

REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

El Salvador Issue Paper # 01

PROBLEMS IN THE PROCEDURES FOR HANDOVER EQUIPMENT DURING REPATRIATION PROCESS (CASE: MALI – TIMBUKTU)

1. ISSUE PAPER THEME

Major Equipment, Other / Crosscutting

2. SUMMARY / BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS HISTORY

During the accelerated repatriation process due to the end of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) mission, specifically at the Timbuktu Camp, irregularities occurred that affected the proper handover of equipment belonging to the Armed Forces of El Salvador. The officer in charge of the rear party of Task Force “Torogoz VIII” confirmed that there was no formal evacuation order or detailed planning from the mission personnel, which resulted in disorganization, lack of official documentation, and logistical complications.

Since the end of August 2023, the rear party remained stationed at the camp to safeguard twenty-one (21) containers and twenty-one (21) vehicles ready for repatriation. In various meetings with the (MOVCOM) team, it was reported that the equipment would be categorized by priority (I, II, and III), with El Salvador's equipment being classified as priority III, making it the last to be shipped.

The reception process by MOVCOM began only on December 6 th, 2023, with only six (6) containers and five (5) vehicles being accepted, selected based on the estimated value of their contents and the contractor's cargo capacity. Heavy vehicles such as tanker trucks and specialized trucks were not transported at that time due to logistical restrictions, remaining pending for future transport arrangements.

Subsequently, on December 10 th, 2023, twelve (12) additional containers and seven (7) light vehicles were handed over. By that date, a total of eighteen (18) containers and twelve (12) vehicles had been delivered, with three (3) lower-value containers and the heavy vehicles still pending.

On December 22nd, authorization was granted for the remaining three (3) containers and heavy vehicles to be transported by their own means to Mauritania. However, the field kitchen truck could not be moved because it was inoperable after five years of disuse, and the armored truck was not authorized for transport by the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) for security reasons. Both vehicles were handed over to the Property Disposal Unit (PDU), responsible for disposing of non-reusable or non-donatable equipment.

It is important to note that no formal record was drawn up for this final handover, as the El Salvador rear party flight was scheduled for the following day to Bamako. Moreover, it is unknown whether the equipment handed over in this final phase was transported to Mauritania as stipulated, which represents a serious omission regarding traceability and documentary support for state-owned material from El Salvador.

3. DETAILED PROPOSAL

It is proposed that the COE Manual 2026 include a mandatory and standardized procedure for "Administrative Closure of Positions," which should include:

- A requirement for a formal written evacuation or closure order issued by the Commander of the position or

2026 COE WORKING GROUP | MEMBER STATE ISSUE PAPER

the Force Commander.

- Preparation of a handover/receipt certificate for equipment, signed by a receiving officer designated by the Mission or the UN.
- Photographic/digital documentation of the condition of the equipment.
- Inclusion of a minimum mandatory checklist for units ceasing operations, covering self-sustainment, major equipment, medical supplies, among others.

Reference: COE Manual 2023 –

Chapter 2, IX Verification and control (d) repatriation inspection

Chapter 4, IV Deployment and repatriation of equipment

Chapter 6, Procedures for reimbursement for loss of or damage to contingent-owned equipment

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Unordered procedures represent difficulties in submitting claims for losses or problems during the repatriation process, resulting in expenses for member states.
- This proposal does not represent a direct additional cost but could generate long-term savings for Member States by strengthening their ability to properly document their claims. It also prevents unreimbursed losses resulting from unrecorded deliveries or unsupported evacuations.

5. PROPOSED 2026 COE MANUAL TEXT

Chapter 6 – Reimbursement for Loss or Damage to Equipment (suggested new paragraph):

"In the event of a repatriation or evacuation from a base, camp or position, the Member State must receive a formal closure order issued by the Force Commander or higher authority, as well as a physical equipment handover certificate signed by the receiving officer designated by the Mission. The handover certificate should include photographic/digital documentation of the condition of the equipment"