

**Ninety-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee  
24-26 March 2026**

**Oral update on the work of the Inspector General's Office**

**Introduction** – Throughout 2025, in an organizational environment marked by rapid restructuring and significant downsizing, the Inspector General's Office, also impacted by reductions, remained steadfast in fulfilling its mandate. At this time of accelerated change and heightened risk, delivering on the 2021-2026 strategy of the Inspector General's Office has been critical in safeguarding the integrity and credibility of the organization's systems and operations. Advancing the strategy (particularly with respect to digitization and prioritization) were imperative, despite a decrease in the budget of the Inspector General's Office of 24 per cent from 2025 to 2026 and the discontinuation of 13 staff positions. While this stretched its capacity, the Inspector General's Office continued to coordinate and promote coherence across independent oversight activities; conduct independent investigations; deliver risk-based advice; conduct strategic analysis and lessons-learned; and identify emerging and systemic risk areas for UNHCR senior leadership and governance bodies.

**Strategic oversight** – In 2025, the Inspector General's Office provided senior leadership with strategic analysis and advice related the restructuring of the organization, including reviews of management and oversight structures, headquarters and bureaux realignment and third-line assurance coverage. It coordinated the work of internal and external oversight assurance providers, such as the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services, the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit, the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Evaluation Office of UNHCR, while maintaining online dashboards for oversight planning and the tracking of recommendations. This coordination work aimed to promote the efficient and effective allocation of third-line activities across the changing risk profile of UNHCR. In addition to the regular quarterly oversight coordination meetings, a dedicated workshop was held in 2025 to assess the organizational impacts of downsizing and the evolving risk landscape, enabling adjustments that would ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of collective assurance activities.

**Investigations Service** – Despite significant staffing reductions and structural changes, a record high number of investigations were opened (173) and finalized (193), requiring adaptability, strategic prioritization, leveraging of innovation and proactive engagement to maintain standards and deliver on commitments. Throughout this period, the Inspector General's Office supported the organizational priority of accountability by receiving and assessing complaints, conducting investigations, and issuing management implication reports to help identify and mitigate systemic risks. To strengthen awareness and a “speak up” culture across the organization, it launched an “integrity counts” campaign, with materials in all six official United Nations languages, which emphasized the importance of reporting concerns, avenues available for seeking support, and the duty of all colleagues to uphold the values of UNHCR. In parallel, it continued pre-emptive and proactive investigative efforts, including work on cases of “double-dipping” involving partners that claim entitlements from multiple United Nations entities as well as financial fraud related to medical insurance claims. Financial fraud, workplace misconduct, and sexual exploitation and abuse remained the most frequently reported categories of allegations. Most allegations implicated UNHCR personnel, with complaints stemming primarily from two main regions where its largest operations are based: the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes, and the Middle East and North Africa.

**Investigations data** – In 2025, the Inspector General's Office registered 1,816 misconduct complaints out of 2,282 complaints identified from 100,000 communications received and processed. In comparison to 2,123 misconduct complaints registered in 2024, this represents a decrease of 14 per cent. Although there was a downwards trend between 2024 and 2025, the reporting pattern of figures related to misconduct remains consistent with those reported from previous years, with the exception of an unprecedented spike in 2023 with 2,192 registered complaints. Of the 1,816 misconduct complaints registered in 2025, 37 per cent were closed after the intake assessment; nearly 50 per cent were outside the remit of the Inspector General's Office and were referred to internal or external parties to be addressed; nearly 10 per cent were investigated directly by the

Inspector General's Office; and five per cent were still open by the end of the reporting period. In 2025, 173 investigations were opened and 193 finalized, an all-time high, of which over 60 per cent were completed within six months.

The Inspector General's Office continued to prioritize complaints concerning sexual misconduct. It registered 205 complaints of sexual exploitation and abuse, with identified or identifiable victims in 2025 compared to 229 in 2024. The ratio of complaints implicating partner personnel versus UNHCR personnel is on par with that from the previous year, with 76 per cent of the complaints concerning partner personnel and 24 per cent concerning UNHCR personnel in 2025. The Inspector General's Office opened 21 investigations into alleged sexual exploitation and abuse compared to 20 in 2024 and finalized 27 investigations in 2025 within its mandate, while 69 investigations carried out by UNHCR partners concerned partner staff. The Inspector General's Office continued to emphasize the importance of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, with support being provided in 46 per cent of cases. With respect to the other instances, the victim either declined support or was unreachable or unidentified. The Inspector General's Office received 43 complaints of sexual harassment with identified or identifiable victims, compared to 74 complaints in 2024. In 2025, 11 investigations into allegations of sexual harassment were finalized. Substantiation rates for investigations into sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment stood at 39 per cent and 54 per cent, respectively.

**Conclusion** – The recent organizational reductions affecting all internal oversight and integrity entities, including the Inspector General's Office, have made effective coordination across these functions more essential than ever. The Inspector General's Office has actively sought to mitigate the impact of these resource reductions by advancing the exploration of the use of artificial intelligence to support intake processes for misconduct allegations, prioritizing specific oversight and investigatory exercises, increasing collaboration among assurance providers, and offering independent guidance on oversight and integrity to senior leadership throughout this period of substantial institutional change. Currently, the organization is recruiting a new Inspector General.

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