to provide support for decision-making. As with other organisations involved in peace and stabilisation efforts, the UN needs knowledge to improve force protection, the planning of operations and the implementation of mission mandates. Two UN reports in particular have established the need for more systematic and efficient processing of information to support decision-making in UN peace operations. The so-called Brahimi report (UN, 2000) called for the increased collection and analysis of information on the relevant actors in a given mission area. Further, it stated that the UN does not have a system to process information about conflict areas – a system which covers information collection, analysis and the dissemination or distribution of products. Although the concept of intelligence in the UN has developed considerably since then, the so-called HIPPO report from 2015 (High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations) still called for improved support systems to enable more responsive and accountable peace operations – in other words, the UN still needs better intelligence (UN, 2015b).

So where does the UN stand in terms of effective operational intelligence? To begin to answer this overarching question, this report provides a case study of the cutting edge of UN intelligence in contemporary UN peace operations<sup>1</sup> – the ASIFU. First deployed in May 2014, the ASIFU was set up to support operational level decision-making in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Comprising military personnel and military resources, the ASIFU was placed under the FC in MINUSMA's organisational chart. The ASIFU is largely based on North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) intelligence doctrine, and is currently composed of personnel and resources from NATO member, or NATO-associated, states. The core aim is to provide an efficient intelligence organisation that enables MINUSMA to protect its forces and civilians under threat and to fulfil its mission mandate.

First, the report explains the role and utility of ASIFU in MINUSMA. Second, it analyses the intelligence processes in the UN mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which does not have an ASIFU. This helps provide an understanding of whether an ASIFU could also be useful there. Finally, the report evaluates how MINUSMA and UNMISS use intelligence to support the implementation of the prioritised mission mandate – the protection of civilians (POC) – for both missions.

<sup>1</sup> This report uses the term peace operations to indicate the relevance of intelligence for missions mandated by either Chapter VI or Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

Specifically, this report tries to answer three questions:

1. How has the ASIFU affected the intelligence cycle of MINUSMA?
2. How does the intelligence cycle function in UNMISS, in the absence of an ASIFU?
3. How do intelligence units support POC mandates in MINUSMA and UNMISS?

Chapter 2 defines the central concepts and describes intelligence resources in UN peace operations. Chapter 3 introduces the analytical framework – the four-phased intelligence cycle. Chapter 4 analyses ASIFU in MINUSMA, whilst Chapter 5 investigates UNMISS in order to compare MINUSMA with a UN mission that does not have an ASIFU. Both these chapters provide conclusions on intelligence resources and processes and recommendations for improvement. Chapter 6 briefly investigates how MINUSMA and UNMISS use intelligence resources to support their top priority task of POC. Chapter 7 makes recommendations on how to increase the utility of intelligence in UN peace operations.

The report largely builds on information received through semi-structured interviews with UN practitioners – civilian and military – in Mali and South Sudan in June 2016. All interviewees agreed to provide information as long as they could remain anonymous. In addition, the report builds on UN policies, guidelines and handbooks, as well as other relevant literature. Both authors have previous experience with intelligence in NATO operations, and Lindboe was involved in the original construction, implementation, and deployment of the ASIFU in MINUSMA.

## **2 Definitions and structure of intelligence in UN peace operations**

Intelligence is a term whose definition and scope have differed depending on the historical and political context, the security situation, and the actors involved. Only recently has the UN started to define what intelligence means to the organisation. An official UN definition is expected during 2017. Given that intelligence is a highly contested issue in the UN, the emerging definition avoids the more controversial aspects related to the challenges of maintaining impartiality found in the traditional understanding of intelligence.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the existing intelligence structure in UN peace operations. The framework and guidelines for intelligence in a UN integrated peace operation are governed overall by the "United Nations Force Headquarters Handbook" (UN, 2014). The specific framework within which the JMAC, the Joint Operations Centre (JOC), and the ASIFU are to operate is set out in the policy and guidelines for these respective entities. The chapter does not cover the analysis capabilities in UN HQ in New York.

### **2.1 Definitions**

#### **2.1.1 Intelligence**

The suggested definition of intelligence in UN peace operations states that:

Peacekeeping intelligence is the acquisition and processing of information by a mission within a deliberate and directed intelligence cycle to meet the requirements of the head of mission and senior mission leadership<sup>2</sup> for decision making related to the safe and effective implementation of the mandate.

This report relates to this understanding of intelligence in UN peace operations, while being aware that other organisations define intelligence differently and more in line with how intelligence is commonly understood. NATO has the following definition of the term:

Intelligence is the product resulting from the processing of information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations. The term is also applied to the activity that results in the product and to organisations engaged in such activity. (AJP 2.0)

NATO speaks openly about "hostile forces", which for many reasons is challenging for the UN. Other definitions typically encompass an element of prediction and a reference to methods. An example of this is the intelligence doctrine of the Norwegian Armed Forces, which defines intelligence as:

"...the systematic collection and processing of information concerning foreign affairs, acquired through overt, covert and clandestine means within the framework of the national jurisdiction. The products should reduce uncertainty, establish understanding, and often have a predictive nature. The term is used about the product, the activity, and the organisation engaged in such activity." (NOR 2013, translated)

Being highly aware of the importance of definitions for the UN, especially in this field, this report relates to the suggested UN definition, while observing that it omits many of the concepts traditionally included in a definition of intelligence.

#### **2.1.2 Command levels and intelligence**

The levels differ only in the nature of the questions asked and the transparency of the intelligence/information requirements, and not in the principles for conducting intelligence. A key principle is that the information or intelligence produced must be "blind" to levels and flow independently of them.

##### **2.1.2.1 Strategic level**

Intelligence at the strategic level is required to understand the political situation between the parties to a conflict prior to UN involvement and, once peacekeepers are deployed, to anticipate the political moves of government or factions. This is the level at UN HQ and is tied to the mission leadership (Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and SMG).

<sup>2</sup> The senior mission leadership, also dubbed the mission leadership team, will in this report be referred to by its other name, the Senior Management Group (SMG).

### **2.1.2.2 Operational level**

Intelligence at the operational level is required to plan the most effective deployment of resources and to carry out the mandate within the integrated mission. It involves the SMG and the component leadership. In integrated missions, the JMAC is responsible for medium- to long-term integrated analysis, providing an incisive understanding of issues and trends, and their implications and potential developments, as well as assessments of cross-cutting issues and threats that may affect the implementation of the mission's mandate. According to the MINUSMA statement of unit requirements (SUR), the ASIFU is the main body responsible for the *operational part of the military intelligence architecture* (DPKO, 2013).

### **2.1.2.3 Tactical level**

Intelligence at a tactical level is needed by troops on the ground to support their tasks and mandated activities and to alert personnel to potential dangers. In a mission, tactical intelligence is typically the domain of the U-2 (in some missions, dubbed the J-2), the military intelligence unit of the military component in mission headquarters (MHQ). Tactical intelligence is the responsibility of the military components.

## **2.2 UN intelligence structure – Military component**

In integrated peace operations, the military component is required to interact with all other mission components, to share information and to maximise the impact of the UN's response. The force headquarters (FHQ) handbook (REF 2.12 Military Component's Interactions) states that the military component is to interact with the civilian component, especially the political pillar, in joint planning. Interaction with the police component is essential for the monitoring of law and order, as well as conducting joint operations. Close coordination between the military component and other mission components is also necessary for security sector reform, disarmament, democratisation and re-integration, humanitarian activities, human rights monitoring and civil affairs.

### **2.2.1 The role of the Force Commander**

The FHQ handbook spells out the role and responsibilities of the FC. It is the FC's responsibility to align military operations with the political objectives set by the SRSG and to provide military assessments and perspectives to the SRSG. The FC is responsible for defining military objectives, benchmarks, mission and tasks, and developing the military component operational order, based on the UN Department of Peacekeeping and UN Department of Field Support military strategic concept of operations, the mission concept and their own assessments (REF 3.2.2 HOMC/FC Responsibilities).

Furthermore, the FC is responsible for maintaining situational awareness through systematic military information processing for decision making at mission level and increasing the responsiveness of the military component. The FC must set priority information requirements (PIRs) and define resources and means.

The human rights perspective of the FC's work is set out in the United Nations policy, "Human Rights in United Nations Peace Operations and Political Missions" (UN, 2011). The FC's responsibilities include to:

- ensure compliance with the UN human rights due diligence policy;
- together with the head of the human rights component and other parts of the mission, anticipate, plan and prepare mission-wide plans for possible crises, escalation of violence and upsurges of human rights violations and to devise rapid preventive and protection measures; and
- ensure that military planning and execution of military operations fully takes into account advice with regard to potential human rights implications and mitigating measures.

### **2.2.2 The U-2 – military intelligence in Force Headquarters**

In FHQ, the FC's principal staff members are the FHQ officers in U-1 through to U-9 (in UNMISS named J-1 through to J-9) joint branches. The FHQ staff is responsible for collating information and analysing the implications and consequences for the mission as a whole and for particular operations.

Both MINUSMA and UNMISS are multidimensional peace operations, in terms of their mandates and the size of their military components – i.e., more than 10,000 troops. In a multidimensional mission, the HQ must operate as part of an integrated command at the operational level and is designed as a modular FHQ to form a joint and functional entity with the MHQ. The basic architecture of the MHQ consists of three main divisions, one of them being Military Operations, led by the Deputy Chief of Staff/Operations.

The Military Operations branch, U-2, is the part of FHQ that deals with matters concerning military intelligence. The U-2 is responsible for the planning and coordination of military information requirements and for the provision of accurate and comprehensive situational awareness to the FC. The responsibilities of the U-2 include supporting the FC

with short/medium/long-term military intelligence for the achievement of military objectives, the analysing, defining and dissemination of the FC's PIRs, the aligning of force PIRs with mission PIRs, and the planning and management of the information collection plan (ICP).

### **2.2.3 The All Sources Information Fusion Unit of MINUSMA**

In 2013, for the first time in UN peace operations, a military intelligence entity was constituted. The ASIFU was meant to be the operational part of MINUSMA's military intelligence architecture. According to the SUR, the ASIFU was to provide relevant, timely, actionable, and integrated intelligence analysis in support of the FC's PIRs and MINUSMA force protection and in order to enhance and execute intel-driven operations.

According to the SUR, the ASIFU was to operate in close coordination with relevant military and police intelligence units and contribute especially to traditionally *non-military* intelligence analysis, such as on illegal trafficking and the narcotics trade, ethnic dynamics and tribal tensions, and corruption and bad governance within Mali and the MINUSMA area of interest.

## **2.3 UN intelligence structure – Mission-wide**

### **2.3.1 The Joint Mission Analysis Centre**

UN missions are required to have a capacity to undertake multi-source analysis and provide predictive assessments. To meet these requirements, multi-dimensional integrated peace operations have a JMAC, an integrated structure whose scope is to optimise civil and military information management and analytical processes to support the SRSG and the SMG. The JMAC is established at MINUSMA headquarters level as a part of the office of the SRSG. Chief JMAC reports to the SRSG, either directly or indirectly through the Chief of Staff (COS) or the Deputy SRSG for Political Affairs.

The JMAC is to generate medium- to long-term integrated analytical products, providing the SRSG and the SMG with an understanding of issues and trends and their implications and potential developments, as well as assessments of cross-cutting issues and threats that may affect the implementation of the mission's mandate. The JMAC is responsible for the management (collection, coordination, analysis and distribution of information and reports) of the mission's civil and military information in order to support the SRSG's decision-making. It can, upon request, also support the FC's planning (UNFHQ handbook, 2.13.3: JMAC). All mission components, in particular analytical entities, should share timely and accurate information with the JMAC, and the JMAC should establish a close relationship to the JOC. All relevant mission components should have liaison officers or focal points to link to the JMAC.

### **3 Analytical framework – the intelligence cycle**

The controversies about intelligence in UN peace operations do not extend to the *intelligence cycle*. It is common to all intelligence processes, regardless of organisational frameworks. Consisting of separate phases tailored to different purposes, the cycle provides structure and logic to the intelligence process. Therefore, the intelligence cycle was used to structure the ASIFU's analysis in Mali and the intelligence system in the UN mission in South Sudan. Below is a brief explanation of the analytical framework.

#### **3.1 Collection planning and management and the intelligence dialogue**

The element of *direction* is the first phase of the intelligence cycle. The phase is constituted by planning and management of the collection of information, more precisely the process of matching anticipated collection requirements with collection capabilities.

The direction, guidance and subsequent prioritising of the various intelligence requirements to ensure an efficient and effective use of assets and resources is a continuous process that coordinates and integrates the efforts of all collection units and agencies. This multi-level collaboration helps to identify collection gaps and redundant coverage in a timely manner to make best use of all available collection capabilities<sup>3</sup>. The overall process of the planning and management of the collection of information in the intelligence community is traditionally termed *Intelligence Requirements Management and Collection Management*, commonly referred to by its former name, *Collection Coordination and Intelligence Requirements Management* (CCIRM). In a military intelligence unit, CCIRM processes are run and managed by a dedicated internal CCIRM organisation. Every incoming request for information is channelled to the intelligence requirement management desk. The request is registered and processed to determine the possible actions that might be taken in response to the request. The production of intelligence is then coordinated and prioritised through the development of a production plan, to ensure that the planned products will adequately answer the commander's PIRs. The plan is an important tool for the distribution of tasks and should enhance efficient use of resources by avoiding duplication of effort.

In planning the collection of intelligence, it is necessary to take into account the distinctiveness of the different collection disciplines and available assets, including their access to relevant sources. It is therefore necessary to develop an ICP to ensure that the right PIRs are answered in a timely manner with the use of the right intelligence disciplines. The ICP is the basis for setting the organisation's own tasks and for asking for action from relevant partners in the intelligence community. The making of the ICP is part of a process called *Collection management* (CM) and is run by the *CM desk of the CCIRM section*. The CM desk is also responsible for managing the products received from the organisation and the responses to the requests for information sent to external partners in the intelligence community.

However, planning and management is not an administrative endeavour only. To develop precise intelligence requirements, it is necessary to have good knowledge about what decision the requested intelligence is intended to support (Etterretningstjenesten, 2012). To properly understand the context of the requesting body and what is required of the intelligence response, a close dialogue – in the intelligence community termed an *intelligence dialogue* – is necessary between the requesting body and the supporting intelligence unit. The intelligence process is cyclical, and the outcome of this intelligence dialogue serves as input into, and premise for, the direction of efforts in a new round of the intelligence cycle.

The development and structuring of intelligence requirements means establishing a common understanding between the commander and the intelligence unit, in terms of clarifying the concrete requirements, the nature of expected answers and products, and what can be expected within a given timeframe. Hence, the intelligence dialogue is one of the most important tools in the management of the intelligence process. In operations, the main requesting body is the commander. Other typical client groups include operations and/or plans sections, analysts (who may have discovered or identified an intelligence gap), and mission-internal and mission-external entities that are authorised to ask for support. Ideally, the intelligence dialogue should be as close as possible to mitigate the risk of misunderstandings.

#### **3.2 Information collection**

The second step of the intelligence cycle is information collection based on information requirements. As Dorn (1999) underlines, there is a myriad of ways to acquire information, both overtly and covertly. In the UN, overt collection is the only accepted way of gathering information. This report covers three main methods: intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), HUMINT and open source intelligence (OSINT).

<sup>3</sup> "Joint Publication 2-0, Joint Intelligence" (PDF). Defense Technical Information Center. Department of Defense. 22 June 2007. pp. GL-11.

### **3.2.1 Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance**

Surveillance is defined as “the systematic observation of aerospace, surface or subsurface areas, places, persons or things, by visual, aural, electronic, photographic or other means” (NATO, 2016, pp. 3–21). Reconnaissance is defined as “a mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or potential enemy, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area” (NATO, 2016, pp. 3–21). Today, modern ISR units use several sensors and platforms within the different intelligence disciplines. One example is unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), also known as drones. These are small, unmanned aircraft of varying size, imagery capacity and range. Aerial reconnaissance is within the UN’s range of permitted measures for information collection (Dorn, 1999).

### **3.2.2 Human Intelligence**

HUMINT is a collection discipline that includes more than is commonly believed. According to NATO’s standard (2016), HUMINT is defined as “information collected and provided by human sources”. This is a rather wide definition, and is not limited by which human sources have provided the information, or how it was procured. In other words, HUMINT may come from friendly forces as well as opposing actors; it may be given freely by UN programmes or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or be derived from interrogations of opposing actors, or even bought. In this way, HUMINT spans the spectrum from white – accepted – means of information collection for the UN, to black – unacceptable means of information collection for the UN (Dorn, 1999).<sup>4</sup>

### **3.2.3 Open source intelligence**

OSINT is intelligence derived from publicly available information, as well as other unclassified information that has limited public distribution or access.<sup>5</sup> In the intelligence community, the term open refers to publicly available sources, as opposed to covert or clandestine sources. Open sources include all publicly accessible sources of information, such as media, internet-based communities and user-generated content (e.g. social media), public data, published professional and academic documents, geospatial data and the Deep Web, i.e. the part of the internet that is not accessible to traditional search engines.

Abilova and Novosseloff (2016) point out that, traditionally, due to its non-secrecy nature, OSINT has been undervalued, and that at the national level “the intelligence community harbours some institutional prejudice against open-source intelligence, as it seems to run counter to the purposes for which the intelligence community was created”.<sup>6</sup> In Mali, especially the disputed parts of Central, East and North Mali, many of the important conflict actors use social media – including Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp groups – to raise their profile with the public, to display (and maybe show off) their capabilities, and to organise, warn or rally sympathisers. The monitoring of social media has proved to be useful to gain situational awareness and an in-depth understanding of the sentiments in the population in general and in the different armed groups in particular.

## **3.3 Intelligence analysis**

The third part of the intelligence cycle is *examination and collation*, followed by *analysis*. This is the stage where all the collected information turns into a finished product that ideally gives meaning to the individual pieces of information it took to create it, and is therefore more than the sum of its parts. There are many ways to analyse information, but this report will focus on two avenues: scenario development and OSINT. These are essential to maintain an effective intelligence cycle, and are also within the reach of the UN’s current intelligence approach.

The central aim for intelligence analysis is the prediction of events or possible futures. One way to achieve this is structured scenario development. It is the core driving force of the *Collection Coordination of Information Requirement Management* (CCIRM) process as outlined in NATO’s intelligence doctrine, AJP-2 (NATO, 2016). The process begins following an intelligence dialogue with a client that has outlined the information needs. This serves as the basis for the structured scenario development process, whereby different futures (scenarios) are detailed along with indicators for each. The scenarios should, at the operational level, consider all political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure (PMESII) domains. The process should have a long-term focus, but include a defined end-date. Studies show that accurate prediction is unfeasible for a period beyond five years (Tetlock and Gardner, 2015). The indicators for each scenario thereafter lead to an ICP guiding the rest of the intelligence cycle.

<sup>4</sup> One example of unacceptable means of information collection for the UN would be to pay informants to provide information.

<sup>5</sup> This is a NATO term from the Official NATO Terminology Database, <https://nso.NATO.int/NATOterm/Web.mvc> (accessed 2016-10-02).

<sup>6</sup> Mark M Lowenthal. Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy (Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, May 2014), p. 103.

### **3.4 Dissemination**

The fourth and last phase of the intelligence cycle is *dissemination*. Dissemination is the spreading of the products created in the previous phases of the cycle.

In general, every product fully or partly answering the commander's PIRs should be made available to the commander and to other relevant bodies authorised to receive it. The actual dissemination may be determined by events or according to predetermined intervals and recipient lists, or a combination of the two. To mitigate the risk of circular reporting, it may be necessary to disclose the recipients of the product. To ensure effective sharing and inter-operability in the international environment of a UN mission, intelligence products should have a classification that is UN proprietary.

Another characteristic of intelligence is timeliness. No matter how reliable and important, intelligence is useless if does not reach the decision-maker in time to be incorporated in the planning process. Furthermore, intelligence must be adequate and appropriate. Whether the presentation should be oral, written, or a combination of these, will depend on the product and the recipient. The content of the intelligence products and the client's preferred way of receiving them determine whether products should be made available through databases, web solutions or other networks. Intelligence products should not be made available to third parties without the permission of the issuing unit. This is done to prevent circular reporting, avoiding the situation whereby information that was originally considered uncertain ends up being thought of as "reliable" because of unknown processing by a third party.

## 4 MINUSMA – All Sources Information Fusion Unit

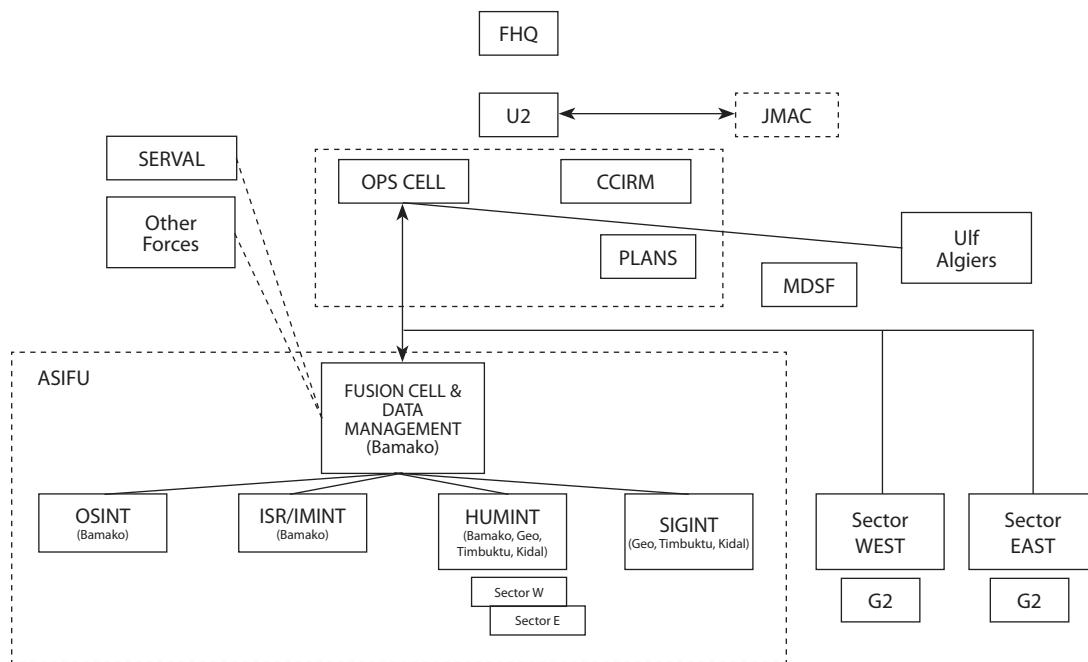
This chapter analyses ASIFU in the period May 2014 – June 2016 and is structured according to the intelligence cycle and its four main phases – intelligence dialogue, information collection, intelligence analysis, and dissemination of products. It begins, however, with an overview of the ASIFU's past and current mission and mandate.

### 4.1 Mission and structure

The original mission guidelines for the ASIFU were spelled out in MINUSMA's SUR (UN, 2013). The ASIFU was intended to constitute “the operational part of the military intelligence architecture”. It should provide relevant, timely, actionable, and integrated intelligence analysis in support of the FC's PIRs, mission force protection and to enhance intel-driven operations. Furthermore, the ASIFU was to work in close coordination with relevant military and police units in MINUSMA headquarters – i.e., the U-2 and UNPOL respectively – and “contribute especially to non-military intelligence”. This included illegal trafficking and the drug trade, ethnic dynamics and tribal tensions, corruption, and bad governance within the Mali and MINUSMA area of interest.

This report interprets the SUR as instructing ASIFU to be a mission-integrated asset, capable of providing fused, predictive, actionable and timely intelligence based on a multidimensional PMESII mission-centric approach in support of tactical, operational and SMG decision-making processes and other staff processes. The ASIFU should also, upon request, support MINUSMA HQ and sector headquarters (SHQ) levels by providing operational and emergency intelligence, using a blend of sensor capacity, analytic capacity, GIS support, OSINT support, and subject matter expertise. The 2013 SUR stated that, having this spectrum of required capabilities, the ASIFU should predominantly focus on intelligence at the operational level.

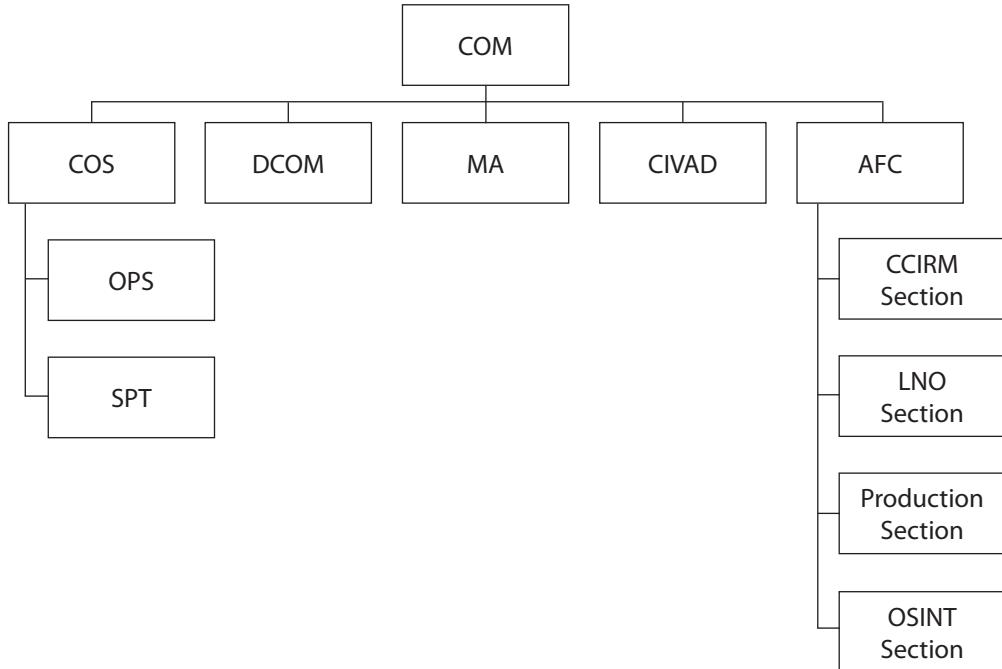
To fulfil the mission mandate, the original ASIFU was envisioned as being set up according to Figure 4.1 below. The ASIFU of the SUR also included a signal intelligence company.<sup>7</sup> For several reasons not covered by this report, this proposed company is yet to be deployed.



**Figure 4.1 The intelligence architecture of the ASIFU, as in the 2013 statement of unit requirement (SUR) (UN, 2013)**

In reality, once all arrangements were finalised, the setup of the finalised ASIFU ended up according to Figure 4.2 below.

<sup>7</sup> This is intelligence-gathering by the interception of signals, whether communications between people (communications intelligence) or from electronic signals not directly used in communication (electronic intelligence).



**Figure 4.2 The ASIFU organisation, as deployed in May 2014**

#### 4.1.1 The new organisational structure of the ASIFU

In 2016, the ASIFU was further restructured. According to centrally placed senior personnel in both MINUSMA HQ and the ASIFU, there were several reasons for this. The overarching rationale was to better respond to the former FC's demand for tactical intelligence.<sup>8</sup>

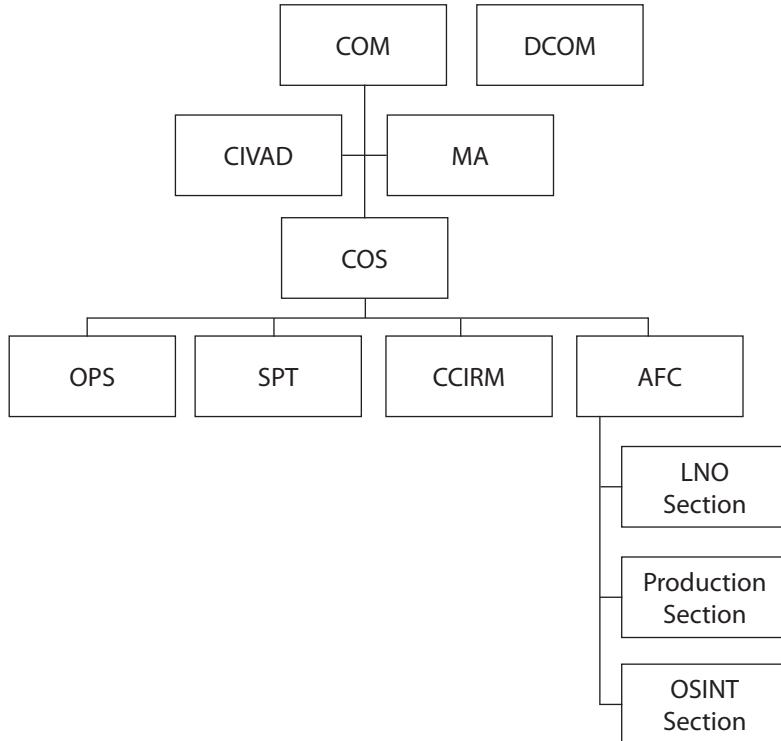
First, a new organisational level was established in the ASIFU, in between the ASIFU leadership and the leader of its subordinated Analysis Fusion Cell (AFC). The AFC chief reports to the ASIFU chief of staff (COS). The COS is a staff officer who does not take any part in the intelligence procedures of the AFC. The purpose was to relieve the ASIFU commander of some of his daily tasks, enabling him to better command the two ISR companies. They were located in Gao and Timbuktu, and the FC was also responsible for the intelligence assets of the Dutch Special Forces – the Special Operations Land Task Group.<sup>9</sup> In the former ASIFU structure, the ASIFU commander was reportedly unable to lead these units sufficiently, as he was busy with the management of all ASIFU subordinates. In the new ASIFU organisational structure, it was envisaged that the ASIFU commander could concentrate on commanding of units, leaving the administration and management of other ASIFU entities to his COS.

Second, the CCIRM section was no longer supposed to be a part of the AFC (see section 4.2 below). Instead, it was placed alongside the AFC, both sections being under command and control of the ASIFU COS. The reason for this was that, when the CCIRM section was part of the AFC, it was allegedly out of the loop, and was not included sufficiently in the AFC's focus. The consequence was that it took too long a time from when a requirement for intelligence was identified, through implementation in the ICP, to the point at which the relevant assets were given the task of acquiring it.

Third, there has been a change in the use of assets in the remaining AFC sections. The liaison officer section (LNO section) is no longer being used as a collection asset, as under its new COS leadership it does not deliver reports to CCIRM on a regular basis. The efforts of the production and OSINT sections were directed at the tactical domain, and the production changed accordingly. The implications of these organisational changes are described in detail in the following chapters.

<sup>8</sup> At the time of writing, a new Force Commander had not yet been nominated.

<sup>9</sup> The Dutch contingent left the mission in 2016, and has been replaced by a German contingent.



**Figure 4.3 The new ASIFU organisational structure**

## 4.2 Intelligence dialogue

To streamline and co-ordinate the intelligence dialogue between clients and the several intelligence entities, MINUSMA has a Joint Coordination Board.<sup>10</sup> The Board meets biweekly at MINUSMA HQ, chaired by the SMG. There are indications that it may have deviated from its scope, and to some extent downplayed its role as the preferred forum for viable intelligence dialogue. In the absence of an effective institutionalised structure for intelligence dialogue, incoming requests may vary in form or nature. They include requests from the ASIFU commander, text messages from senior personnel at HQ or SHQ, requests received orally when people meet in the corridors or at lunch, bits of conversation between senior HQ or SHQ personnel, and emails.

This report finds that the clients in MINUSMA only engage to a certain extent in a close intelligence dialogue with the intelligence units. However, the FC is clear that his priority is that ASIFU focuses on tactical intelligence to support force protection. This directive must be seen in the light of the generally held opinion that the U-2 alone is not capable of providing intelligence products for this purpose. In the ASIFU, the SMG's directive is the main rationale for moving the CCIRM out of the AFC (see more detail below), as it is seen as a necessary step to make the CCIRM run more swiftly and to accommodate the demand for tactical intelligence.

During the first two contingents of the AFC, i.e. the first 12 months of its deployment, the CCIRM was a section of the AFC. It was placed on the same organisational level as the production, OSINT, and LNO sections. The CCIRM section was the hub for all incoming requests for information, the owner and manager of the ASIFU ICP, and the body responsible for the direction and guidance of the other sections of the AFC. In other words, the AFC had ownership of the planning and management of its own collection and production assets, and the chief of the AFC was responsible for all intelligence processes in his own unit.

As of June 2016, CCIRM had been moved out of the AFC. It is on the same organisational level as the AFC itself, both being under command of the ASIFU Chief of Staff (COS). In other words, the entity responsible for collection management is external to the body that it is intended to manage. This organisational change leads to challenges for the chief of the AFC, because in practice he does not lead the unit that manages his tasks and subordinates. This leadership is now for the senior staff officers of the ASIFU.

<sup>10</sup> This organizational body was introduced in MINUSMA in 2015 after calls for more coordination between the various parts of the intelligence cycle such as the ASIFU, the U-2, the JMAC and senior mission management.

Collection management in the ASIFU is characterised by the fact that the AFC and CCIRM are separate entities. A rudimentary ICP exists, developed in cooperation with the U-2. In the new ASIFU organisation, a structured process of matching anticipated collection requirements with the operational focus and collection capabilities that the AFC should have according to the ASIFU SUR is still being shaped. In the absence of sufficient relevant tactical intelligence products from the U-2, the former FC directly commanded the ASIFU to focus on tactical intelligence. This could create a gap at the operational intelligence level. The consequence would be that MINUSMA HQ and the SMG could lack operational intelligence products, relevant for military operational planners.

## 4.3 Information collection

The ASIFU was set up with specific means of information collection (UN, 2013). This section will focus on ISR and HUMINT. The ASIFU was also set up with a considerable OSINT collection capability and this will be addressed in depth in section 4.4.2.

### 4.3.1 ISR

According to the ASIFU founding document, the ASIFU was to have ISR capability in a dedicated ISR company (UN, 2013).

There are two ISR companies deployed in Mali – a Swedish company based in Timbuktu, and a Dutch company based in Gao. According to the intelligence cycle, the ISR companies should be tasked according to an ICP. The result of their collection efforts should be input for a multisource analysis done by the ASIFU in Bamako. Whilst this process does occur in line with the theory, interviewees also pointed to limitations.

The first is related to the range of the UAVs. Whilst the exact range of the ISR companies' UAVs is classified information, experience shows that the ASIFU has little coverage of the vast majority of Mali. This includes the areas with the most violent conflict. In areas with little or no UAV coverage, the ASIFU has to rely on other sources of information. Hence, UAVs are not capable of covering the majority of the intelligence needs of MINUSMA.

The second limitation relates to intelligence requirements. UAVs are useful means of collecting information, perhaps particularly for tactical purposes. When directing troops on the ground, it is very important to know how many soldiers an adversary has, how many heavy weapons he has, and what his intentions might be. UAV imagery alone is, however, not sufficient as intelligence to support the analysis of conflict drivers across the PMESII domains. Hence, the ASIFU could have more to gain from focusing on other means of information collection, in particular the collection of information from open sources.

### 4.3.2 HUMINT

According to the ASIFU guidelines (UN, 2013), the ASIFU should have a dedicated HUMINT capacity. The ASIFU capacity became known as the mobile reconnaissance and training team. The team has focused on "white" means of information collection, including through liaison with organisations external to MINUSMA.

Interviewees were not forthcoming with regards to the activity of the team, or its liaison section. However, on prompting, one remarked that the liaison section must be seen as a problem in relation to the ASIFU's internal processes. This is because: "the LNOs write up meeting reports, but they are never distributed internally through the CCIRM process. [I am] unaware of what section in the ASIFU receives these meeting reports, if any."

It cannot be ruled out that the LNO reports are used as part of the ASIFU's production of intelligence, but it seems unlikely that this is done in a structured way according to the training standards that the ASIFU is based upon.

## 4.4 Intelligence analysis

### 4.4.1 Scenario development

The scenario development process described in Chapter 3.3, which serves as a foundation of NATO doctrine, does not take place in ASIFU. All interviewees confirmed that the ASIFU only produced scenarios as a Quarterly Outlook to support the FHQ's operational planning process. This operational planning process is in practice influenced by NATO standards, and the intelligence requirement is limited to so-called *most likely* and *most dangerous* scenarios. These scenarios are limited in scope, do not take into account multiple PMESII domains, and are tailored to specific threats. As these scenarios are limited in scope, they need to be continuously revised. Interviewees confirm that the scenarios go through minor revision every 14 days and major revision every three months – hence the name, Quarterly Outlook. The problem with this, as one interviewee put it, is that "long-term planning in the FHQ is not particularly long term".

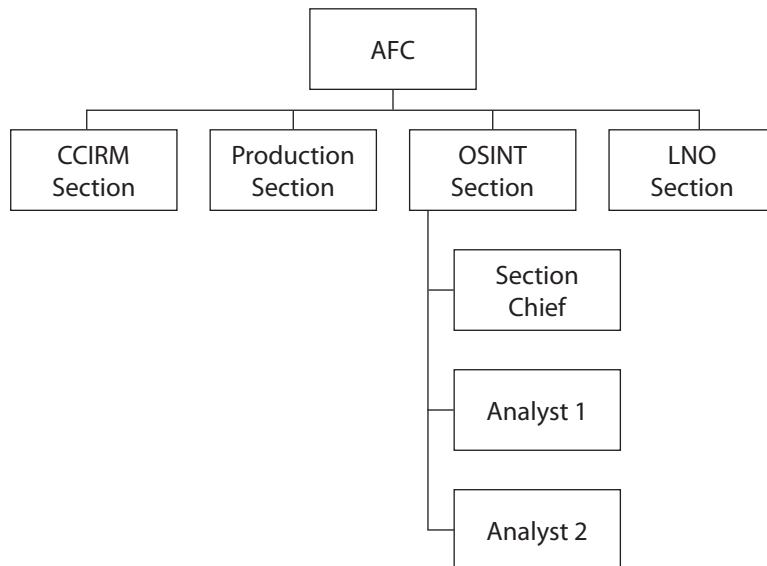
In addition, the Quarterly Outlook comes with *Quarterly Guidance* – recommendations on how the integrated mission can work towards, or avoid, certain futures. The inclusion of recommendations is generally hailed as positive amongst our interviewees from the ASIFU because it highlights the ASIFU's inclusion and importance in the FHQ and because it is what the FC requests. Indeed, the fact that the ASIFU provides recommendations along with its Quarterly Outlook is often mentioned as the key reason why the FC is now pleased with the ASIFU's output. However, the inclusion of recommendations from an intelligence branch in operational matters may to some seem controversial. The principle is that intelligence products support a planning process and do not direct operational decisions. It appears that the FC may be using the ASIFU and its products directly in the planning process, rather than as a pure intelligence contribution. Normally the planning process is owned by U-3 and U-5, for short-term and long-term planning respectively. Putting the ASIFU in the mix may create uncertainty over ownership, which may be problematic. On the other hand, it is important for an FC to be pragmatic and use all available sources in the best way possible.

At the ASIFU's inception, the scenario process was more long term and made use of a fully-fledged method based on assessment of PMESII. ASIFU may have downplayed its methodological approach to, and use of, scenarios. This can be seen in relation to the ASIFU's new mission to support military units with more tactical intelligence, and simultaneously to support the planning process in FHQ with recommendations. Whilst their current process is possibly suited to this endeavour, it is normally not sufficient for PMESII analysis support to long-term decision-making.

#### **4.4.2 Open source information and intelligence**

As a collection and processing discipline, OSINT was organised as a separate section in the ASIFU. The OSINT section was placed on the same organisational level as the production section, the LNO section, and – from the deployment of the ASIFU until the beginning of 2016 – the CCIRM section (Figure 4.4). The OSINT section should, according to present plans, be staffed with the following personnel: a section chief, who also serves as a senior analyst, and two analysts.

In the first year, the OSINT section was fully staffed with personnel trained in OSINT. Analysts were fluent in oral and written English and French, and one of the analysts was equally fluent in Arabic, which facilitated analysis. Monitoring relevant open sources, including news and social media, and in coordination with the CCIRM section, the OSINT section produced its own stand-alone products, including both regular and special reports. It also contributed to the products of the production section, including weekly, monthly, and quarterly outlooks, and special reports. The OSINT section supported the LNO section upon request, and it contributed to the daily ASIFU Commander's update briefing.

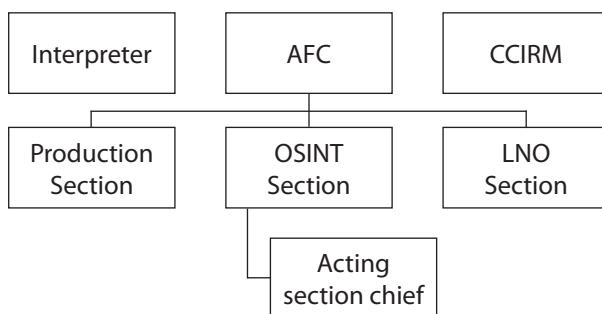


**Figure 4.4 The original OSINT section, as up to June 2015**

During subsequent contingents, the OSINT section has changed. The section has at times been significantly understaffed. The OSINT section now consists of one analyst and the section chief. At one point, the only analyst in OSINT was no longer used for collection and analysis purposes. Rather, the ASIFU leadership and other AFC sections reportedly used him as a translator and interpreter, since he spoke French. Therefore, the section chief in reality had no OSINT capability. This challenge is typical since ASIFU's senior staff officers in general do not speak French themselves.

Furthermore, at the time of the field work, the OSINT section did not have Arabic-speaking personnel, and it had stopped monitoring social media or any other online media on a regular basis. Interviewees indicated that it did not produce reports on a regular basis. However, it supported the production section and the ASIFU staff upon request when something needed to be looked up on the internet.

Lastly, the OSINT section had stopped taking part in the daily Commander's update briefing. The assessment based on the field visit was thus that the OSINT section, as an agency for the collection and processing of valuable open source information, had for all practical purposes ceased to function, impairing the ability of MINUSMA to maintain situational awareness.



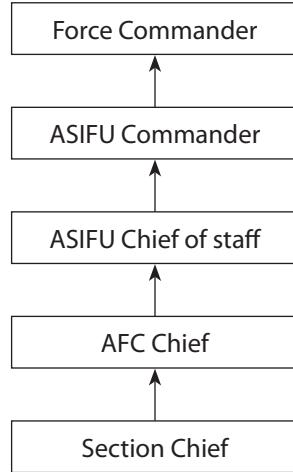
**Figure 4.5 The OSINT section, June 2016**

## 4.5 Dissemination

During the first year, the policy of the ASIFU was to disseminate products to the largest possible audience. Dissemination was based on the *need to share principle*. When necessary, products were subject to sanitisation, i.e. the process of removing sensitive information from a document or other message, so that the product could be distributed to a broader audience. When we visited the mission, a shift in the dissemination policy had taken place. Products were being disseminated on an increasingly stricter *need to know* basis.

The product release pathway must be described within the unit's SOP, meeting the principles of the right information and assessments reaching the right decision maker, in the right format and at the right time. Any organisational layer within the chain of dissemination must be evaluated in terms of whether it contributes to these principles. Normally release authority is with the chief of the agency producing the report. A prolonged chain of dissemination could undermine the ability to provide timely intelligence products.

Another finding at the time was that the ASIFU commander no longer had release authority for ASIFU products. Release authority had been transferred to the FC. This constituted an additional stage in the chain of release, and could potentially hamper the ASIFU's efficiency and timely release of products.



**Figure 4.6 Chain of Approval of intelligence products**

It was found that the original structures and procedures intended to provide objective and independent intelligence products had to some extent been taken over by a system in which the intelligence products were interpreted, maybe partly written or rewritten, edited, amended, and finally approved, by the very individuals who needed them. In other words, the military component could risk finding itself in a situation in which the FC was the recipient of his own advice, and was incorporating it into his own planning.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The ASIFU had changed by June 2016. At its inception, it was designed to produce operational-level military intelligence under the FC. Due to the SMG's lack of tactical intelligence, the FC had directed the ASIFU to fill this gap. This led to an increased focus on tactical level intelligence production as basis for decision-making and operational planning processes. By prioritising tactical intelligence, MINUSMA risked the creation of critical knowledge gaps at the operational and strategic levels.

An exaggerated focus on the tactical level of conflicts is nothing new from an intelligence perspective. Flynn, Pottinger and Batchelor (2010) detail how an exaggerated focus on the tactical level of the Afghanistan conflict contributed heavily to making intelligence products almost irrelevant for decision-makers. At the time, Major General Flynn was the Senior Intelligence Officer for American forces in Afghanistan. The prescribed remedy was comprehensive analysis at the operational level, studying conflict drivers such as ethnic tension, black markets in finance, key personalities in a given area, the feelings of the population and more. A similar approach could enable MINUSMA to be a more proactive mission, better able to counter the drivers of conflict.

The exaggerated focus on tactical issues may have contributed to organisational challenges. First, despite producing tactical level intelligence, ASIFU is also requested to provide operational recommendations, which is a responsibility that traditionally belongs to U-3 and U-5 in FHQ. Second, release authority for the ASIFU is now the FC himself. This could be interpreted as micromanagement and could challenge the principles for good intelligence practice described above. The chain of approval for ASIFU products now is given in Figure 4.6.

This structure has a number of implications. Chief AFC no longer has any internal release authority for his own products, as this has been moved to the ASIFU COS. Chief AFC no longer has command and control of the CCIRM process, i.e., he is no longer in charge of the intelligence production of the ASIFU. The CCIRM section, which has been moved out of the AFC, is out of the loop and not represented in the chain of approval authority. It now only has a function when it comes to dissemination and information management. What this means as a whole is that control of products has moved outside the entity that actually produces them, and that the products that are released are not timely, because it takes a long time to receive approval from every link in the chain. The military component is in a situation in which its commander is a recipient of his own advice, incorporating it into his own military operational planning process. This could be an example of a logical fallacy, and an example of short-circuiting the process.

In addition, a limited distribution of products means that entities in need of intelligence products may end up not receiving them. Wide dissemination of ASIFU products is supported by two factors. First, ASIFU products, which should be focused at the *operational level*, can be shared without jeopardising source confidentiality or security. Second, the ASIFU is part of a UN mission built upon the notion of transparency. It does not use covert means of intelligence

collection. This means that the dissemination of products should be both possible and desirable in order to ensure that the entire mission and external entities receive timely information to support their decision-making processes.

This report finds that force protection is the FC's main priority, and that more credible intelligence on this subject is required. One may argue that one of the challenges is to enable the U-2 to be more relevant, not what the ASIFU can and cannot do. As long as most of available resources are directed at the tactical level, the mission may risk lacking intelligence at the operational and strategic levels, as the JMAC is a unit with a loosely structured intelligence cycle. For the mission as a whole, this may mean that it will risk becoming reactive. The mission could be treating symptoms rather than root causes and conflict drivers, as there is a relatively weak intelligence structure at the operational level able to describe those conflict drivers.

This situation has led the FC to direct a merger between the ASIFU and the U-2. As many of the initial challenges lie with the U-2, a merger with an operational intelligence unit could be considered a practical solution to improve force protection at the substantial expense of the operational level.

## **5 UNMISS – J-2 and Joint Mission Analysis Centre**

An analysis of successes achieved by, and challenges facing, the ASIFU in MINUSMA can usefully be supported by analysing and comparing the intelligence process in another mission. This report compares MINUSMA and UNMISS, the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. UNMISS was selected because it belongs to the same group of missions in terms of strength, POC mandate and structure and as such has comparable challenges over intelligence requirements. At the same time, UNMISS has centred the intelligence-related processes around the JMAC, and has vested its collection of information in the traditional elements of the military component and the non-military elements of the mission.

### **5.1 UNMISS intelligence units**

The main intelligence entities processing information in UNMISS are the J-2 and the JMAC.<sup>11</sup> There are several other sections in UNMISS that collect and process information, but the J-2 and the JMAC are the only sections which are directly governed and mandated to operate according to processes that may appropriately be named intelligence. The current chapter will therefore focus on these two entities.

The JMAC and J-2 are co-located at the UN compound in Juba. The JMAC is considerably larger than the J-2, both in size and in its impact on mission decision-making. The co-location was to promote cooperation and information sharing between the two intelligence entities, but interviewees describe how the relationship between them is to some extent characterised by a sense of rivalry. Informants from both the J-2 and the JMAC confirm that the JMAC maintains a database of information that is continuously updated, but which is not shared with the J-2. Whilst informants from both entities insist that there is a certain degree of coordination of intelligence gaps – referred to as a “harmonisation of environmental understanding” – there is reason to suspect that this coordination often takes the form of the JMAC influencing the outcome of the J-2’s products.

The military component has limited access to collection assets. One interviewee stated that: “Our biggest challenge is lack of sensors that we can task. We have some HUMINT, but it is limited. It would be good to have some SIGINT.”

The J-2 and the JMAC do not distinguish between levels across the tactical–strategic spectrum. As shown in Chapter 2, the entities’ mandates simply define the J-2’s tasks as to cover short-, mid- and long-term military information needs, and the JMAC’s tasks as to cover mid- and long-term needs for mission leadership. Commenting on the intelligence entities’ adherence to the tactical–strategic spectrum, one interviewee noted, “[The] JMAC has no clear distinction between tactical and strategic levels, and works across the spectrum.” The J-2 in contrast, attempts to home in on micro-events and a short-term perspective.

### **5.2 Intelligence dialogue**

An effective intelligence dialogue is essentially about the decision maker and the Intelligence organisation creating a common understanding and agreeing on what products are needed and when. A decision-maker needs information relevant to the decisions he or she is going to make; the information must be reliable and delivered in a timely manner (Etterretningstjenesten, 2013). A crucial premise for this to work is that the decision-maker, also known as the intelligence *client*, is aware of what he or she needs, and actively asks for it. Sometimes the decision-maker is not able to clearly formulate his or her needs in terms of what it is possible to deliver. In such cases, the intelligence community is responsible for guiding the decision-maker in the formulation of the intelligence requirement. The analysis in this chapter does not indicate that this premise was present in UNMISS.

Information obtained during talks with key leadership personnel in UNMISS indicated a limited understanding of intelligence within the SMG. For instance, there was limited understanding within the SMG of what intelligence could theoretically provide them with, on both POC and key conflict drivers. A situation in which leaders are not fully capable of tasking their intelligence organisations, could compound the problem of not receiving sufficiently relevant, timely and reliable intelligence.

For example, structured CCIRM and information flow are particularly useful in an environment in which military personnel rotate frequently, as such processes can function as safeguards for the retention of situational awareness in an intelligence organisation and its products. Here the study has identified a difference between the J-2 and the JMAC. The J-2 attempted to impose its own system of an ICP with underlying PIRs, whilst the JMAC abandoned the notion altogether. Although the J-2 did have an ICP, its level of maturity was low, given that reporting units and personnel were not used to working according to an ICP. This resulted in a partial CCIRM process. The consequence of these

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 1 for details of the U-2 and JMAC mandates.

non-systematic approaches was vulnerability in terms of maintaining situational awareness. The loss of key personnel in the J-2 and the JMAC could result in the loss of major parts of their organisations' situational awareness.

### 5.3 Information collection

Although the military component apparently had a lack of resources and sensor capacity, the J-2 of the FHQ did not have a shortage of information. It is necessary not to confuse a lack of information with a lack of unique information, provided by dedicated sources or sensors. Informants from UNMISS described how the J-2 had access to a range of sources as a basis for their analysis. Besides the MLOs, the J-2 received information from the Civil Affairs Division, UN Police, the Human Rights Division, contractors in transportation, troops in the field, UN programmes, and non-governmental organisations.

Information sharing with humanitarian actors was coordinated by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the J-2 was allowed to send a representative to coordination meetings. As one interviewee described these meetings: "Some of them are very willing to provide us with information. We try to build trust and relationships in these settings."

The same flow of information, in principle, was available to the JMAC. Interviewees further stressed the informal way in which information was received – commonly not through structured channels or processes. One interviewee noted that: "the system works as long as it does not work as intended. [I]nformation collection and product dissemination is mostly done through informal channels that are reliant on personal relations."

Additionally, lacking systematic forms of information collection results in a situation whereby having information does not necessarily result in its use. This is because information sharing based on personal relations may lead to irregular intelligence production. Our findings indicate that this may represent one of the great challenges concerning the access to information in UNMISS today – using what is already freely available in a systematic manner as per good intelligence procedures.

### 5.4 Intelligence analysis

As mentioned in section 3.3, a structured scenario development process must be seen as the main driving force of an intelligence cycle. Once possible futures – scenarios – are developed for a certain situations, indicators can be developed, describing events that will signal that a scenario has come into existence. The indicators will form the basis for the *collection needs*, necessitating the other steps of the intelligence cycle.

In UNMISS, this process took a somewhat different shape. The JMAC, in fulfilment of its mandate, continuously updated an early warning matrix. As described by informants, the matrix was essentially a list of indicators for possible futures. However, it would be imprecise to call it a list of indicators for future scenarios. This is because the process led by the JMAC did not involve structured scenarios. Instead, the JMAC's process short-circuited the scenario development process, moving directly to the indicators. In the UNMISS JMAC, the indicators could vary on a weekly basis, depending for instance on the focus in the media, according to informants. This could be problematic, because analysts were thus not able to follow any given topic over time. This could in turn make it harder to fully grasp which scenario the situation could be moving to, and thereby make it more difficult to select appropriate measures to mitigate an unwanted development.

Our findings indicated that the short-circuiting of the scenario development process was not what analysts and decision-makers in UNMISS were discontented with. Rather, interviewees almost unanimously pointed to the struggle of transforming *early warnings* into *early actions* – achieving a pro-active mission. As this problem primarily belonged to *operations*, and not intelligence, it will not be discussed further in this report.

### 5.5 Dissemination

Whilst the flow of information *into* the J-2 and the JMAC could be considered satisfactory, this report finds that the flow of processed information, or products, *out of* the two entities could be more effective. Both the J-2 and the JMAC were reluctant to disseminate their products widely. A range of recipients of intelligence, including personnel within the civil affairs division, UN department of safety and security, political affairs, the military column and a number of UN programmes, had limited access to products from the J-2 and the JMAC. Common to all was a conviction that they ought to receive more, particularly from the JMAC. The JMAC's products were not even shared with all members of the SMG – they were tailored for every recipient. Only the SRSG received everything that was produced.

An underlying factor for this “filtered” dissemination is a strong sense of the “need to know” principle in UNMISS. Abilova and Novosseloff (2016) emphasise that intelligence in the UN needs to be multidimensional and based on a “need to know” principle. This is to maximise operational security and ensure that UN actions are not countered or hampered in any way. It is a principle whereby only those with a genuine professional need for a piece of information are able to receive it.

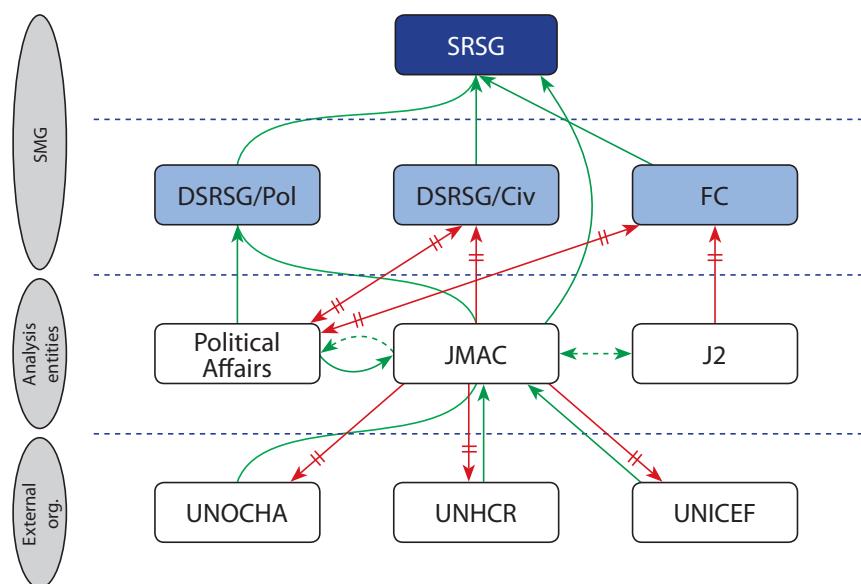
The principle is often seen in contrast with a “need to share” principle – a principle whereby wide dissemination of products is seen as beneficial, because a piece of information may be useful to many parties not otherwise aware that the information exists.

In UNMISS, the “need to know” principle seemed to guide all parts of the organisation. The principle was seemingly issued directly from the SRSG, an observation confirmed by several interviewees. Although sometimes a necessity, the “need to know” principle can be overemphasised, causing more harm than good. When several potential recipients of intelligence products are kept out of the loop – even those with an obvious need for the intelligence – the principle is not helpful. This report finds that this may have been the case in UNMISS.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The intelligence entities and processes of UNMISS worked well in certain respects. Many success factors existed in the J-2 and the JMAC. The J-2 had a structured CCIRM process, and both the J-2 and the JMAC employed a mix of civilian and military personnel, drawing on cross-domain expertise for their products.

However, the challenges of UNMISS’s intelligence entities and processes were also a matter of concern. The difficulties explained in this chapter led to a system in which actors contribute information to be processed, but receive little, if anything, in return. They were also uncertain of what they could request. Information gained from interviews in UNMISS and with external organisations paints the following picture of information and product flow in UNMISS along with relevant external organisations:



**Figure 5.1 Information sharing and product dissemination in UNMISS and external organisations**

The figure above is a simplification of the real situation, generated from interviews at several levels at UNMISS HQ. Several other entities could be included, particularly at the level of external organisations. However, it is sufficiently detailed to illustrate that the flow of information and product dissemination was not satisfactory. Green arrows indicate existing flows of information, and red arrows indicate non-existent information or product sharing. The figure shows that information sharing mainly went upwards, and not downwards. External organisations fed their information into the JMAC, which only shared parts of its information with other entities such as political affairs and the J-2. Such sharing seemed dependent on personal relations. The JMAC sent its products to the Deputy SRSG Political and the SRSG; it sent little to the rest of the SMG. The FC received only parts of what he really needed from the J-2. Note that, in this figure, nothing trickles downwards. There might be other information-sharing mechanisms that are not captured here. Still,

the limited distribution could have consequences for the work of other mission components and external organisations such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN International Children's Emergency Fund – the organisations that are out in the field, working to protect civilians every day. Many interviewees from UN programmes were frustrated with the lack of information and products they received in return for the information they sent.

The only actor in UNMISS who received all the intel products was the SRSG. We thus describe a system where the *need to know* principle has narrowed dissemination of products significantly. Based on this conclusion, UNMISS should reconsider the trade-off between a strict enforcement of the need-to-know principle and a broader dissemination of intelligence products. Moreover, even key personnel in the J-2 and the JMAC themselves admitted that they were struggling to cover the entire spectrum of tactical–strategic intelligence products. It therefore seems clear that UNMISS does have a need for a stronger element responsible for intelligence at the operational level. However, above all, it has a need for structured intelligence processing in all of its intelligence entities. This requires competence standards (education), clearer intelligence dialogues, CCIRM, and proper use of all the information that already exists in the mission. Lastly, it requires an emphasis on a *need to share*, as well as a need to know. This would result in wider dissemination of products where possible and appropriate, to ensure that all possible recipients of intelligence receive the information they need to do their jobs as efficiently as possible.

## **6 Intelligence and protection of civilians**

Almost all contemporary UN peacekeepers are mandated to protect civilians, *in extremis* by the use of deadly military force. MINUSMA and UNMISS are both examples of UN peace operations that are mandated to protect. In June and July 2016, respectively, the United Nations Security Council authorised MINUSMA and UNMISS to adopt a more proactive and robust posture, including when protecting civilians (S/RES/2295 - 2016) and (S/RES/2302 - 2016). The Council further decided to increase the number of military troops and police personnel in MINUSMA.

POC has become one of the main objectives for UN peace operations. Whereas protection of civilians historically implied humanitarian aid or avoiding so-called collateral damage in military operations, it has a wider meaning in today's operations. UN troops are now requested to counter the threat against civilians itself – the perpetrators of violence (Beadle, 2014). A POC mandate is defined as "all necessary means, up to and including the use of deadly force, aimed at preventing or responding to threats of physical violence against civilians, within capabilities and areas of operations, and without prejudice to the responsibility of the host government" (UN, 2015a). In addition to the direct military action implied by *all necessary means*, the mandate also implies addressing the root causes of the conflict in a comprehensive, whole-of-mission approach. In recognising the importance of POC, the UN has developed specific POC policy and guidelines for the military component (UN, 2015a).

Tackling these issues from the headquarters' perspective requires strong operational-level comprehensive intelligence, encompassing PMESII domains, in order to gain a clear picture of the conflict drivers, and predict how they will develop over time. The intelligence needs to be PMESII focused because the conflict drivers may affect all PMESII domains, from the political to information and infrastructure. This chapter analyses how MINUSMA and UNMISS relate to POC from an intelligence perspective.

### **6.1 Intelligence and POC in MINUSMA**

Providing operational intelligence under the military component of MINUSMA, the ASIFU is by definition required to support its POC mandate. It is clear that this responsibility has been taken seriously from the outset, as one of the ASIFU's PIRs on its ICP is directly related to POC – aiming to establish what the threats to civilians in Mali actually are. Unfortunately, the ASIFU was not resourced to pay equal attention to all of its four PIRs. One informant underlined that the four PIRs were indeed in *prioritised order*, with the PIR related to POC coming last and receiving the fewest resources. The ASIFU's tasking matrix supported the informant's view.

One interviewee described the process of requests for information related to POC, as opposed to regular products related to POC, as a PIR: "More often than not, when we receive requests for information related to POC, our answer is put together by reports from the unit who sent us the RFI! This is because it is usually the requesting unit who operates in a given area in Mali, with POC." The ASIFU could thereby end up compiling an answer that the client already had. Furthermore, the interviewee said, "The RFIs are usually very general, regarding POC as a concept that is not focused on the threat against civilians. This makes it difficult for the ASIFU to respond to, when our focus is now tactical and short term. Reports on the threat against civilians therefore take a long time to make, and are therefore not prioritised." Therefore, ASIFU products related directly to POC could risk lacking timeliness and quality.

However, the informants also specified that the ASIFU produced intelligence related to counter-improvised explosive devices. What this specifically entailed was not entirely clear, and none of the project's interviewees was specific. The ASIFU's related work is likely to involve identification of possible IED locations and/or how to avoid them. The informants claimed that this work supported not only the military component in MINUSMA, but also improved civilian security in general, since IEDs posed just as grave a threat to civilians as to military personnel. This is obviously an important task, but this activity does not entirely cover what intelligence in support of a POC mandate should be.

The findings indicate that the ASIFU, and indeed all of MINUSMA's intelligence entities, do not appear to prioritise products on POC. This result should be seen in the light of the fact that the ASIFU has been directed to focus on tactical intelligence on a short-term basis, as described above. The capability and capacity to provide timely intelligence in support of MINUSMA's POC mandate is present in the ASIFU, but it is not prioritised.

### **6.2 Intelligence and POC in UNMISS**

POC may be vulnerable because of the exaggerated emphasis on "need to know leading to lack of information and product sharing". Additionally, no intelligence doctrine or guide exists to specify how exactly intelligence is supposed to assist the goal of protecting civilians. The very concept of POC seemed to be interpreted differently by different actors.

As one interviewee in the SMG put it:

[POC is now] number one on our mandate, but the South Sudanese authorities and the international community perceive that POC is synonymous with opening the gates of the POC sites. This is incorrect. Opening the gates is an absolutely last resort. Instead, working on POC means not only working on symptoms, but the threat to civilians.

This indicates that POC is an area that possibly suffers from a strict enforcement of the “need to know” principle. One interviewee in the MHQ said: “dissemination goes upwards, not downwards, and this is a problem for POC.” According to informants at different levels working with POC issues, the reception of intelligence products on POC was dependent on personal relations.

Personnel working with POC in UNMISS seemed fully capable of defining the information needed to support their work. Interviewees noted that, for POC:

...the kind of information that is important is [knowing] what civilians will do in case of a specific threat. In-depth knowledge of this may enable the mission to take actions to mitigate the threat to civilians. In the majority of cases, we are too late, and any actions end up as responses to attacks.

Such a lack of intelligence products may result in a mission that risks becoming reactive, not pro-active, in terms of countering threats to civilians.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

Both MINUSMA and UNMISS were tasked with protecting civilians from violence. In MINUSMA, POC concerns were reflected in the PIRs, but the intelligence structure was not resourced to collect, analyse and disseminate information on this topic. In UNMISS, POC had become synonymous with POC sites. In addition, the flow of information went upwards, keeping several POC actors out of the loop of potentially relevant information.

## **7 Conclusion and recommendations**

After decades of discussion of the inclusion of intelligence entities in UN peace operations – even the use of the term *intelligence* in UN peace operations – different solutions exist in various peace operations. Although guided by central documents such as the “UN Force Headquarters Handbook” (UN, 2014), UN staff in any mission will still develop intelligence approaches on an ad hoc basis, This report has detailed the development of the intelligence cycles in MINUSMA and UNMISS.

The intelligence processes of MINUSMA and UNMISS have their own distinctive success factors and challenges. Nonetheless, it is possible to point to some general implications for intelligence in UN peace operations. Drawing on the challenges and lessons identified in the preceding chapters, the report provides recommendations on the use of intelligence in UN peace operations in seven categories:

- I. Intelligence structures
- II. Intelligence dialogue
- III. Collection Coordination and Information Requirements Management (CCIRM)
- IV. Intelligence collection
- V. Intelligence analysis
- VI. Competency requirements
- VII. UN standards for information sharing and product dissemination

The recommendations are hardly new or controversial. Much of this knowledge already exists in the “UN Force Headquarters Handbook” and in the guidelines for the ASIFU and the JMAC specifically. Building efficient intelligence organisations takes time and is a never-ending process. Implementing the recommendations based on the findings in this report, however, could contribute to UN peace operations being better equipped with situational awareness and improved decision-making. Ultimately, intelligence is about supporting – in a relevant, timely, and reliable manner – the achievement of mission mandates.

### **7.1 UN intelligence structures**

There are three main levels of analysis commonly applied – the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The definition of levels will vary and, although it makes sense to describe the strategic level in a UN context to belong to UN headquarters in New York, it also makes sense to describe strategic intelligence products developed in the field. The mandate of the JMAC can be described as producing strategic-level intelligence products. The ASIFU, as evidenced in MINUSMA, was originally created to produce operational-level intelligence products under the FC. The U-2/J-2 structure is directed to focus on the micro-level and short-term analysis, which may be described as the tactical level.

Based on the findings from MINUSMA and UNMISS, it is recommended that UN peace operations have sufficient capacity to cover the full spectrum of intelligence products. The findings from UNMISS indicate that the spectrum is too wide for the J-2 and the JMAC to handle alone, and that they leave a void of intelligence products at the operational level. The findings from MINUSMA indicate that, when such a unit (the ASIFU) is re-directed from the operational level towards the tactical level, the mission as a whole may become more reactive than proactive, with inherent challenges to achieving its mandate.

### **7.2 Intelligence dialogue**

An efficient intelligence cycle is dependent on both the producer and the recipient of intelligence. It is a common organisational challenge in both MINUSMA and UNMISS that decision-makers lack a systematic approach to specifying what type of information they need, and particularly to specifying it in a manner that intelligence agencies are able to act upon. Decision-makers should increasingly be informed about the capability and the capacity of their available intelligence functions in order to enable the functions to produce what the decision-makers need, and for the decision-makers to be challenged to use these functions in a more active and structured way.

### **7.3 Collection coordination and information requirements management**

An intelligence cycle is dependent on a functioning CCIRM process. If CCIRM is not performed in a structured manner, with continuous revision of relevant scenarios, indicators for early warning and information requirements, it may lead to a system that is less able to provide relevant, timely and reliable information to decision-makers. Existing intelligence structures in UN peace operations should actively take steps to use the ICP, with PIRs – focused on areas that should be resourced for information collection – and that are continuously revised.

## **7.4 Information collection**

Much of the existing discussion around information collection to analysis entities in a UN context revolves around novel, technical means of collection such as UAVs, or drones. The ability of drones to collect information relevant to operational and strategic level intelligence products is limited. Whilst they may be useful at the tactical level, it is necessary to focus on other means of information collection to support the decision-making of the mission leadership.

A considerable amount of useful information for use in intelligence analysis already exists in various peace operations. The main challenge is using what is already freely available. For instance, following a meeting between parties, it is vital to create meeting minutes to be fed into a CCIRM process. A second avenue is creating an environment of openness. As Abilova and Novosseloff have argued, demystifying the word “intelligence” is perhaps particularly relevant to creating an environment in which all parties with information will automatically *want* to share it with intelligence entities (2016). They should not have anything to lose by doing so. In return, they may receive an intelligence product in which their original information is seen in conjunction with information from a number of other sources, creating a synergy effect for the finalised intelligence product. Intelligence entities in UN peace operations must be metaphorical sponges – collecting all open information, to the mutual benefit of all parties.

Collecting all open information certainly also extends to open sources such as the internet and in particular social media. Using such sources will drastically increase any intelligence entity’s ability to build situational awareness and understanding, because open sources are not in any way limited by range, as UAVs are, or by the time and skill it takes to create and build human relations in human intelligence. Social media is continuously evolving and expanding, and it is incumbent upon analysis organisations to modernise accordingly.

## **7.5 Intelligence analysis**

The collected information needs to be subjected to structured scenario development. Scenario development may enable prediction of a phenomenon, whilst continuously revising the information needs necessary to do so. If no plausible alternative exists, structured scenario development should be the way forward. Intelligence entities, in the UN and otherwise, need to build the required personnel competence to develop and use scenarios. The current alternative in the UN peacekeeping operations MINUSMA and UNMISS is that intelligence entities only follow trends in the media, thus predicting futures on an ad hoc basis.

## **7.6 Dissemination**

Once intelligence products are released, they need to be disseminated to the appropriate recipients. This requires a balance between enforcing the “need to know” – a narrow dissemination – and the “need to share” – a wide and open dissemination. The enforcement of “need to know” is often necessary for a number of reasons, including the need to protect the source of the original information or the need to protect future operations including force personnel (Dorn, 1999). This is particularly relevant to tactical intelligence products, where handling specific names and identities is inevitable. The “need to know” is less relevant for operational and strategic level intelligence products such as analysis of conflict drivers and population sentiments. This is because such analysis products are easy to *sanitise*, i.e. to omit specific names of sources and other identifying information likely to be irrelevant at the operational and strategic level.

Consider the benefits of a wide and open dissemination for operational and strategic level products: any and all who may have a professional need for the product will receive it, regardless of whether they are on a specific distribution list or not. This is perhaps particularly relevant for organisations that are external to the UN peace operation itself – such as UN programmes and some non-governmental organisations – who, for example, feed a lot of information into UNMISS, but receive little in return. Second, wide and open dissemination would bolster the mission’s adherence to the essential UN principles of openness and transparency. Where secrecy is not professionally warranted, there is nothing to lose by opening up to scrutiny. This leads to the third point – that external scrutiny of products may identify faulty argumentation or analysis, thereby strengthening the final product. External perspectives are often beneficial to intelligence analysis.

## **7.7 Competency requirements**

It is important to recognise why the ASIFU in MINUSMA has been re-directed from producing operational level products with a wide dissemination, to producing more tactical level intelligence, with a limited dissemination. A significant factor in this, in addition to a lack of sensors in the field, is the lack of unified competence and procedures familiar to all personnel. Additionally, competence standards are unanimously pointed to as a success factor in both MINUSMA and UNMISS with regards to efficient intelligence support.

It would be useful for personnel in intelligence entities in UN peace operations to be subjected to common competence standards or even intelligence courses prior to deployment. The standards should require personnel to be adept at:

- structured CCIRM
- single source and multi-source analysis, including analysis of conflict drivers
- means of providing intelligence support for the protection of civilians
- structured scenario development
- means of open source collection and analysis
- templates for various intelligence products.

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Where does the UN stand in terms of effective intelligence and what is needed to improve the utilisation of intelligence for decision-making and mandate implementation in UN peace operations?

This report provides a case study of a recent cutting edge asset for UN intelligence in contemporary UN peace operations – the All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU). Drawing from findings during a field trip to MINUSMA and UNMISS in June 2016, the authors examine how intelligence is used to support decision-making and implementation of the prioritised mission mandate for both missions – Protection of Civilians (POC). The analytical framework of the report is the four-phased intelligence cycle, which forms the basis for conclusions on intelligence entities and processes in these missions, as well as recommendations for how to increase the usefulness of intelligence in UN peace operations.

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