



# The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities

October 2024

# The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities

Independent Study commissioned by  
the United Nations Department of Peace Operations.

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# Executive Summary

- 1 This independent study was commissioned by the United Nations (UN) Department of Peace Operations at the request of Germany and the other co-chairs of the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial process. It is intended to inform the 2025 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin (May 2025), whose overarching theme is “The Future of Peacekeeping.”
- 2 UN peacekeeping remains an effective multilateral tool for preventing and limiting armed conflict, sustaining peace, as well as responding to a broader range of threats to international peace and security. Since the late 1940s, UN peacekeeping has evolved and adapted to changing circumstances, mobilizing civilian, police, and military expertise from every region of the world. So far, over 120 peace operations involving two million uniformed peacekeepers have deployed in more than 50 countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. These missions have delivered important achievements and have done so in a comparatively cost-effective manner. UN peacekeepers have helped calm conflicts and crises, shepherd decolonization, protect civilians, strengthen state sovereignty, and forge institutions that support peace and good governance. Many of these positive effects hold even in contexts marked by high levels of ongoing violence or deadlocked peace processes.
- 3 Peacekeeping achieved its positive track record by bringing together a wide range of stakeholders. It epitomises multilateralism in action, building agreement among the permanent and elected members of the Security Council, major financial contributors, host countries, relevant regional actors, and well over two-thirds of UN Member States who provided peacekeepers. Even when the Security Council was divided on other issues, it regularly forged a consensus on deploying peace operations. This is an important attribute in a world that is increasingly volatile, fragmented, complex, and contested, and where the UN’s Member States must respond to a series of interlocking peace and security threats and challenges. Among the most important are armed conflict, the weaponization of new and emerging technologies, transnational organized crime, the climate crisis, and public health emergencies, which are combining in complex ways that ignore international political borders.
- 4 The UN is well-suited to meet these challenges. The Organization’s global membership, long history of field missions, and diverse offices and institutions give it several important advantages when compared to bilateral and other forms of international crisis response. Specifically, the UN can generate, deploy, sustain, support, fund, evaluate, and assess its peacekeeping missions. The UN retains unparalleled authority and legitimacy to convene key stakeholders when crises erupt. Its basic principles of peacekeeping—consent of the main parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate—have stood the test of time and built the Organization a powerful reputation as impartial stewards for peace processes. The UN also has the flexibility to mandate peacekeeping operations to meet current and emerging threats and it benefits from sustainable and flexible sources of financing that spread the economic costs of peacekeeping across all Member States. As the global financial environment grows tighter, with Member States facing competing demands, UN peacekeeping can further enhance its efficiency by ensuring missions are even more responsible, transparent, and consistent in their fiduciary responsibilities and communicating the results clearly. This should give financial contributors confidence that they are making sound investments in an efficient multilateral tool for crisis response, but also for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Finally, when the UN deploys peacekeepers, it does so with an established package of accountability and compliance mechanisms that are second to none in the multilateral world.
- 5 Looking to the future, fresh thinking is needed about what roles peacekeeping can and should play. This is especially necessary as UN field missions have recently encountered a worrying degree of political resistance and a trust deficit among some governments, local populations, influencers, and analysts. Increased mis- and disinformation and a “capability-expectations gap” have also contributed. The backdrop is intensifying geopolitical competition and diverging perspectives on multiple global issues that are dividing the Security Council and the wider UN membership, further complicating peacekeeping and peacemaking endeavors on the ground.

- 6 This study's vision for UN peacekeeping is a politically focused, people-centered, modular tool that can unite the Security Council around effective multilateral responses to a broad range of threats and challenges. There are strong links between peacekeeping and the UN's broader prevention and peacebuilding agendas, as well as the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. With the right political leadership, efficient resource management, and adequate and predictable financial resources, these links can be reinforced, and this vision can become a reality. To support this vision, our study offers 30 plausible models to inform future UN missions (figure 1). The models describe a mix of longstanding peacekeeping tasks; how those traditional tasks might be performed in different ways in changed contexts and with new technologies; and propose novel activities for future UN peacekeeping.
- 7 Not only do these models provide a condensed and useful reminder of the numerous activities that UN peacekeepers have previously undertaken, but they can also help crystalize the forward thinking that will be necessary to meet new and emerging threats to international peace and security. Considering different modalities and a modular approach also highlights how missions can be tailored to unique situations, and can help them adapt over time and think through a wide range of partnerships, both inside and beyond the UN system.
- 8 These models can therefore help inform the Security Council, Member States, and potential host governments about the numerous available options. While mandates should set the strategic direction of peacekeeping operations, models can be designed and, where necessary, combined to implement related clusters of tasks in the field. The Council and Secretariat can then develop nimble, flexible, and adaptable modalities to sustain and improve missions, drawing on the full range of capabilities in the UN system and its Member States, and sometimes partnering with regional organizations and other actors. These modalities could include standalone UN missions; situations in which the UN is part of a sequenced set of mission deployments or operates alongside other entities with separate command and control arrangements; joint and hybrid missions; or operations carried out by state coalitions or other international organizations but authorized by the Security Council, perhaps with a UN support package.
- 9 This study also highlights the need for investments in key capabilities to strengthen current and future peacekeeping missions, irrespective of the precise combination of models and mandates. They relate to planning, personnel, leadership, support capabilities, data and information management, strategic communications, information integrity, standby and rapid deployment capabilities, and the security and welfare of peacekeepers. The study emphasizes the need for the UN to hire committed and determined personnel with the right mix of local knowledge and expertise. This should include hiring and deploying more women at all levels. Missions whose personnel perform well, have effective conduct and accountability systems, and are adaptable to changing circumstances, are most likely to achieve positive results. Finally, as peacekeeping operations transition, ensuring a smooth process is imperative for integrating efforts with other UN actors and leaving behind a positive legacy for countries and their populations.
- 10 However, new thinking and technical and operational reform must be combined with UN Member States mustering the political will and leadership to build sustainable peace. As a tool for collective crisis response, peacekeeping works much of the time, but it is not a magic wand. Security Council leadership and unity are paramount. New peacekeeping models will not deliver the desired results if the Council is divided, unwilling, or unable to consistently support its field missions, especially when challenges arise.
- 11 UN peacekeeping is also more likely to succeed when neighboring states and the relevant regional arrangements are invested in that outcome. The UN should continuously engage such regional actors about mission activities and problems, so they view peacekeeping success as vital for the whole region.
- 12 Peacekeeping success is also closely correlated with the extent to which conflict parties want to make peace. While UN peacekeeping can help limit the damage, even in the most challenging circumstances, no mission can restore peace and stability if the parties are not truly committed to doing so. Similarly, no mission can succeed without adequate cooperation and support from the host government(s) and the other main parties. Beyond the host state's legal consent, what matters most is a genuine commitment

to advancing the peace process and related key reforms, a willingness to cooperate fully and continuously with peacekeepers and, when problems arise, look for solutions with an open mind. The UN can foster closer cooperation by seeking the views of host governments on mandate issues, acting transparently and impartially to build trust, being creative in response to requests for support from local and national authorities, and prioritizing the delivery of tangible benefits to local populations and key stakeholders.

**13** As a tool for addressing some of the world’s most protracted conflicts and complicated crises, peacekeepers will often deploy into volatile, high-risk

environments. Future peacekeeping must therefore be able to withstand setbacks. Those mandating, funding, and implementing UN peacekeeping must incorporate a degree of risk tolerance into the enterprise, emphasize and fund risk management, prepare for failures, and be ready to adapt when circumstances deteriorate unexpectedly from the initial deployment conditions. Local and international expectations of what peacekeeping can achieve should be calibrated accordingly.

**14** Our world faces mounting peace and security challenges that call for inclusive, principled, and effective multilateral action. Peacekeeping can help galvanize it.

**Figure 1: Models for Future UN Peacekeeping**

	<b>1. Preventive Deployments</b>		<b>11. Election Security and Assistance</b>		<b>21. Natural Disaster Response</b>
	<b>2. Atrocity Prevention</b>		<b>12. Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration</b>		<b>22. Humanitarian Accompaniment / Protection</b>
	<b>3. Protection of Civilians</b>		<b>13. Security Sector Reform and Governance</b>		<b>23. Cultural Heritage Protection</b>
	<b>4. Ceasefire Monitoring and Observation</b>		<b>14. Rule of Law / Law Enforcement Support</b>		<b>24. Natural Resource Protection</b>
	<b>5. Monitoring, Observation, and Reporting</b>		<b>15. Police Assistance</b>		<b>25. Border Management</b>
	<b>6. Verification</b>		<b>16. Support to Accountability Mechanisms</b>		<b>26. Infrastructure Security</b>
	<b>7. Support of Peace Agreements</b>		<b>17. Counter-Organized Crime</b>		<b>27. Cybersecurity</b>
	<b>8. New State Support</b>		<b>18. Mine Action / Explosive Ordnance Removal</b>		<b>28. Regional Security</b>
	<b>9. Transition Assistance</b>		<b>19. Emergency Humanitarian Response</b>		<b>29. City Security</b>
	<b>10. Transitional Administration</b>		<b>20. Public Health Support</b>		<b>30. Maritime Security</b>

# 1. Introduction

United Nations peacekeeping is arguably the Organization's most important invention. It is based on a widely shared set of international norms, rules, principles, and decision-making procedures that have evolved since the late 1940s. Over time, peacekeeping became one of the UN's most visible and prestigious symbols, and a critical part of the Organization's identity. Over 120 missions have deployed in more than 50 countries, recording notable achievements across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Peacekeeping has brought together key constituencies and benefitted from broad consensus among them: the permanent and elected members of the Security Council, major financial contributors, host countries, relevant regional actors, and more than two-thirds of UN Member States who, so far, have provided over two million uniformed peacekeepers. The UN has also learned to adjust its missions to novel circumstances and develop new areas of expertise. It has deployed civilian, police, and military expertise from every region of the world, adapted to a dynamic conflict landscape, and built flexible and innovative partnerships with a variety of international actors in the pursuit of peace and security. The community of practitioners and experts involved in designing and running UN missions—from the UN Secretariat to Member States to other entities—has developed and regularly refined peacekeeping policies, while also socializing and training a wide range of actors to implement them in the field.

Today, UN peacekeeping confronts an increasingly complex and contested environment, resulting from the confluence of several factors. Chief among them are intensifying geopolitical competition, perceptions of partiality and a trust deficit among some actors, increasing financial pressures, and a range of problems and limitations within UN headquarters and peacekeeping missions, particularly related to planning, human resources, and the level of agility of various processes.

Despite these challenges, UN peacekeeping still plays important roles around the world and could perform more

and different ones in the future. This study is intended to provide insights about the future direction of UN peacekeeping. It was commissioned by the UN Department of Peace Operations at the request of Germany and the other co-chairs of the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial process. The intent is to inform the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin (May 2025), whose overarching theme is "The Future of Peacekeeping," as well as its preparatory meetings. The study's focus on operations conducted by the UN means it does not cover issues pertaining to the implementation of resolution 2719 (2023) on the financing of African Union-led operations authorized by the Security Council, which are addressed by a joint AU-UN task force.

In compiling this study, our team conducted extensive consultations with UN Member States, UN officials, regional arrangements, and experts in civil society and academia. The evidence we present suggests that UN Member States are correct to renew their commitment to peacekeeping, as more than 50 did in the most recent Security Council debate on this topic.<sup>1</sup> Both the historical track record and future potential of UN peacekeeping are generally positive. Peacekeeping embodies the UN's core value of working together to address common challenges. With over 120 Member States providing peacekeepers and the entire membership contributing financially, peacekeeping exemplifies "multilateralism in action."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as just one instrument in the Organization's toolbox, peacekeeping can draw support from wider UN system entities. This is most impactful when peacekeeping efforts are aligned with the UN's broader preventive and peacebuilding activities. As the Security Council has repeatedly noted, for the most part, peacekeeping works; it remains one of the UN's most effective tools for pursuing objectives enshrined in the Charter.<sup>3</sup> It can be good for the UN's Member States by enhancing their sovereignty and leaving behind a legacy of sustainable institutions and peace in host countries. And it can be good for the UN, because the

1 "United Nations peacekeeping operations," S/PV.9719, 9 September 2024.

2 *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations 2024 substantive session (New York, 19 February–15 March 2024)* (A/78/19, 2024), para. 118. Hereafter, C34 Report, A/78/19, 2024.

3 For example, S/PRST/2022/5, S/PRST/2021/17, S/PRST/2021/11.

Organization’s credibility and global visibility hinge on its ability to remain an effective, field-based organization in the peace and security sector.

In embarking upon this exercise, the study team was mindful of the current distinction between “peacekeeping operations” and “special political missions,” which report to different departments and have a different method of funding: while peacekeeping operations have a separate account, SPMs are financed by the UN’s regular budget and hence must fit within its overall funding envelope (see box 3). However, the analysis running through the study and the ideas put forward are informed by the HIPPO Report’s recommendation that “[p]eace operations must be employed as a spectrum of tools and adapted to respond to changing situations”.<sup>4</sup> This approach will make it possible for the UN to flexibly draw on the full spectrum of what the Pact for the Future calls “peace operations,” enabling the Organization “to better respond to existing challenges and new realities.”<sup>5</sup>

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4 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015 (hereafter, HIPPO Report), p.10.

5 *Pact for the Future*, Action 21.



# 2. UN Peacekeeping's Evolution, Achievements, and Challenges

The 76-year history of UN peacekeeping is essentially one of diplomatic necessity generating pragmatic, multilateral responses to international crises. As an instrument of multilateral diplomacy, both the Security Council and General Assembly have often recognized that UN peacekeepers are the most legitimate and well-suited to tackle tough problems. On other occasions, UN peacekeepers have been sent to crisis zones when other organizations and actors were unable or unwilling to do so. Along the way, the principles of UN peacekeeping evolved, its practices have been reinvented, and numerous lessons identified and operationalized in response to the changing character of armed conflict and unforeseen threats.

## 2.1 Evolution

Invented in the late 1940s, UN peacekeeping remains a flexible multilateral tool to tackle a variety of threats and challenges. The UN has now deployed over 120 peace operations (72 peacekeeping operations and 52 field-based special political missions) in more than 50 countries (figure 2 and map 1). Since the end of the Cold War, the

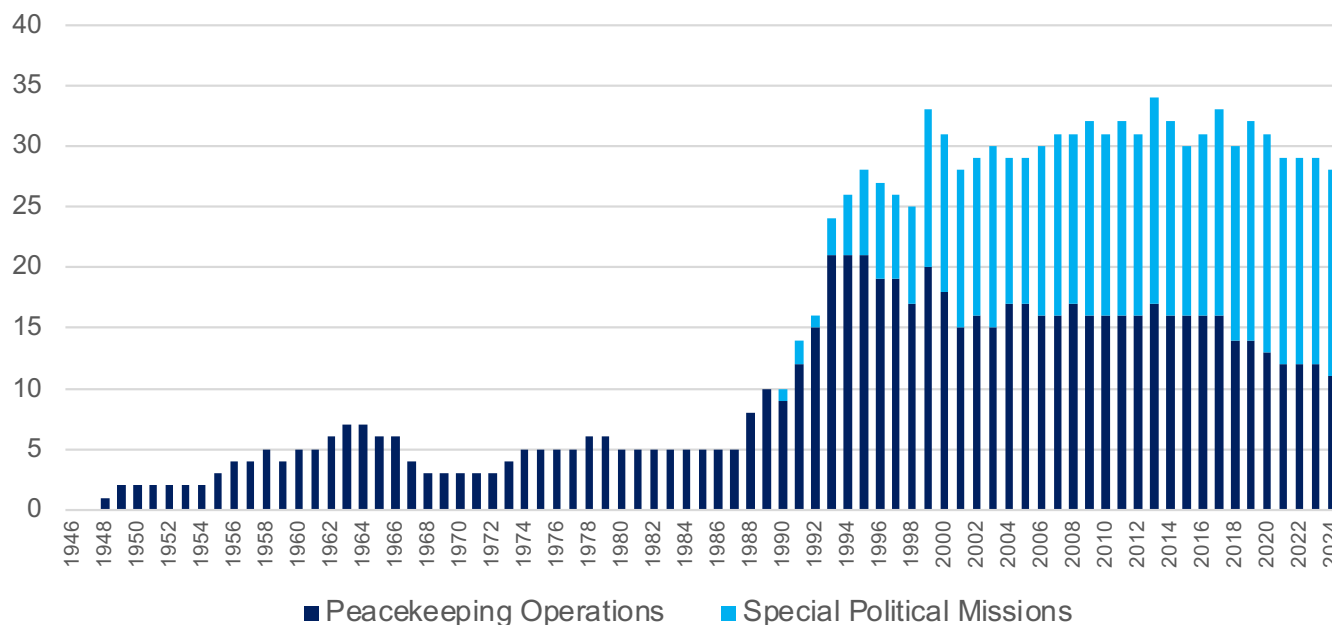
Organization averaged around three new missions every year (figure 3).

**The 76-year history of UN peacekeeping is essentially one of diplomatic necessity generating pragmatic, multilateral responses to international crises.**

The scope, scale, and structure of these missions has evolved both in response to trends in armed conflict and when the Security Council identified other threats to international peace and security. While the UN's earliest missions helped manage territorial disputes, its peacekeepers have more frequently deployed into intrastate armed conflicts. UN peacekeepers also facilitated decolonization processes and responded to several challenges beyond armed conflict, including administering territories, supervising electoral processes, strengthening law enforcement, supporting international justice mechanisms,

**Figure 2: Active UN Peace Operations, 1946-2024**

Source: UN Peace Mission Mandates dataset, <https://www.peacemissions.info>



## Map 1: The Location of UN Peace Operations, 1948-2024



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

assisting newly independent states, advancing women’s participation, managing public health emergencies, and addressing adverse effects of climate change. The Security Council has also proved willing to make peacekeeping mandates more robust when warranted by changing circumstances, and it has made considerable efforts to improve how it partners with regional arrangements, as discussed in Section 5.3 of this study.

### Invented in the late 1940s, UN peacekeeping remains a flexible multilateral tool to tackle a variety of threats and challenges.

Most recently, in 2018, the UN Secretary-General launched the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative to renew Member States’ political commitment to peacekeeping. This included a declaration of mutually agreed principles and commitments to make peacekeeping fit for the

future. The declaration received over 150 endorsements and offered a roadmap for improvements in eight priority areas.<sup>6</sup> In 2021, this was followed by Action for Peacekeeping+ to accelerate implementation in the areas of collective coherence and political strategy, strategic and operational integration, capabilities and mindsets, accountability to and of peacekeepers, strategic communications, and cooperation with host countries.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2 Achievements

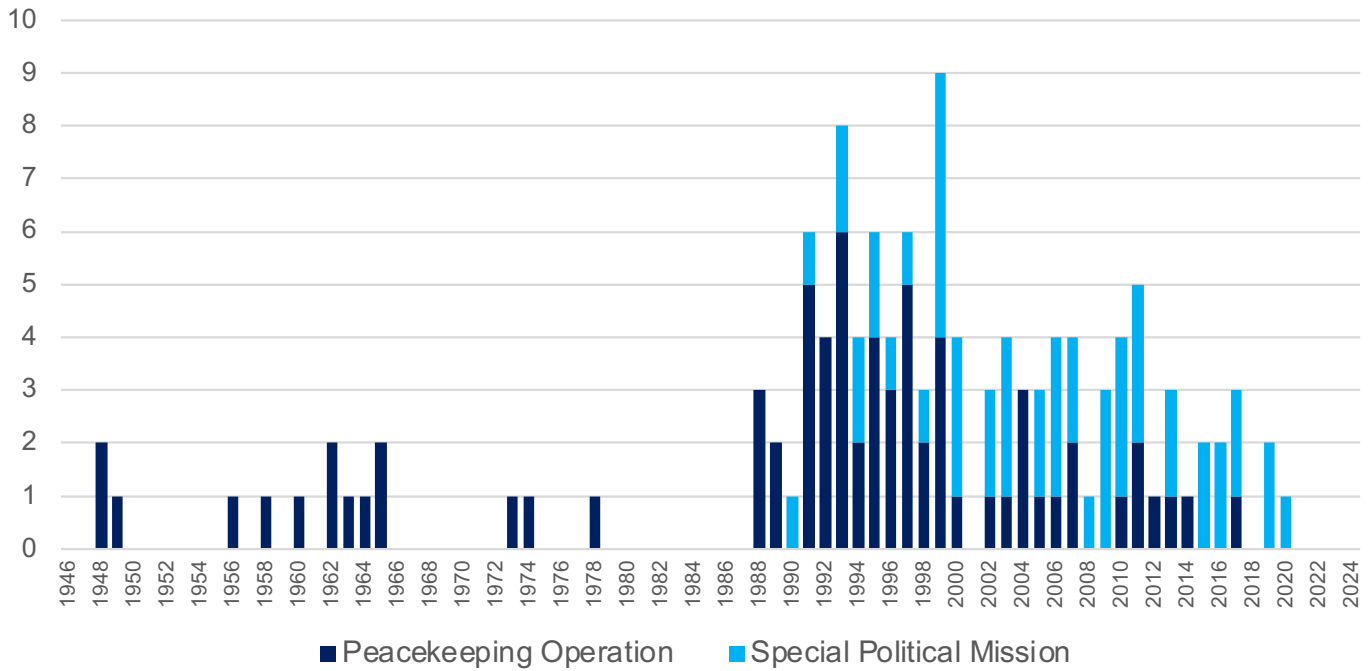
UN peacekeeping has an impressive list of accomplishments. With Security Council unity and support, and with host state cooperation, it has proved to be a highly versatile and cost-effective tool for supporting political processes and transitions, creating space for dialogue, protecting vulnerable populations, helping to forge institutions that support peace and good governance, thereby strengthening state sovereignty, as well as containing armed conflict and mitigating its impact on neighboring

<sup>6</sup> The areas were politics; women, peace and security; protection, safety and security, performance and accountability, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, partnerships, and conduct.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-peacekeeping> and Action For Peacekeeping+ (5th Progress Report, September 2024), pp.16-17, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/a4p-fifth-progress-report>

### Figure 3: New UN Peace Operations, 1946-2024

Source: UN Peace Mission Mandates dataset, <https://www.peacemissions.info>



countries. Field missions have also bolstered the UN’s position as the principal global forum for addressing international peace and security challenges.

UN peacekeepers can deploy at any or all stages of the conflict cycle, across a range of scales—from small teams to tens of thousands—and they can operate for short periods or be maintained for decades, when deemed necessary. Even when the Security Council has been divided on other issues, it has regularly forged a consensus on deploying peace operations. At other times, the General Assembly has established and supported the extension of peacekeeping operations and recommended other mechanisms to maintain international peace and security.<sup>8</sup> This is because both the Council and Assembly recognize that peacekeeping usually works. And by responding to shared threats and challenges, these missions also enhance the UN’s relevance and legitimacy.

There is good evidence to support these conclusions. As box 1 summarizes, dozens of independent studies using

varied methodologies and research designs have concluded that UN peacekeeping has a range of statistically significant positive effects. Importantly, these studies show that many of these effects hold in contexts marked by high levels of ongoing violence—when there is little or “no peace to keep”—or deadlocked peace processes. Behind these positive statistics, UN peacekeeping has influenced the lives of real people and the fates of countries for the better. This includes helping Congolese, Namibians, Bosnians, East Timorese, and South Sudanese secure their independence; assisting Côte d’Ivoire, El Salvador, Liberia, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone transition from devastating civil wars to a more stable and prosperous future; and keeping wars from reigniting in flashpoints such as Kashmir, the Golan Heights, Cyprus, and Western Sahara. Conversely, in some countries, including most recently Haiti, Mali, and Sudan, the security situation has grown more complex after UN peacekeepers left.

<sup>8</sup> The General Assembly’s authority to make recommendations on matters of international peace and security stems from Articles 11(2), 14, and 22 of the UN Charter. Article 11(2) states the Assembly may discuss “questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security”; Article 14 states the Assembly “may recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation”; while Article 22 empowers the Assembly to “establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.”

## Box 1: UN Peacekeeping Achievements

This box summarizes major recent findings from peer-reviewed publications about the impact of UN peacekeeping:

1. Counterfactual simulations based on statistical estimates show UN peacekeeping is a cost-effective way of increasing global security by reducing major armed conflict and saving lives.<sup>i</sup>
2. 12 of the 18 completed multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations deployed between 1960 and 2017, successfully achieved their major goals.<sup>ii</sup>
3. UN peacekeeping is strongly associated with post-war periods of peace.<sup>iii</sup>
4. UN peacekeeping can prevent the spread of violence within a country during civil war<sup>iv</sup> and peacekeepers deployed to a neighboring state can reduce the risk of cross-border spillover.<sup>v</sup>
5. When deployed amidst civil wars, UN peacekeepers go where the violence is,<sup>vi</sup> reduce the time it takes to reach a negotiated settlement,<sup>vii</sup> decrease the length of conflict episodes,<sup>viii</sup> and lower the level of organized violence. The larger the UN force, the more battle-related and one-sided fatalities will be reduced.<sup>ix</sup>
6. When deployed in civil war settings, UN peacekeeping is successful approximately 60% of the time in terms of reducing violence, displacement and the spread of violence. The key determinant is host state cooperation.<sup>x</sup>
7. UN peacekeeping improves the prospects for protecting civilians when peacekeepers conduct proactive and tailored operations that use force in ways that directly counter the methods used by the perpetrators of violence.<sup>xi</sup> It also helps when troops are drawn from high-quality militaries.<sup>xii</sup>
8. Deploying UN peacekeepers reduces civilian harm in those areas, but they are more likely to stop rebel<sup>xiii</sup> than government violence against civilians.<sup>xiv</sup>
9. Deploying UN troops increases security for aid workers by mitigating the intense conflict environments that facilitate aid worker attacks and dissuading attacks on humanitarian personnel in transit.<sup>xv</sup>
10. Deploying UN police is associated with a decrease in conflict-related sexual violence, even in the most difficult environments.<sup>xvi</sup>
11. Deploying UN police can reduce public security gaps after war<sup>xvii</sup> and moderate the tendency for post-war territories to experience an increase in criminal violence.<sup>xviii</sup>
12. UN peacekeeping deployments reduce population displacement and can encourage IDP return.<sup>xix</sup>
13. UN peacekeeping reinforces mediation initiatives, although both these types of external involvement can reduce battlefield fatalities independently.<sup>xx</sup>
14. Combined with mediation initiatives, UN peacekeeping reduces the frequency of armed conflict.<sup>xxi</sup>
15. UN peacekeeping can partner effectively with non-UN organizations to successfully curb violence.<sup>xxii</sup>
16. Multidimensional UN peacekeeping improves women's political participation and empowerment in host states, but this can decrease considerably after the mission's departure.<sup>xxiii</sup>
17. UN peacekeeping increases maternal health and women's well-being by providing medical and training facilities and facilitating women's access to medical services and education.<sup>xxiv</sup>
18. UN peacekeeping increases economic growth in host countries,<sup>xxv</sup> but this can rapidly decline when missions end.<sup>xxvi</sup>
19. UN peacekeeping improves households' well-being in civil wars by encouraging labor provision and economic exchanges, and instilling confidence by reducing the psychological impact of daily stressors.<sup>xxvii</sup>
20. UN peace operations promote democratization<sup>xxviii</sup> and reinforce elite commitment to power-sharing and peace-building reforms.<sup>xxix</sup>
21. UN peacekeeping operations that engage in election-related activities lower the risk of election-related violence.<sup>xxx</sup>
22. UN peacekeeping is substantively associated with better environmental quality<sup>xxxi</sup> and can support new clean-energy projects and sustainable peace.<sup>xxxii</sup>
23. UN peacekeeping enables space for nonviolent public protests.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

## 2.3 Challenges

Of course, peacekeeping has several limitations and faces multiple challenges. Most fundamentally, peacekeeping relies on the strategic consent and continued cooperation of host states and the support of other critical parties, notably armed groups, local populations, and regional actors.<sup>9</sup> Without host state consent peacekeepers cannot deploy, and without cooperation from these critical parties they are unlikely to succeed. These factors are reflected in the basic principles of UN peacekeeping: consent of the main parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate.<sup>10</sup>

These principles also distinguish peacekeeping from military interventions, which may occur without host state consent, and peace enforcement, which comes close to warfighting. The distinction between peacekeeping and peace enforcement has come under considerable strain when host governments want UN peacekeepers to help them defeat local insurgents or violent extremist groups rather than support political engagement or the implementation of a peace process. In some theaters, this has put the UN in a very difficult position. Not only is the Organization ill-suited to conducting enforcement operations but they would risk undermining the basic principle of impartiality. Moreover, when frustrated host governments turn to alternative regional actors for security assistance, as recently occurred in the Sahel and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), they too will probably ask the UN for various types of help, which, in turn, are complicated to implement in an impartial and accountable fashion.

Arguably the main contemporary challenge is intensifying geopolitical competition and the fact that diverging perspectives on multiple global issues are dividing the Security Council and the wider UN membership. This is adversely impacting the Council's unity of purpose and action, further complicating peacekeeping and peace-making endeavors and generating negative perceptions of the UN's relevance. It is also fragmenting political support for some missions, undermining peace processes, and influencing some Member States' negotiating positions on the financing of peace operations. While such polarization and political tension persist, no amount

of technical and operational reform will deliver peacekeeping success.<sup>11</sup>

A second ongoing challenge facing UN field missions is a worrying degree of political resistance and a trust deficit among some governments, local populations, influencers, and analysts. Some of this has been fueled by UN mistakes, perceptions of partiality, and misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers; some by an increase in mis- and disinformation. As an enterprise founded on partnerships, peacekeeping success is heavily contingent upon the level of cooperation it receives from host states and parties to the peace processes it is mandated to support. Serious problems occur when host states violate Status of Mission Agreements. UN records indicate such violations have been increasing and pose significant challenges for missions in multiple areas, including freedom of movement, supply chain and other operational support activities.

Managing local and international expectations poses a third challenge for UN peacekeeping. All peace operations must figure out how to live up to these expectations, especially in areas where young people have grown increasingly disillusioned with UN field presences. But a serious "capability-expectations gap" emerges when peacekeepers are insufficiently resourced to deliver fully on their mandates or expectations are unrealistically high. In such cases, UN achievements are likely to be overlooked and alternative options will seem more attractive. A related problem is the perceived disconnect between mission mandates and realities on the ground. This is particularly true in environments characterized by terrorist and extremist violence, fueling distrust and increasing the dangers associated with misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. In some cases, it has generated direct and continued attacks on missions leading to unacceptably high casualty rates.

UN peacekeeping will also remain under financial pressure as Member States tighten their own budgets and face competing demands. While an increasing number of UN Member States are paying their assessments in full and on time, peacekeeping is still suffering from a shortage of contributions (cash) to honor the appropriations passed by the General Assembly. Moreover, as peacekeeping budgets

<sup>9</sup> S/2023/646, para. 72.

<sup>10</sup> *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (UN DPKO and DFS, 2008), p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> See Jean-Pierre Lacroix, "Peacekeepers Need Peacemakers," *Foreign Affairs*, 2 September 2024, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/united-nations-peacekeeping-missions>

are reduced (due to closing missions), the proportion of existing arrears (about \$1.3 billion) continue to grow. Unaddressed, this trend is likely to worsen and has the potential to seriously undermine mandate implementation. Moreover, while the General Assembly allocates the financial resources, soon, only two Member States will provide approximately 50% of assessed peacekeeping contributions. Even though the onus of timely and full payment of assessments are a Member State responsibility, the UN Secretariat, including its peacekeeping missions, can and must work harder to demonstrate a “culture of efficiency.” In an era of finite resources, more judicious management of existing resource levels can ameliorate some of these financial constraints by enabling missions to maximize their impact with what they have individually and pool with other missions (e.g., sharing of costly aviation assets). Equally important, and especially for major contributions, a demonstrable “culture of efficiency” will go a long way to reassure that the UN Secretariat is a trustworthy custodian of Member State resources. Peacekeeping has proven to be a very cost-effective tool, especially when compared to bilateral and other forms of crisis response,<sup>12</sup> but a commitment to efficiency can be demonstrated further by ensuring missions are responsible, transparent, and consistent in producing appropriate budget levels while communicating results clearly. The UN has also shown itself capable of implementing innovations to make peacekeeping more financially stable. For example, enabling cross borrowing of cash across missions and prioritizing payments to troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs). This should give the financial contributors confidence that they are making worthwhile investments for crisis response, and for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

A fifth set of challenges stem from the inner workings of UN headquarters, which can sometimes hinder the Organization’s ability to design and deploy optimal field operations. Consequently, continued efforts to implement reforms in areas such as human resources, planning, information management, and preparedness will be an important part of effectively implementing new peacekeeping models. In addition, the Secretariat’s internal working and decision-making processes could be streamlined to bring together the multiplicity of actors involved in issues related to peacekeeping more effectively. This would help reduce the

time spent by various working groups assessing challenges and exploring solutions and move more quickly to implement recommendations that deliver practical changes.

UN peacekeeping also relies on what the Member States provide. However, they sometimes place caveats, declared and undeclared, on the uniformed units, personnel, and assets they contribute to UN peacekeeping. The persistence of operational caveats by some T/PCCs, at times unknown to mission leadership, reveal a lack of will to fully support mandate implementation, undermine the chain of command, reduce operational effectiveness, and can cause harmful divisions among contributing countries. Although not unique to UN missions, these legal, political, and operational restrictions shape when, where, and how peacekeeping can be employed effectively in the field.

Finally, another longstanding challenge involves coordination and integration, namely, how to combine peacekeeping most effectively with the UN’s other, related activities, and those of external partners. Peacekeeping is only one of the tools at the UN’s disposal and, ideally, should be aligned with the broader set of instruments for promoting conflict prevention and peacebuilding, both within the UN system and beyond. The challenge is to deploy peacekeepers as part of a coherent ecosystem for building and sustaining peace.

These challenges make it important for those mandating, funding and implementing UN peacekeeping to incorporate a degree of risk tolerance into the enterprise. As a tool for addressing some of the world’s most protracted conflicts and complicated crises, peacekeepers will often deploy into volatile, high-risk environments. Consequently, UN peacekeeping must emphasize and fund risk management, prepare for failures, and be ready to adapt when circumstances deteriorate unexpectedly from the initial deployment conditions. International expectations of what peacekeeping can achieve should be calibrated accordingly.

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12 See Håvard Hegre, Lisa Hultman, Håvard Mokleiv Nygård, “Evaluating the Conflict-Reducing Effect of UN Peacekeeping Operations,” *The Journal of Politics*, 81:1 (2019): 215-232, <https://doi.org/10.1086/700203>

# 3. Comparative Advantages of UN Peacekeeping

Assessments of UN peacekeeping must, of course, evaluate its impact on the populations and places where it deploys. But assessments should also include a comparative dimension of how well UN missions stack up against the potential alternative multilateral instruments. When dealing with complex conflicts and crises, the principal alternative multilateral responses come via regional arrangements and ad hoc coalitions of states. Hence, it is important to recall that UN peacekeeping has achieved its positive track record, in part, because the Organization maintains important comparative advantages over most actors engaged in this area. Specifically, the UN is well-suited to leverage a system of networked multilateralism that can bring together a wide range of actors and capabilities to participate in peacekeeping, and which can complement the Organization's broader efforts to promote prevention, peacebuilding, and development. The UN's global membership, long history of field missions, and diverse offices and institutions enable peacekeeping operations to be planned, generated, deployed, sustained, supported, reimbursed, evaluated, and assessed, if necessary for decades.

First, the UN's global reach and the Council's principal responsibility for maintaining international peace and security make it possible to convene key stakeholders and facilitate authoritative discussions on the issue at hand. In addition, the UN can use the leaders in its field mission as mediators imbued with an unparalleled level of international legitimacy.

Second, the UN can authorize, generate, and sustain diverse and potentially very large teams of uniformed and civilian personnel and project them anywhere in the world within a few weeks, including with the financial support from a \$150 million peacekeeping reserve fund for mission start-ups. It can do this because of capabilities at UN headquarters, an impressive array of logistical and support services at its disposal, and especially because of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, which has significantly improved the Organization's proficiencies in force generation (see box 2). The UN's ability to conduct joint military, police and civilian activities, to sustain them with a wide range of operational support services (such as the Strategic Deployment Stocks in the

## Box 2: Force Generation for UN Peacekeeping

In 2016, the Department of Peace Operations created the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS), replacing the moribund UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS). Unlike the UNSAS, the PCRS was given dedicated resources (\$3.3 million was provided for the PCRS under the support account for the 2024/25 budget period). The PCRS also entailed a stricter and more thorough system of assessment for military and police units pledged by Member States for use in UN peacekeeping. Largely through pledges generated in the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial process, the PCRS currently contains over 100 units that have been assessed by experts in the UN Secretariat as meeting UN standards and readiness to deploy, if selected, to a peacekeeping operation. Since 2020, over 40 units have deployed from the PCRS into missions. This has helped improve the quality and performance of peacekeepers in the field. Roughly a dozen specific units, comprising an integrated brigade, sit at the Rapid Deployment Level (RDL) of the PCRS. The Member States that pledged those units are paid a maintenance reimbursement fee in exchange for the agreement to deploy to any current or new UN peacekeeping operation in fewer than 60 days from a request. Aside from the RDL, there are over 80 units—from formed police units to quick reaction force companies to demining companies to unmanned aerial systems (UAS)—that have been assessed and are available within 120 to 180 days, should the T/PCC agree to deploy in that instance.

### Box 3: Financing UN Peace Operations

UN peace operations can draw on several financing mechanisms and methods of funding, making them durable tools and suitable for addressing long-term challenges when required. First, most peacekeeping missions have a separate budget funded through a separate special account. Second, some peace operations are funded via the UN's regular or program budget. This includes the UN's special political missions (SPMs), as well as UNMOGIP and UNTSO, which were established before the Organization created its current system of assessed peacekeeping contributions. Both peacekeeping missions and SPMs are financed by the UN's system of assessed contributions, albeit on different scales of assessments. This is a burden sharing mechanism that spreads the cost across all 193 Member States. Third, several other UN accounts and financial mechanisms support peacekeeping. There are three additional special accounts—the Headquarters Support Account, the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi, Italy, and the Regional Service Center in Entebbe, Uganda—that provide various support functions and services for missions. There is also the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund, established in 1993, which contains \$150 million to support requirements related to the start-up and expansion of missions, and to serve as a source of liquidity for peacekeeping operations. The General Assembly further authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding \$8 million (for 2024) related to unforeseen and extraordinary developments for the maintenance of peace and security (see A/RES/78/255, 28 December 2023). Finally, specific projects related to UN peace operations can be supplemented by extrabudgetary funds, including voluntary contributions from the Member States, which could appear in dedicated trust funds, the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund, or as in-kind contributions.

UN Logistics Base in Brindisi, Italy), and to integrate them with the wider UN system entities is a major comparative advantage in this field. This is made possible by different types of contributions provided by Member States, including not only the deployment of uniformed personnel but also supporting activities such as training and capacity-building activities for T/PCCs. UN missions can also build on, amplify, and extend the impact of the wider UN system, including the agencies, funds and programs that are part of UN Country Teams.

Third, although the composition of the UN Security Council is criticized and longstanding calls for reform remain unheeded, it retains unparalleled authority, legitimacy, and, crucially, flexibility to mandate peace operations to carry out whatever tasks might be necessary to maintain international peace and security. In that sense, UN peacekeeping is well-positioned to respond to new challenges.

Fourth, UN peacekeeping benefits from sustainable and flexible sources of finance that spread the economic

costs across all the Organization's Member States. Since 1990, UN missions have averaged around \$7 billion per year (see figure 4). For all their complexity, the UN has financial systems that work, both for rapid start-up, expansions, and, if needs be, for missions that may last decades (see box 3). This is especially important to emphasize because building sustainable peace in war-torn territories can take a generation or more.<sup>13</sup>

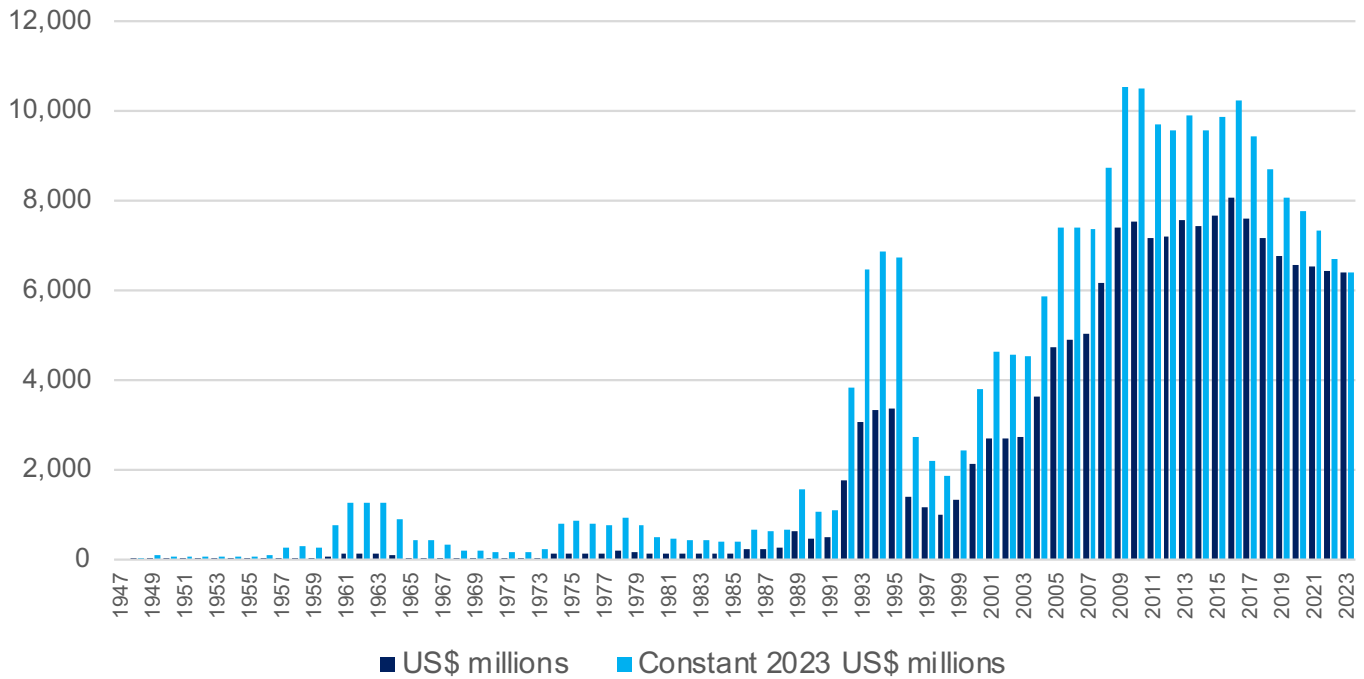
Fifth, the UN now has an established package of accountability and compliance mechanisms for its peace operations that are second to none in the multilateral world. They help make peacekeepers answerable for the decisions and actions they take and reduce the risk of UN personnel committing violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL), as well as engaging in other types of misconduct. The UN's compliance frameworks also act as a form of risk reduction for IHL and IHRL violations and reducing civilian harm when other security forces conduct operations, including counterterrorism, in that theater.

13 See *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (World Bank, 2011), pp. 60-65, <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/4389>



## Figure 4: UN Peacekeeping Expenditures, 1947-2023

Source: UN and Consumer Price Index data



Finally, over time, the UN has become a reasonably effective learning organization. Although there is scope to gather and implement lessons more effectively, the UN has demonstrated its ability to learn from both success and failure to develop new areas of expertise, policies, guidelines, procedures, and practices. Concerning peacekeeping, the UN has facilitated learning and dissemination of performance standards to well over 100 T/PCCs. Hence, after more than 75 years, UN personnel have

developed extensive expertise on peacekeeping, which should be retained and used. They provide the UN with a rich portfolio of policies, guidance, and training modules across every area related to peace operations.

These characteristics mean the UN should be capable of responding to an evolving threat landscape, if its Member States can act in unison.

# 4. The Threat Landscape

The world is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and contested. UN peacekeeping can be an important tool to help Member States respond to the interlocking threats confronting international peace and security today and tomorrow.

## 4.1 Armed Conflict

The UN faces a global context in which armed conflicts have increased and become increasingly urbanized and internationalized. Surging since 2010, by 2023 there were over 130 state-based and nonstate armed conflicts worldwide (figure 5).<sup>14</sup> Most were intrastate conflicts but internationalized, due to their spillover effects and the involvement of foreign actors, both state and nonstate. Armed groups have also proliferated, including insurgents, militias, tribal factions, cartels, and mercenaries. So have private security companies. The complexity of actors and issues has made many conflicts more protracted and peacemaking more difficult. Mass atrocities, foreign interference, and criminality also makes resolution more difficult, especially where governments refuse to negotiate with armed groups they label “terrorists” or “criminals.” These wars have caused huge casualty counts and record levels of forced displacement, wrecked economies and wrought severe environmental destruction, and driven large increases in military spending with the usual opportunity costs. Rising inequalities within and among countries will only fuel these dynamics.

Four more trends related to armed conflict are particularly important for the future of UN peacekeeping. First, the persistence of land grabs in territorial conflicts where

military deployments seize disputed territory.<sup>15</sup> Second, the growth of urban violence, including urban warfare, gang violence, terrorism, as well as organized riots. As a result, cities have become increasingly salient containers for political mobilization and violence in most world regions.<sup>16</sup> Third, the rising number of maritime disputes since the 1960s has seen more violent confrontations in the world’s oceans.<sup>17</sup> And, fourth, the fact that most contemporary civil wars are recurrences of earlier civil wars means that building strong political institutions is the only plausible way these countries can escape the conflict trap.<sup>18</sup>

## 4.2 Weaponization of New and Emerging Technologies

Both states and non-state actors are weaponizing new and emerging technologies due to rapid advances and greater convergence. The lethal concoction of smart phones, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and drones (on land, sea, and in the air) exemplify the challenges. Military applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are increasing autonomy in weapons, surveillance, and targeting systems. They are also becoming more affordable and hence will likely diffuse to more armed groups. Such advances are influencing how arms control, de-escalation, and confidence-building mechanisms will have to change in both scope and complexity. Revolutionary developments in biotechnologies, especially synthetic and computational biology, have opened new avenues for producing and disseminating bioweapons.<sup>19</sup> Most prevalent of all, the malicious use of digital technologies

<sup>14</sup> Uppsala Conflict Data Program, <https://ucdp.uu.se/>

<sup>15</sup> Dan Altman, “By Fait Accompli, Not Coercion: How States Wrest Territory from Their Adversaries,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 61:4 (2017): 881-891, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqx049> and Dan Altman, “The Evolution of Territorial Conquest After 1945 and the Limits of the Territorial Integrity Norm,” *International Organization*, 74:3 (2020): 490-522, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000119>

<sup>16</sup> Henry Thomson, Karim Bahgat, Halvard Buhaug, “Urban Social Disorder 3.0,” *Journal of Peace Research*, 60:3 (2023): 521-531, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221082991>

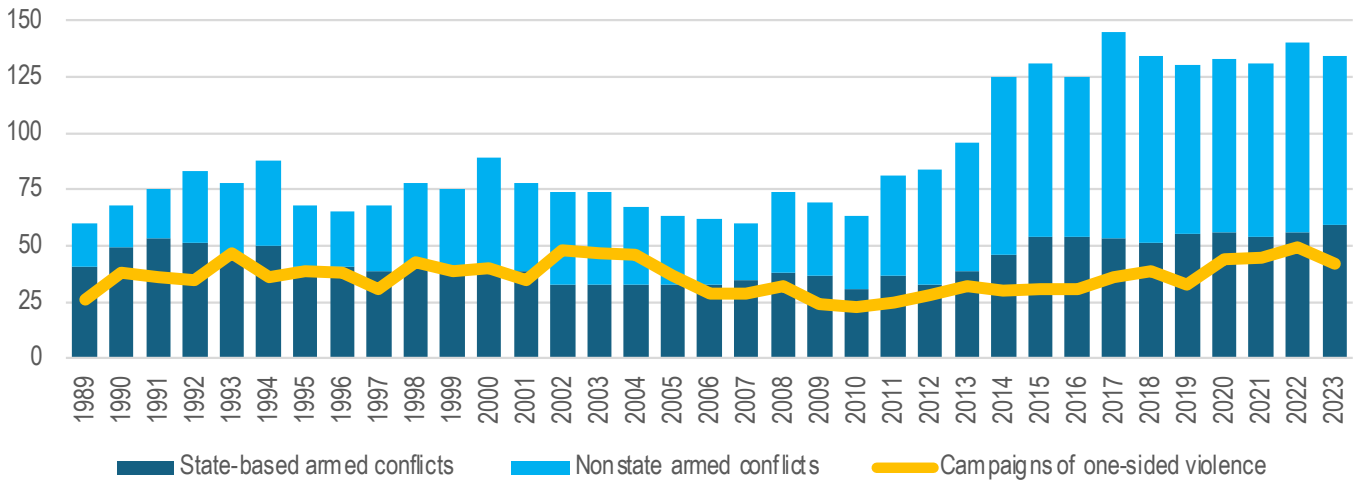
<sup>17</sup> Sara M. Mitchell, “Clashes at Sea: Explaining the Onset, Militarization, and resolution of Diplomatic Maritime Claims,” *Security Studies*, 29:4 (2020): 637-670, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2020.1811458>

<sup>18</sup> Barbara Walter, “Why Bad Governance Leads to Repeat Civil War,” *Journal of Conflict resolution*, 59:7 (2015): 1242-1272, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714528006>

<sup>19</sup> Fabio Urbina et al, “Dual use of artificial-intelligence-powered drug discovery,” *Nature Machine Intelligence*, 4 (March 2022): 189-191, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-022-00465-9>

## Figure 5: Armed Conflicts Worldwide, 1989-2023

Source: UCDP, <https://ucdp.uu.se>



can spread pernicious ideas at unprecedented speed and scale to over 5.5 billion internet users. States and nonstate actors use these technologies, including groups engaged in terrorism from jihadis in Africa to those motivated by white supremacy. They are exploiting the current era of “information disorder,”<sup>20</sup> characterized by information pollution on a global scale and the rise of digital misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, and hate speech (MDMH). MDMH has been enabled by irresponsible social media platforms prioritizing profit over the safety of their users and societies.<sup>21</sup> It is especially prevalent during armed conflict, major political events, and crises when populations experience uncertainty and change.<sup>22</sup> It fuels divisions in host countries, including by undermining electoral integrity, inciting hatred along racial and ethnic lines, as well as intensifying harmful gender norms and silencing women and gender diverse voices. MDMH has also weakened consent and support for peacekeeping, threatened the safety and security of peacekeepers, and undermined their effectiveness.<sup>23</sup>

### 4.3 Transnational Organized Crime

The darker side of globalization is the rise of transnational organized crime (TOC), which has helped drive, facilitate, and prolong armed conflict and hinder peacekeeping and peacebuilding. TOC encompasses diverse actors, organizational structures, and methods to obtain funds. Today’s many illicit markets range from trading in people, arms, and exotic species to drugs, data, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). They are managed by a network of organized crime networks where cooperation is fluid, regular, systematic and focused on profits.<sup>24</sup> Such crime thrives where States are weak or complicit, societal inequality is high, goods and people cross borders quickly, and online payment systems and cryptocurrencies flourish. It provides opportunities for corruption, collusion with government officials, as well as impunity. Moreover, differences in State laws and regulations create opportunities for these organizations to exploit, further fueling their transnational dimensions. TOC is a major problem for all regions. Its pernicious effects

20 Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan, *Information Disorder* (Council of Europe report DGI(2017)09, 2017), <https://rm.coe.int/information-disorder-report-versionaugust-2018/16808c9c77>

21 *A New Agenda for Peace* (UN Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9, July 2023), p. 6, <https://dppa.un.org/en/a-new-agenda-for-peace>

22 See Kelly M. Greenhill and Ben Oppenheim, “Rumor Has It: The Adoption of Unverified Information in Conflict Zones,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 61:3 (2017): 660–676. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqx015>

23 See *Information Integrity: Addressing Mis/Dis/Malinformation and Hate Speech in Peacekeeping Settings* (UN DPO Policy, forthcoming), para. 1.

24 Report of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility* (UN, 2004), p. 53, [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/hlp\\_more\\_secure\\_world.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/hlp_more_secure_world.pdf)

threaten people, companies, States, and even biodiversity, often violently. But for populations who are impoverished, alienated and marginalized, TOC can bring opportunities and benefits, sometimes producing alternative forms of governance and providing services and protection instead of the government. In sum, the UN must confront how TOC weakens States and undermines the rule of law within and across borders.

## 4.4 The Climate Emergency

After decades of warnings, world leaders are still failing to mobilize sufficient action to mitigate Earth's climate emergency.<sup>25</sup> Regionalized warming, sea-level rise, and more frequent extreme weather events are the new normal. The predictable result is that more significant climate change is still in the pipeline.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, human industry and climate change are devastating ecosystems and biodiversity at unprecedented rates and exacerbating societal inequalities and hence the risks of political instability. Climate change and environmental stressors can also increase the risk of organized violence, including in areas where peacekeepers are deployed or might be sent in the future. The negative impacts of the climate emergency are being felt very unevenly across human communities, often hitting hardest those least responsible. This is especially true in war-torn territories where warfare causes further environmental destruction. Around the South Sudanese city of Bentiu, for example, hundreds of thousands of civilians have become "hostages of the climate emergency" as four years of unprecedented rains have produced catastrophic flooding which has submerged farmlands, ancestral homes and roads, and turned Bentiu into an island.<sup>27</sup> UN peacekeepers have started adapting to these new realities, reducing their environmental footprint, and supporting green energy transitions, with the goal of leaving positive environmental legacies.

## 4.5 Public Health Emergencies

Between 1996 and 2022, nearly 2,300 pandemic- and epidemic-prone disease outbreaks occurred worldwide, involving 70 infectious diseases.<sup>28</sup> UN peacekeepers were on the frontlines of some of them, including in West Africa, the DRC, and Haiti. Outbreaks diffuse quickly because of rapid international travel and trade, limited global disease surveillance and control, lack of international consensus on biosafety norms, gaps in national health systems, and a large deficit of healthcare workers. The conclusion should be clear: pandemics cannot be eliminated; they must be managed. Two related trends are particularly relevant for the future of UN peacekeeping. First, there is a connection between pandemics and peace. 70% of disease outbreaks on the World Health Organization's (WHO) agenda occur in fragile states and conflict-affected territories. This is why the WHO's Global Health and Peace Initiative is designing health programs that are sensitive to conflict dynamics and can contribute to peace outcomes.<sup>29</sup> Second, public distrust about global health initiatives and medical misinformation will increase because influential actors will continue to manipulate infectious disease spread for political or economic gain. Pandemics will therefore require political solutions and protection for healthcare workers as well as medical interventions.

These interlocking threats and risks set the stage on which future UN peacekeeping will operate. Where they disrupt international peace and security, the UN must be willing and prepared to act. The models sketched below provide a way to think about viable responses.

25 Sophie Boehm et al, *State of Climate Action 2023* (Systems Change Lab, 2023), <https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/state-of-climate-action-2023/>

26 James E. Hansen et al, "Global warming in the pipeline," *Oxford Open Climate Change*, 3:1 (2023), kgad008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfclm/kgad008>

27 Charlotte Hallqvist, "South Sudan's hostages of the climate emergency," UNHCR, 22 June 2023, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/south-sudan-s-hostages-climate-emergency>

28 J.A.T. Munguía et al, "A global dataset of pandemic- and epidemic-prone disease outbreaks," *Nature: Scientific Data*, 9, 683 (2022), <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41597-022-01797-2>

29 "WHO Global Health and Peace Initiative", <https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-health-and-peace-initiative>

# 5. UN Peacekeeping's Future: Mandates, Models, Modalities

This study's vision for UN peacekeeping is a politically focused,<sup>30</sup> people-centered, modular<sup>31</sup> tool that can unite the Security Council around effective multilateral responses to a broad range of threats and challenges. With the right political leadership, efficient management, and support, including adequate and predictable financial resources, this vision can become a reality. The Council has the latitude to adopt mandates, including robust ones, that address current, emerging and often interconnected threats, and it can draw from a wide range of peacekeeping models and modalities that should be applied flexibly to meet specific needs. While mandates should set the strategic direction of peacekeeping operations, models can be designed and, where necessary, combined to implement related clusters of mandated tasks in the field. The Council and Secretariat can then develop nimble, flexible, and adaptable modalities to sustain missions and make them more effective and efficient, drawing on the full range of capabilities in the UN system, Member States and other actors, including partnerships with regional organizations. The success of these models and modalities will also require a sound financial foundation for UN peacekeeping, in which all UN Member States pay their assessments in full and on time, as well as sound financial management by mission leadership and the Secretariat.

## 5.1 Mandates

Since the 1940s, UN peace operations have been mandated to implement hundreds of distinct tasks, with some individual missions given well over 100. To organize so many mandated tasks in a way that is manageable, the UN Peace Mission Mandates database grouped them into approximately 40 clusters of activities, displayed in figure 6.<sup>32</sup>

**This study's vision for UN peacekeeping is a politically focused, people-centered, modular tool that can unite the Security Council around effective multilateral responses to a broad range of threats and challenges.**

Whether they are authorized by the Security Council or the General Assembly, the principal task of a mission mandate is to “provide clear strategic direction.”<sup>33</sup> However, this has not always happened, and the Council has sometimes added significant tasks that had to be implemented “within existing resources”. This has been particularly challenging for missions grappling with cash liquidity challenges caused by the payment patterns of Member States. In turn, this has over-burdened missions and divided the political attention of the Council and

30 Peacekeeping should be anchored in and guided by a political strategy. See HIPPO Report, and C34 Report, A/78/19, 2024, para. 113.

31 Modular peacekeeping would entail designing flexible missions tailored for particular contexts by combining different models, packages of capabilities, and modalities, and working closely with a range of partners (from inside and beyond the UN system). The initial design and partnership arrangements would then be adapted as the context evolves.

32 See <https://www.peacemissions.info>. The UN's Security Council Affairs Division groups mandated tasks into approximately 20 components, including 1) supporting local police and military forces; 2) ceasefire monitoring; 3) maritime security; 4) security monitoring, patrolling and deterrence activities; 5) protection of humanitarian and UN personnel and facilities, free movement of personnel and equipment; 6) security sector reform (SSR); 7) demilitarization and arms management; 8) humanitarian support; 9) human rights, women and peace and security, and children and armed conflict; 10) rule of law and judicial matters; 11) political process; 12) electoral assistance; 13) support to state institutions; 14) international cooperation and coordination; 15) support to sanctions regimes; 16) public information; 17) civilian-military coordination; 18) contingency planning; 19) mission impact assessment; 20) (since 1999) protection of civilians, including refugees and IDPs; and 21) authorization to use force in defense of their mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

33 S/2023/646, para. 75

conflict parties over many fronts. It has also engendered fragmented mandates that include many dissimilar assignments, which has undermined the ability of missions to execute all those tasks effectively.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast, as the C34 has emphasized, mandates should be “clear, focused, prioritized, sequenced, achievable, adaptable to the situation on the ground and ... matched by adequate and appropriate financial and human resources, in pursuit of sustainable political solutions.”<sup>35</sup> Peacekeeping models can help inform such mandates. Moreover, “when changes are made in an existing mandate, commensurate changes should be made in the resources available to a peacekeeping operation for carrying out its new mandate.”<sup>36</sup> Recent financial data and reports from the Secretary-General indicate that adequate, appropriate, and predictable financial resources require Member States to approve the appropriate budgetary levels and also provide the cash for these budgets in a timely manner.<sup>37</sup>

Moving forward, the Secretariat should be more proactively involved in the planning of mission mandates, before they are officially authorized. This study endorses the Brahimi Report’s earlier recommendation that “The Secretariat must tell the Security Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear, when recommending force and other resource levels for a new mission, and it must set those levels according to realistic scenarios that take into account likely challenges to implementation.”<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, after a mission mandate is issued by the Council, it is imperative that the Secretariat “provide sound, realistic and frank analysis, feedback and recommendations on the mandates of peacekeeping operations.”<sup>39</sup> At the same time, the Secretariat has a responsibility to report candidly on the efficiency of field missions throughout their life cycle and clearly show whether they have had the desired impact, including leaving a positive legacy as they transition out of a country.

## 5.2 Models

This section summarizes 30 peacekeeping models that the UN could use to respond to both traditional and emerging threats and challenges to international peace and security (figure 1). The case for considering a broad range of models and modalities to inform future peacekeeping has three parts. First, the models provide a condensed and useful reminder of the numerous activities that UN peacekeepers have been asked to undertake historically, most of which remain relevant today. Second, looking at the models and other options can help crystallize the forward thinking that will be necessary to meet new and emerging threats to international peace and security, for both the Security Council and potential host states. Finally, the different modalities and a modular approach highlight the many ways of assembling peacekeeping operations, helping to tailor missions to unique situations, as well as assisting them to adapt over time, and think through how to work with a wide range of partners, both inside and beyond the UN system.

### **Each model represents a package of a desired strategic goal, a cluster of potential mandated tasks, and a brief list of related capabilities to enable its successful deployment.**

The models were developed by the study team based on a review of previous peacekeeping activities authorized by the Security Council, General Assembly, and Secretary-General, as well as extensive consultations with UN Member States, UN officials, regional arrangements, and experts in civil society and academia. The models describe a mixture of longstanding, traditional peacekeeping tasks; how traditional tasks might be performed in different ways in changed contexts and with

34 Robert A. Blair, Jessica Di Salvatore, Hannah M. Smidt, “When Do UN Peacekeeping Operations Implement Their Mandates?” *American Journal of Political Science*, 66:3 (2022): 664-680, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12650>

35 C34 Report, A/78/19, 2024, para. 121.

36 C34 Report, A/78/19, 2024, para. 32.

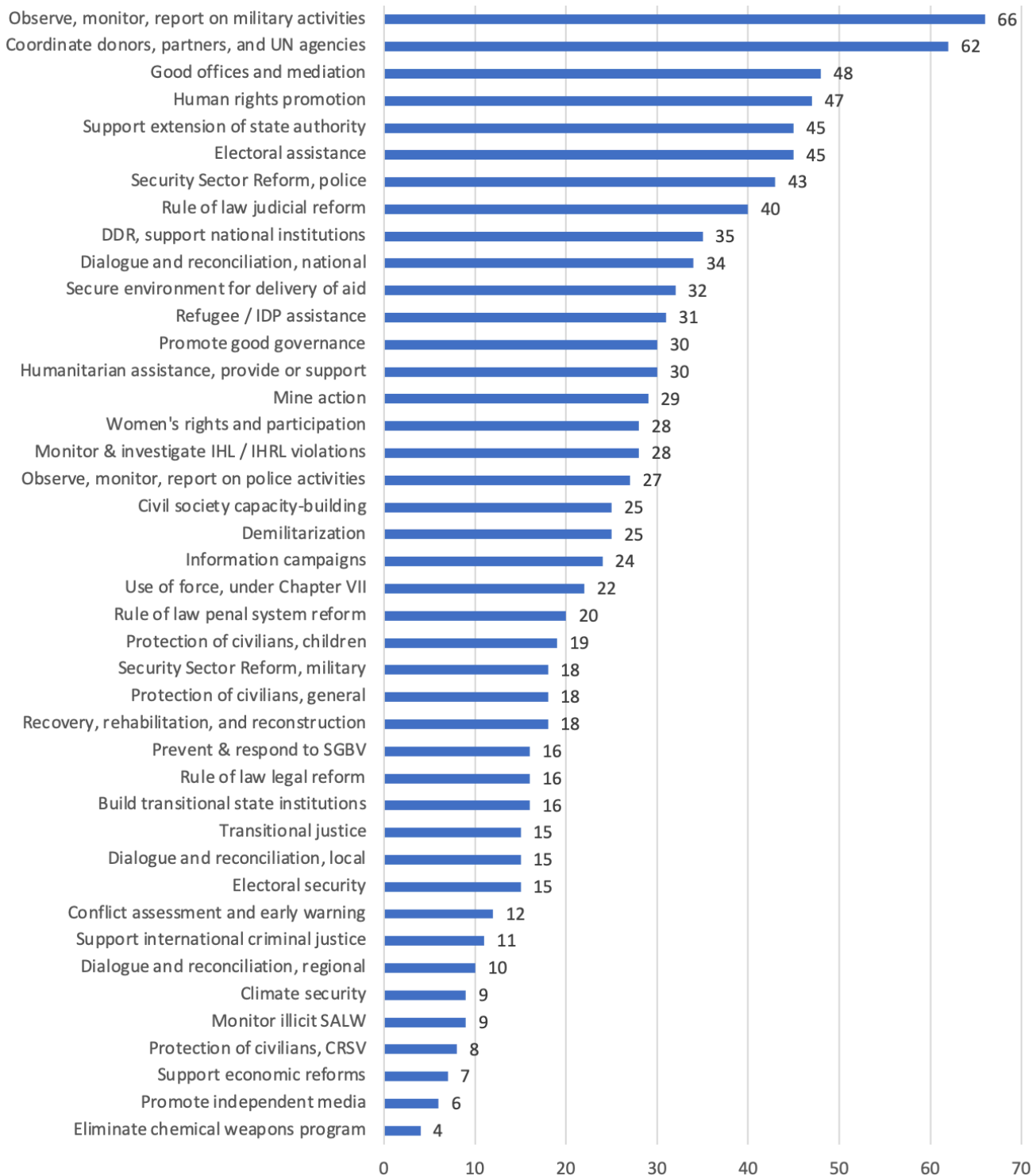
37 See the financial situation reports of the Secretary-General as well as briefings provided by the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Controller, available at <https://www.un.org/en/ga/contributions/financial.shtml>

38 The Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000, p. x.

39 C34 Report A/78/19, 2024, para. 123.

## Figure 6: Frequency of Mandate Tasks in UN Peace Operations, 1948-2023

Source: UN Peace Mission Mandates dataset, <https://www.peacemissions.info>



new technologies; and raise the prospect of plausible novel activities for future UN peacekeeping. However, the political feasibility of each of these models and their likelihood of success can only be realistically assessed

against the specific situations in which their deployment is contemplated.

The models are simplified representations of a complex set of issues. Each model represents a package of a

**Figure 1: Models for Future UN Peacekeeping**

	1. Preventive Deployments		11. Election Security and Assistance		21. Natural Disaster Response
	2. Atrocity Prevention		12. Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration		22. Humanitarian Accompaniment / Protection
	3. Protection of Civilians		13. Security Sector Reform and Governance		23. Cultural Heritage Protection
	4. Ceasefire Monitoring and Observation		14. Rule of Law / Law Enforcement Support		24. Natural Resource Protection
	5. Monitoring, Observation, and Reporting		15. Police Assistance		25. Border Management
	6. Verification		16. Support to Accountability Mechanisms		26. Infrastructure Security
	7. Support of Peace Agreements		17. Counter-Organized Crime		27. Cybersecurity
	8. New State Support		18. Mine Action / Explosive Ordnance Removal		28. Regional Security
	9. Transition Assistance		19. Emergency Humanitarian Response		29. City Security
	10. Transitional Administration		20. Public Health Support		30. Maritime Security

desired strategic goal, a cluster of potential mandated tasks, and a brief list of related capabilities to enable its successful deployment. The models are not rigid templates for peacekeeping missions. Rather, they represent a non-exhaustive and flexible list of options, some of which overlap, from which the Security Council can choose to respond to specific situations, on the understanding that whatever mix of models the Council chooses to employ should remain strategically coherent. The models should also provide potential host states and other conflict parties with a better understanding of the variety of peacekeeping tools available to the UN to

help address their needs and promote sustainable peace, based on relevant Council decisions.

The models could be used to establish narrowly focused missions based on a single model, or operations with a broader set of objectives that encompass multiple models. They could be used to design short-term missions or operations of much longer duration. Although a mission's duration is not in itself a sensible criterion for assessing its effectiveness, all missions should give early and serious thought to how they will reinforce the sustainability of their achievements. A modular approach could also offer flexibility by helping to design different phases of a



peacekeeping operation across its life cycle. For instance, short-term, specialized missions could be transitioned into broader operations that combine multiple models. Similarly, the models might be used to plan the transition of large missions with broad mandates into smaller, more focused operations as part of an exit strategy.

All the models assume the deployment of a UN-led mission authorized under Chapter VI or VII of the Charter, and operating under UN command and control arrangements with sound logistical and support structures, with varying financial costs to the Organization. In addition, all the models must promote the purposes and principles in the UN Charter as well as other UN values and norms enshrined in subsequent relevant documents, including international human rights and humanitarian law. All models must be gender-responsive and designed to advance gender equality and the women, peace and security agenda as political and strategic imperatives for sustainable peace.<sup>40</sup> They must also ensure that they do no harm through their operational footprint or conduct and are designed to make civilian populations more secure.

## A modular approach could also offer flexibility by helping to design different phases of a peacekeeping operation across its life cycle.

The models must consider, build on, and reinforce existing UN efforts in the respective host countries, especially those of UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams. The same goes for regional efforts. In this sense, the models assume UN peacekeeping operations have the capacity to broker and establish effective partnerships across the multiple stakeholders involved in each scenario, inside and outside the UN system. But the models could also be implemented under different modalities. As summarized in Section 5.3, these modalities could include UN missions operating in sequence or in parallel with other actors and peace operations, in joint or hybrid arrangements, and supporting UN-authorized peace

operations. Finally, and importantly, the models should be anchored in, and guided by, a political strategy.<sup>41</sup> UN field missions will have the best chance of success where they are implemented as part of a comprehensive framework that seeks to address the causes of conflict and insecurity through the pursuit of sustainable political solutions.<sup>42</sup>



### 1. PREVENTIVE DEPLOYMENTS

**Strategic Purpose:** Prevent the onset of armed or violent conflict or the escalation of existing or frozen armed conflicts.<sup>43</sup>

**Description:** Depending on their mandate, preventive deployments could be comprised of military and/or police contingents with a supporting civilian component. Preventive deployments could serve deterrence, early warning, monitoring, and confidence-building functions for the UN to prevent the onset of armed conflict and organized violence, including terrorism and other atrocities, or the escalation of such things, thereby creating space for mediation efforts or a political process to defuse tensions. Such missions could engage in monitoring and patrolling designed to help prevent or contain armed conflict within a state, a particular region of a state, cross-border spillover effects of armed conflict in a neighboring state, or the threat of invasion. They could be mandated to mediate between relevant parties or work closely with envoys designated for this purpose. They could also focus on quelling violence within a UN Member State during times of heightened tensions, such as the period before elections.<sup>44</sup>

**Related Capabilities:** observers (uniformed and civilian), military units with deterrent effect, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)/sensing technologies, aviation, expertise (monitoring & reporting, conflict assessment, political and civil affairs, early warning, Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), data analytics)

<sup>40</sup> See also C34 Report A/78/19, 2024, para. 166.

<sup>41</sup> HIPPO Report.

<sup>42</sup> *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, 2021 substantive session (New York, 15 February–12 March 2021) (A/75/19, 2021)*, para. 113.

<sup>43</sup> UNPREDEP is an example of the former. Preventing the “recurrence” of armed conflict is the job of most UN multidimensional missions and hence isn’t included in this model.

<sup>44</sup> For example, UNOMSA’s mandate in SCR 772 (1992) to “help quell violence” in South Africa.



## 2. ATROCITY PREVENTION

**Strategic Purpose:** Protect populations from targeted violence in situations of ongoing or threatened mass atrocities.

**Description:** Peacekeeping operations can help end and prevent mass atrocities, especially in situations of armed conflict. In such scenarios, peacekeepers must be deployed quickly, drawing on the capabilities available in the PCRS Rapid Deployment Level. The force should comprise primarily military and police units, with a small supporting civilian component. Their main objective would be proactively deterring targeted violence against civilians. While this could involve actions across all three pillars of the UN's approach to the protection of civilians,<sup>45</sup> initially it would be focused on proactive and credible deterrent actions to eliminate or mitigate immediate physical threats of violence, the physical protection of key sites, such as IDP camps and critical infrastructure, facilitation of safe passage for populations under threat, and support to immediate de-escalation measures at various levels. These efforts would need to be linked to a viable search for political solutions and might also be linked to activities under Model 19, Emergency Humanitarian Response.

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units with high levels of deterrent capability and mobility, aviation, ISR/sensing technologies, expertise (protection, conflict assessment, peacekeeping-intelligence, early warning, community engagement, human rights, CIMIC)



## 3. PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

**Strategic Purpose:** Protect civilians from threats of physical violence, including by supporting host governments and communities in their protection roles.

**Description:** Peacekeepers would focus on impartially protecting civilians from violence by taking actions

across all three pillars of the UN's approach to the protection of civilians, including the use of force.<sup>46</sup> This could include local-level efforts, such as local and intercommunal mediation and dialogue, community engagement, support to existing community protection mechanisms, including support to the participation of women and youth in such efforts, and community-based policing. They could also have specific mandates to protect children and prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). Such deployments would comprise military, police, and civilian components operating in an integrated manner and would coordinate protection-focused activities with a broad range of other UN and non-UN protection actors operational in each context. These efforts would need to be firmly embedded in the pursuit of viable political solutions at local and national levels.

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units, aviation, ISR/sensing technologies, relevant expertise (protection of civilians, child protection, CRSV, gender, conflict assessment, peacekeeping-intelligence, early warning, CIMIC, community engagement, mediation, political and civil affairs, human rights)



## 4. CEASEFIRE MONITORING AND OBSERVATION

**Strategic Purpose:** Monitor and observe ceasefire arrangements, including reporting on violations.

**Description:** Historically, the oldest UN peacekeeping model, observers can be deployed to monitor a truce, cessation of hostilities, or ceasefire agreements which may involve demilitarized and temporary security zones as well as cantonment arrangements. These tasks could be conducted by land, sea and air and make use of remote OSINT methods of geolocation, chronolocation, and analysis to investigate and make sense of key events and/or situations. This model relies on UN peacekeepers being perceived as impartial observers who can accurately record and report incidents in their area of responsibility and liaise between the conflict parties. Advances in weapons and sensing technologies

<sup>45</sup> See *The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping*, (UN DPO, Ref. 2023.05, 1 May 2023), [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2023\\_protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_policy.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2023_protection_of_civilians_policy.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> See *ibid.*

have changed the modus operandi and costs of such missions. Peacekeepers need improved capacities to monitor zones of interest, including remotely with the assistance of drones, satellite imaging, and other sensing technologies. They will also need to cope with significant advances in the long-range strike capabilities available to more state militaries and nonstate armed groups, which will increase the observation area and be able to bypass demilitarized zones.

**Related Capabilities:** observers (uniformed and civilian), mission/force protection, ISR/sensing technologies, signal units, communications networks, aviation, expertise (monitoring & reporting, OSINT, data analytics)



## 5. MONITORING, OBSERVATION, AND REPORTING

**Strategic Purpose:** Monitor, observe, and report on the implementation of peace agreements and other peace and security issues.

**Description:** Beyond ceasefires, UN missions can monitor peace agreements and a variety of other peace and security issues within host states or between them.<sup>47</sup> Specific tasks would be tailored to the situation, including contents of a peace process or agreement where they exist, but could include monitoring the security, political, economic, and human rights situations. Such missions could (i) help create an environment conducive to political dialogue by averting further deterioration of the security situation; (ii) enhance the situational awareness of other UN and regional actors; and (iii) provide early warning capacity to enable national, regional, and international stakeholders to address emerging concerns.<sup>48</sup> Peacekeepers could use remote OSINT methods of geolocation, chronolocation, and analysis to improve their situational awareness and investigate key events, including identifying threats to civilians. This model also relies on UN peacekeepers being seen as impartial observers.

<sup>47</sup> For example, ONUSAL SCR 693 (1991) engaged in monitoring activities before a ceasefire agreement.

<sup>48</sup> SCR 2303 (2016) on Burundi uses this language, mandating a UN police mission to “monitor the security situation and to support OHCHR in monitoring human rights violations and abuses.”

<sup>49</sup> See <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/disarmament>

**Related Capabilities:** observers (uniformed and civilian), mission/force protection, observation posts, ISR/sensing technologies, signal units, communications networks, aviation, expertise (monitoring & reporting, political and civil affairs, OSINT, data analytics)



## 6. VERIFICATION

**Strategic Purpose:** Verify compliance with arms control or other security-related agreements such as interim security arrangements or sanctions regimes.

**Description:** A small number of expert uniformed and civilian personnel could employ various forms of monitoring and investigation to verify compliance with agreements concerning interim security arrangements, WMD, conventional weapons, cluster munitions, and ammunition, as well as other forms of sanctions regimes imposed by the Security Council.<sup>49</sup> Peacekeepers could use remote OSINT methods of geolocation, chronolocation, and analysis to investigate key events and/or situations. Such missions could also be deployed on location to remove, confiscate, and destroy weapons.

**Related Capabilities:** observers (uniformed and civilian), ISR/sensing technologies, aviation, mission/force protection, expertise (monitoring & reporting, OSINT, weapon & ammunition management, data analytics)



## 7. SUPPORT OF PEACE AGREEMENTS

**Strategic Purpose:** Support the implementation of a peace process, a peace agreement, or political settlement of an armed conflict.

**Description:** Such deployments would involve military, police, and civilian components and probably occur in the context of intrastate armed conflict, which often have

internationalized dimensions. They could be mandated to perform a potentially wide-ranging set of tasks tailored to the specific content of the peace agreement, stage of political processes, and context in question. Historically, the size, capabilities and costs of such missions have varied considerably from a few thousand to tens of thousands of peacekeepers. In all recent cases, they have been mandated to protect civilians and have included robust women, peace and security mandates. As part of their transition strategies, these missions could be designed to help address critical capacity gaps in the host country. This could prioritize the local security sector,<sup>50</sup> including by providing HRDDP-compatible logistical support to elements of the national security forces that are engaged in joint operations with a UN-led or UN-supported peace operation or are undertaking other activities fostering mandate implementation.<sup>51</sup> It could also entail enhancing local peacebuilding and development capacities, including by building coalitions of actors committed to such activities that can sustain the mission's positive legacies.<sup>52</sup>

**Related Capabilities:** Similar to those required for current large multidimensional missions and reflected in pledge guides for recent UN Peacekeeping Ministerials.



## 8. NEW STATE SUPPORT

**Strategic Purpose:** Consolidate peace and security and help establish the conditions for development in newly independent UN Member States.<sup>53</sup>

**Description:** Peacekeepers would provide various forms of support and assistance to the government in a newly established UN Member State in order to consolidate peace and security, the conditions for development,

effective and democratic governance, and good relations with its neighbors.<sup>54</sup> They would almost certainly be multidimensional, including significant civilian components to help a new administration fulfil core functions of government.<sup>55</sup> While the mandate would be tailored to the host government's needs, the mission could undertake a wide range of activities across multiple sectors (e.g. governance, rule of law, economic, and security, including gender-responsive security sector reform), potentially encompassing many of the activities covered in a UN transitional administration (see Model 10, Transitional Administration).

**Related Capabilities:** multidimensional components, mission/force protection, aviation, expertise (governance & service delivery, political and civil affairs, other relevant areas)



## 9. TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

**Strategic Purpose:** Support a UN Member State's transition to a new political order.

**Description:** Peacekeepers would assist the implementation of agreed processes or settlements to establish a new political order, including overseeing a popular referendum process to determine the status of a territory or facilitate the end of a civil war and/or the subsequent advent of an independent polity; assisting in a return to constitutional order and democratic rule; or providing assistance and confidence-building measures in the aftermath of disputed elections.<sup>56</sup> They would almost certainly be multidimensional, with the precise combination of military, police and civilian components tailored to the situation at hand. Peacekeepers could also provide

<sup>50</sup> As in the case of UNMISS. See S/2023/784, 18 October 2023, paras 54-57.

<sup>51</sup> For example, MONUSCO for the FARDC, UNSOS for the SNA, and MINUSCA for the FACA.

<sup>52</sup> As recommended by the Independent Strategic Review of MINUSCA, March-June 2024.

<sup>53</sup> For example, UNMISSET (2002-05) in Timor-Leste; UNMISS (2011-13) in South Sudan.

<sup>54</sup> This draws on language in SCR 1996 (2011) on UNMISS.

<sup>55</sup> For example, UNMISSET's Civilian Support Group had up to 100 international expert personnel who were seconded to Timorese ministries to fill core functions of government, including a Serious Crimes Unit and Human Rights Unit.

<sup>56</sup> All these tasks have been mandated before. For example, in MINURSO, UNOVER, UNISFA, UNITAMS, UNOCI.

VIP protection to officials and representatives engaged in transition negotiations.<sup>57</sup> Unlike UN transitional administrations (Model 10), transition assistance missions would not assume temporary governing authority over a territory.

**Related Capabilities:** multidimensional components, mission/force protection, VIP protection, aviation, expertise (governance, political and civil affairs, human rights)



## 10. TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION

**Strategic Purpose:** Assume temporary governing authority over a territory to carry out the sovereign responsibilities of the relevant State(s).<sup>58</sup>

**Description:** UN transitional administrations have previously been established when armed conflict and other factors made governance of a territory impossible or deeply contested.<sup>59</sup> Transitional administrations are distinct from both missions that support a national transitional government and occupying powers, with different authorities, responsibilities, and obligations. Previous UN transitional administration mandates have usually been designed around five core elements: building local governance capacity, strengthening judicial capacity, supporting economic reconstruction, delivering security, and with an explicit exit strategy based on agreement about the future status of the territory in question. The intent of these administrations is to build effective state institutions by delivering expertise, resources, better governance, and high-level international attention to territories devastated by war. By working with local actors, transitional administrations could help new national authorities build legitimacy and earn the trust of local people. To perform these tasks, transitional administrations require

a significant civilian component focused on governance and administrative tasks. They may have military and police components, or robust security capacity could be provided by partner organizations or multinational coalitions in a pillar structure.<sup>60</sup>

**Related Capabilities:** multidimensional components, mission/force protection, aviation, expertise (governance & service delivery, rule of law, political and civil affairs, human rights, economic reconstruction)



## 11. ELECTION SECURITY AND ASSISTANCE

**Strategic Purpose:** Ensure a secure environment for the conduct of credible elections and provide electoral assistance in specific areas.

**Description:** Peacekeepers could be authorized at the request of a UN Member State to help prevent electoral-related violence and hate speech, and support credible elections at multiple levels (e.g. local, legislative, senatorial, presidential) as well as popular referendums. Types of UN electoral support include technical assistance; support to creating a conducive environment; panels of experts; electoral observation; and operational support to international observers.<sup>61</sup> The UN's Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA) serves as system-wide focal point on electoral assistance matters and sets parameters for the assistance in line with the mandate. A wide range of other UN entities may be involved (e.g., UNDP, UN Women, OHCHR). In mission settings, UN electoral assistance is integrated and under overall mission leadership. Security-related tasks could involve stabilizing the security situation and providing security for the organization and conduct of an electoral process. These activities could occur alongside logistical

57 The UN could perform similar tasks to the South African Protection Support Detachment deployed to Burundi in 2001, which protected politicians who had returned from exile to participate in the new transitional government and Parliament, but who did not trust the Burundian armed forces.

58 This could happen in a territory contested by more than one state. For example, the AU High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan proposed, among other options, placing Abyei under an AU or AU-UN Supervisory Authority, informed by UN practices in this regard. However, this proposal did not prosper.

59 In Indonesian Papua (UNTEA, 1962-63) and Cambodia (UNTAC, 1991-93) under Chapter VI and Croatia (UNTAES, 1996-98), East Timor (UNTAET, 1999-2002), and Kosovo (UNMIK, 1999-present) under Chapter VII.

60 For example, Kosovo (UNMIK, EU, NATO, OSCE).

61 UN observation has become rare, with the last two mandates being in Burundi (2015) and Fiji (2001). Technical assistance is the most common form of UN support.

support and other forms of electoral assistance such as civic education, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units, observers (uniformed and civilian), election advisers, mission/force protection, logistics/transportation units (including for electoral material and personnel), aviation, other expertise (political and civil affairs)



## 12. DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION, REINTEGRATION

**Strategic Purpose:** Assist in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes.

**Description:** DDR activities have been an important element of peace processes, and since 1989 more than 60 UN missions have been tasked with conducting such activities.<sup>62</sup> In 2005, the General Assembly enhanced support for such programs by funding 12 months of “reinsertion” before reintegration, thereby reducing the security and political risk.<sup>63</sup> For some missions, DDR-related tasks have been a principal focus.<sup>64</sup> Beyond the basic disarmament and cantonment or mobile demobilization tasks, such missions could include transitional weapons and ammunition management initiatives, and community violence reduction projects, which can help deal with the often-blurred distinctions between ex-combatants and other armed groups, including self-defense militias and criminal gang members. They could also support the DDR of children associated with armed groups and ensure appropriate screening and referral pathways are in place for survivors of violence, including to ensure the protection and participation of women and girls. These missions would build on the UN’s Integrated DDR Standards<sup>65</sup> (IDDRS) and could be conducted in partnership with other organizations that have been involved in DDR processes, including the more than two dozen members of the UN-wide Interagency Working Group on DDR.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> The UN’s first DDR mandate was in ONUCA.

<sup>63</sup> See A/RES/59/296, 15 August 2005, section VI, para. 7 and A/C.5/59/31, 24 May 2005.

<sup>64</sup> For example, MONUA and UNMIN.

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.unddr.org/the-iddrs/>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.unddr.org/the-iawg/>

**Related Capabilities:** multidimensional components, observers (uniformed and civilian), aviation, Quick Reaction Force, expertise (DDR, weapons & ammunition management, community violence reduction)



## 13. SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND GOVERNANCE

**Strategic Purpose:** Enhance capacity and responsible governance structures in the security sector of UN Member States confronting challenges identified as threats to international peace and security.

**Description:** Peacekeepers could deliver various forms of assistance to Member States facing threats to international peace and security, including advising, technical assistance, training, selecting, recruiting, vetting, and mentoring security personnel. Such assistance should also include broader efforts aimed at security sector reform and responsible governance of the security and defense sectors, including developing mechanisms to prevent children from enlisting, and building gender-responsive institutions that ensure women’s meaningful participation at all levels. The efforts would aim to build an effective, transparent, accountable, affordable, and professional security apparatus that is representative of all communities and do so via a process in which different communities, especially youth, feel they can participate and contribute. Such missions would comprise civilian and/or uniformed personnel with specialist units specifically configured to deliver these services in the host state in compliance with the UN HRDDP.

**Related Capabilities:** training units (including mobile training teams), relevant military and police experts, expertise (national security strategy design and implementation, strategic advice, training, SSR, defense institution building, security & defense sector governance, gender-responsive security sector reform, human rights, child protection)



## 14. RULE OF LAW / LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT

**Strategic Purpose:** Enhance capacity and responsible governance structures in UN Member States for addressing rule of law / law enforcement challenges.

**Description:** Historically, the absence or low levels of rule of law have been associated with an increased risk of armed conflict. For this and other reasons, the Security Council has authorized multiple law enforcement support initiatives as part of peace operations.<sup>67</sup> Such missions could involve the deployment of rule of law and law enforcement capabilities and expertise and/or support to the justice and corrections systems, including support for criminal accountability,<sup>68</sup> detention, prosecution and criminal defense.<sup>69</sup> One novel approach would be to broaden the scope of Specialized Police Teams, which have been used since 2010 in several missions,<sup>70</sup> to transfer skills and build local capacity for responding to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), criminal intelligence, community policing, diplomatic protection, livestock protection, organized crime, and crime scene management. Future UN missions should also partner with other entities, including UNODC, the UN Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT), and INTERPOL.

**Related Capabilities:** police (formed units, individual officers, SPTs, training units), corrections officers, expertise (judicial assistance, training, human rights)



## 15. POLICE ASSISTANCE

**Strategic Purpose:** Respond to Member State requests for police-specific forms of assistance.

**Description:** In addition to broader rule of law support (Model 14), Member States might ask the UN to provide

capacity-building and support to deal primarily with police-specific issues. UN police can supply serving officers with the most up-to-date skills and thematic expertise including in comprehensive approaches to, and planning for, police reform; public order management; community-oriented policing; border policing; police performance management and internal/external accountability; police planning in the context of elections; assistance to serious crimes and organized crime units; and promotion of gender diversity in policing. Member States facing a significant deterioration in the law-and-order situation (e.g. surging gang violence or cross-border trafficking) could also request UN operational support for their police and other law enforcement institutions.

**Related Capabilities:** individual police experts/mentors/trainers, police units, training units, relevant civilian staff, expertise (investigations, forensics, intelligence-led policing, community-oriented policing, accountability and oversight, police surveillance, crowd control)



## 16. SUPPORT TO ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

**Strategic Purpose:** Assist hybrid, internationalized criminal tribunals or other accountability mechanisms to investigate and prosecute serious violations of IHL, IHRL and international crimes related to threats to international peace and security identified by the UN Security Council.

**Description:** A small number of uniformed and civilian personnel could be deployed at the request of national authorities to support domestic accountability processes for international crimes (including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and terrorism) that possess a hybrid or internationalized feature, such as the inclusion of international judges, prosecutors, or other court personnel.<sup>71</sup> Tasks could include supporting mobile hearings, protecting witnesses and judges, undertaking joint operations with national forces, or adopting “urgent

<sup>67</sup> For example, the Haitian National Police, Abyei Police Service, Chad’s *Détachement Intégré de Sécurité*, and in SCR 2303 (2016), the Council also authorized a small UN police mission for Burundi “to monitor the security situation and to support OHCHR in monitoring human rights violations and abuses”. However, that mission did not deploy.

<sup>68</sup> For example, MONUSCO (prosecution support cells), MINUSMA (support specialized judicial unit to counter terrorism), UNMISS (mobile courts).

<sup>69</sup> For example, MINUSTAH (supported legal aid offices).

<sup>70</sup> For example, MINUSTAH, MINUSMA, UNMISS, MONUSCO, MINUSCA, UNITAMS.

<sup>71</sup> For example, UNAMSIL and the Special Court for Sierra Leone; UN and MINUSCA to the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic.

temporary measures<sup>72</sup> to arrest and detain individuals indicted by the tribunal upon the request of the national authorities in areas where national security forces were not present or sufficiently operational.

**Related Capabilities:** investigators (uniformed and/or civilian), lawyers, prosecutors, judges, support personnel, protected mobility, mission/force protection, expertise (detention, corrections expertise)



## 17. COUNTER-ORGANIZED CRIME

**Strategic Purpose:** Prevent, disrupt, and dismantle organized criminal activities identified by the Security Council as threats to international peace and security.

**Description:** The Security Council has given increasing attention to the impacts of illicit economies on peace and security challenges.<sup>73</sup> And with the UN looking to scale-up efforts to address transnational organized crime (TOC) in particular, peace operations could provide an appropriate means.<sup>74</sup> Counter-organized crime missions could perform numerous tasks, including providing technical expertise and assistance to national institutions (e.g. legislative, judicial, police and law enforcement institutions), collecting and analyzing information about criminal networks,<sup>75</sup> taking “executive” action involving the power of arrest,<sup>76</sup> or tackling criminal actors and banditry, including by confiscating and destroying weapons.<sup>77</sup> Counter-TOC missions should receive tailored mandates (e.g. focusing on the political economy drivers of conflict, including trafficking and criminal and terrorist networks, or enhancing criminal justice sector support with a transnational focus) and develop sector-specific strategies (e.g. anti-money laundering, anti-corruption, or in the cryptocurrency space).<sup>78</sup> They would require specialized expertise and capabilities, for example in anti-corruption,

intelligence analysis, financial crime, cybercrime, countering terrorist travel, and in preventing trafficking for the purpose of forced labor, sexual slavery and sexual exploitation. One novel approach would build on and broaden existing Specialized Police Teams. Counter-TOC missions should be deployed across multiple states and perhaps even multiple regions to facilitate integrated data collection and sharing, monitoring and analysis, and would benefit from enhanced foresight and risk analysis. Such missions must be integrated, involving the appropriate mix of police, civilian, and potentially military components, which can each leverage their comparative advantages. Future UN missions could also partner with other entities, including UNODC, UNOCT, relevant UN sanctions panels, as well as the World Bank, INTERPOL,<sup>79</sup> and relevant private sector actors.

**Related Capabilities:** relevant police and potentially military units, ISR/sensing technologies, aviation, expertise (financial analysis, anti-corruption, cybercrime, forensics, intelligence, OSINT)



## 18. MINE ACTION / EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE REMOVAL

**Strategic Purpose:** Ensure a secure environment in which to conduct a comprehensive range of activities related to mine action and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).

**Description:** Clearing mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) not only saves lives but makes land safe and productive again, allowing communities to function. Such missions would be especially valuable in territories where these activities would be a precondition for other forms of reconstruction and peacebuilding initiatives. They could draw on the expertise and capabilities from UNMAS and other partners and generate and deploy the

72 As set out in SCR 2149 (2014) for MINUSCA.

73 See the list of UN Security Council resolutions addressing organized crime and illicit flows, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/scresolutions/>

74 *Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact, and Declaration on Future Generations* (UN Summit of the Future Outcome Documents, September 2024), Action 25, <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/pact-for-the-future>

75 For example, CICIG and MONUSCO.

76 For example, UNMIK and UNTAET.

77 For example, MINUSTAH, MINURCAT, UNIOGBIS, MINUSCA.

78 See Erica Gaston and Fiona Mangan, *Global Policy Considerations: Crafting a More Coherent and Effective Multilateral Response to Transnational Organized Crime* (UNU Report, 2024).

79 INTERPOL has relevant dedicated programs on cybercrime, environmental security, and counterterrorism across its 196 Member States.



required number of Member State military or police EOD and C-IED capabilities. Such missions could perform a range of tasks, including the full range of military EOD activities (reconnaissance, identification, field evaluation, rendering safe, neutralization, recovery and disposal of explosive ordnance, including IED); awareness raising; providing advice, training, or technical assistance to host government personnel; as well as demining activities (i.e., surveying, mapping, marking, detecting, and destroying mines). In some settings, missions might also contribute to counter-IED activities encompassing the key dimensions of preparing the force, defeating the device, and attacking the networks. At sea, maritime missions could be designed to conduct minesweeping operations, deploying minesweeper vessels to remove naval mines.

**Related Capabilities:** military or police EOD/IEDD units, sappers, canine units, mine-clearing sifters, protective equipment & suits, robotic systems, expertise (mine risk education)



## 19. EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

**Strategic Purpose:** Help respond to humanitarian emergencies, such as sudden refugee flows following major episodes of violence and conflict.

**Description:** Peacekeepers could assist with security and logistical issues associated with humanitarian emergencies, for example rapid, large, and unexpected refugee flows as people flee violence and conflict.<sup>80</sup> They would work in close cooperation with OCHA, UNHCR, OHCHR and other relevant agencies, taking measures to safeguard humanitarian principles,<sup>81</sup> and could assist the recipient State to promote public safety and security.

Relevant tasks might involve logistical support, securing camps and maintaining their civilian and humanitarian character. Peacekeepers could perform guard, patrol, protection, and logistical roles. Ensuring the safety and dignity of refugees and affected communities would be paramount.

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units, aviation, transport units, ISR/sensing technologies, engineering units, medical units, CIMIC, expertise (protection, refugees, human rights)



## 20. PUBLIC HEALTH SUPPORT

**Strategic Purpose:** Support a secure environment for public health initiatives and public health emergencies of international concern (PHEIC).<sup>82</sup>

**Description:** Peacekeepers would build on the lessons learned from earlier UN missions tasked with mitigating the effects of infectious diseases, often in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme and other UN agencies, to devise a division of labor for relevant tasks.<sup>83</sup> In the case of Ebola, relevant tasks included ensuring a safe and secure environment for healthcare workers, training healthcare workers, building treatment units, case finding, contact tracing, laboratory services, community engagement and social mobilization, and safe and dignified burials. Public health support missions would require certain attributes. First, a regional footprint to deal with contagion, cross-border coordination, information-sharing, and monitoring viral transmission.<sup>84</sup> Second, multidimensional components and probably an integrated pillar structure with other relevant organizations and UN agencies to develop an

80 SCR 1080 (1996) identified the crisis in eastern Zaire as a threat to international peace and security and authorized a multinational force to perform such tasks, although ultimately the force was not deployed. Building on SCR 1834 (2008), SCR 1861 (2009) authorized MINURCAT to help refugees who had escaped violence in neighboring Sudan.

81 See UN General Assembly resolution 46/182, 19 December 1991.

82 A PHEIC is defined in the International Health Regulations (2005) as, "an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response." This definition implies a situation that is: serious, sudden, unusual or unexpected; carries implications for public health beyond the affected State's national border; and may require immediate international action.

83 For example, Ebola in West Africa and the DRC, and COVID-19.

84 This would go beyond the UN's existing practice of encouraging cooperation between missions in geographic proximity to share necessary information, situational awareness data and capacities.

appropriate division of labor. Since few host states will have the domestic capacity to respond to a major health crisis without involving military resources, a key practical issue is how to involve domestic and international military forces without overly militarizing the overall response. This can be done by ensuring an integrated approach led by civilian agencies, as well as preparing for contingencies with relevant training and exercises before deployment. Third, missions deployed in active conflict zones could help secure the environment for the provision of medical services and protect personnel, installations, and equipment. Strategic communications would be especially important for rebutting mis- and disinformation, including concerning peacekeepers being a vector of infectious disease, and ensuring host state authorities and populations trust the mission.

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units, medical support, personal protective equipment (PPE), treatment units, CIMIC, training packages, contact tracing, laboratory services, expertise (all relevant public health areas)



## 21. NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE

**Strategic Purpose:** Improve international responses to natural disasters by limiting damage, supporting aid distribution, ensuring a secure environment, and assisting reconstruction.

**Description:** UN peacekeepers have sometimes responded to natural disasters, including earthquakes, flooding, volcanic eruptions, and even forest and farmland fires ignited by shelling, rocket, and airstrike attacks.<sup>85</sup> Future missions could support such emergency responses, or others such as major hurricanes, tsunamis, or wildfires, by organizing and sustaining large numbers of personnel and engineering equipment, as well as implementing recovery projects. For new missions, rapid deployment

would be crucial, ideally drawing on capabilities of Member States whose police and militaries already play a role in domestic disaster response and possess relevant training and equipment. So too would partnerships with relevant UN agencies. Engineering capabilities and sappers would be especially important for repairing key infrastructure such as medical facilities, roads, bridges, airports/airstrips, schools etc. and building dikes to protect communities from flooding. Aerial surveillance and satellite imaging capabilities can monitor natural disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Some disasters are predictable and relevant missions should be designed accordingly. For example, missions facing seasonal flooding should be deployed with boats, amphibious vehicles and other equipment to enable them to operate in or cross water. Future natural disasters may be connected to climate change, the adverse effects of which are already recognized in several UN mission mandates.

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units, military engineering, sappers, transportation units, ISR/sensing technologies, medical facilities and evacuation, logistics, stockpiles of resources (food, water, PPE etc.), search & rescue, aviation, naval assets, expertise (reconstruction, construction, humanitarian, civil affairs, human rights)



## 22. HUMANITARIAN ACCOMPANIMENT / PROTECTION

**Strategic Purpose:** Protect humanitarian personnel in high-threat environments.

**Description:** Military and perhaps police units could be deployed to protect humanitarian actors in close coordination with them and taking measures to safeguard humanitarian principles.<sup>86</sup> Such deployments could operate within a single host State, including in territory controlled

<sup>85</sup> For example, 2010 earthquake in Haiti, 2021 volcanic eruption in Goma, extensive flooding of POC Sites in South Sudan, and AU bases in Somalia. Such fires are a dangerous feature of conflict on the Israel-Lebanon blue line.

<sup>86</sup> See UN General Assembly resolution 46/182, 19 December 1991. The Security Council has previously authorized peacekeepers to perform such tasks, including UNPROFOR to protect UNHCR personnel in Bosnia in SCR 776 (1992) and UNOSOM to protect ICRC and nongovernmental organizations in Somalia in SCR 751 (1992) and SCR 814 (1993).

by nonstate armed groups, or undertake cross-border activities where authorized by the Security Council.<sup>87</sup>

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units, protected mobility, combat convoy company, aviation, C-IED, ISR/sensing technologies, aviation, Quick Reaction Force



### 23. CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION

**Strategic Purpose:** Protect sites of cultural heritage in times of armed conflict and organized violence.

**Description:** During conflict and other instances of large-scale violence, cultural heritage sites often become targets. Such deployments would build on the precedent set by SCR 2100 (2013) when the Security Council mandated MINUSMA to protect from attack “the cultural and historical sites in Mali, in collaboration with UNESCO”. Peacekeepers might also play a role in protecting cultural heritage sites from natural disasters when the host government suffers from a lack of relevant capabilities (see Model 21, Natural Disaster Response). More generally, SCR 2347 (2017) has affirmed that UN peacekeepers should, where appropriate, engage in “the protection of cultural heritage from destruction, illicit excavation, looting and smuggling in the context of armed conflicts.”

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units, aviation, ISR/sensing technologies



### 24. NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

**Strategic Purpose:** Support national efforts to protect natural resources, where they are directly related to conflict resolution and strengthening the rule of law and governance.

**Description:** Peacekeepers could assist national authorities to enforce laws and regulations aimed at restoring administration and responsible governance over natural resources and protection of natural resources from illegal exploitation, and perhaps support natural resource management in the host country.<sup>88</sup> This could be particularly relevant where increasingly scarce and depleted resources are being used as a tactic of war by illegal armed groups. Peacekeepers would need to work in parallel with other national oversight institutions as well as the International Financial Institutions and relevant regional organizations given their roles in natural resource management. When requested, peacekeepers could also help protect natural ecosystems (such as forests, reefs) and national wildlife, including provision of security to game parks where the presence of armed groups undermines protected zones.<sup>89</sup>

**Related Capabilities:** police and rule of law advisors, relevant military and police units, expertise (relevant natural resources, economics)



### 25. BORDER MANAGEMENT

**Strategic Purpose:** Assist with border security, control, management, and monitoring in situations deemed to represent threats to international peace and security.

**Description:** Peacekeepers could be deployed in the aftermath of war or in situations of active armed conflict where combatants may be moving across national borders, to help monitor and discourage such movements.<sup>90</sup> They could also perform a broader range of tasks, including monitoring internationally recognized borders, deterring border violations, and helping create conditions to facilitate the delimitation/demarcation of a border, including by demining key areas.<sup>91</sup> Such deployments could also support border control and cross-border cooperation, including to better enable legitimate cross-border flows of people and commerce, which can

<sup>87</sup> SCR 2165 (2014) authorized UN agencies to use cross-border routes to deliver humanitarian aid into Syria.

<sup>88</sup> For example, UNTAC helped implement a sanctions regime on logging; UNMIL assisted the government restore proper administration of natural resources; UNISFA protected oil infrastructure in the Abyei region of Sudan.

<sup>89</sup> For example, MONUSCO.

<sup>90</sup> For example, UNOCI and UNMIL, ONUB and MONUC.

<sup>91</sup> As undertaken by UNMEE.

enhance a government's revenue collection, and prevent cross-border flow of illicit goods, arms, and people. They might also involve conducting customs operations and assisting with export control issues. When deployed, peacekeepers could support ongoing Security Council border management schemes such as those related to terrorist financing in SCR 1373 (2001) and the proliferation of WMD in SCR 1540 (2004).

**Related Capabilities:** relevant police and military units, customs, law enforcement, ISR/sensing technologies, aviation, expertise (illicit markets, border control, customs, human rights)



## 26. INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY

**Strategic Purpose:** Protect elements of critical infrastructure required for core functions of the State, including national defense, as well as basic service provision.

**Description:** Since they would likely be deployed in situations of (or potential) armed conflict and organized violence, most peacekeepers would probably be military but there may also be a need for police and civilian components. In the context of armed conflict, examples could include securing locations (e.g. seaports, airports, roadways), facilities (e.g. nuclear reactors, dams, medical facilities), urban settlements and cities (see Model 29, City Security), and other forms of critical infrastructure (e.g. oil infrastructure,<sup>92</sup> undersea internet cables, power stations/electricity grids, communications centers, see Model 27, Cybersecurity).

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units, aviation, expertise (related to relevant infrastructure, OSINT)



## 27. CYBERSECURITY

**Strategic Purpose:** Help reduce conflict risks from cyber threats and contribute to long-term stability, including, where relevant, protecting the integrity of a peace process.

**Description:** With record numbers of people online and state institutions increasingly dependent on connectivity for their core functions, digital information systems have become more important but remain vulnerable and can be manipulated to cause significant damage. A peacekeeping operation could help uphold international law and implement agreed norms, rules and principles of responsible State behavior in the use of information communications technologies.<sup>93</sup> Peacekeepers could use cyber means and methods as part of a physical peace operation or engage in purely online operations in cyberspace.<sup>94</sup> Online operations could involve “digital blue helmets”—experts in cyber capabilities and computer systems. Partnerships and cooperation with relevant private sector actors would probably be important. Information security and cybersecurity missions could be mandated to perform a variety of tasks, including to prevent cyber intrusions; protect information and computer systems and networks that are vital for sustaining life and livelihoods; provide technical assistance and advice to Member States; act as trusted investigators by monitoring, analyzing, and reporting on malicious activities and MDMH; help secure computer systems and networks; offer targeted operational support to national authorities, including identifying and attributing specific threats; and perhaps even play an active role in disrupting malicious cyber actors. There is also a possibility of the UN conducting cyber operations for human protection purposes (see Model 2, Atrocity Prevention).<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> As in UNISFA.

<sup>93</sup> *Pact for the Future*, Action 29.

<sup>94</sup> For relevant discussions, see Michael Robinson et al, “Developing cyber peacekeeping: Observation, monitoring and reporting,” *Government Information Quarterly*, 36:2 (2019): 276-293, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2018.12.001>; Walter Dorn, “Cyberpeacekeeping: A new role for the United Nations?” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 18:3 (2017): 138-146, <https://doi.org/10.1353/gia.2017.0046>; and Nicholas Tsagourias and Giacomo Biggio, “Cyber Peacekeeping Operations and the Regulation of the Use of Lethal Force,” *International Law Studies*, 99 (2022): 37-71, <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2996&context=ils>

<sup>95</sup> See Rhiannon Neilsen, “Coding protection: ‘cyber humanitarian interventions’ for preventing mass atrocities,” *International Affairs*, 99:1 (2023): 299-319. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaac261>

**Related Capabilities:** information integrity capacities, computer systems (hardware, software), expertise (cybersecurity, cybercrime, information operations, data analytics, OSINT)



## 28. REGIONAL SECURITY

**Strategic Purpose:** Help multiple states or regional arrangements address cross-border threats to regional security, including containing armed conflict, organized crime, or the threat of violent extremism.

**Description:** UN peacekeepers could assist regions facing a common security challenge emanating from armed nonstate groups operating across national borders and posing serious threats to the safety of their people and the viability of state structures. Peacekeepers would likely work closely with relevant regional arrangements and other cooperative mechanisms, which may have pooled efforts to contain or eliminate the threat, and relevant parts of the UN system such as Country Teams and regional offices. Peacekeepers could perform a range of tasks spanning several models described above, including: (a) enhancing operational cooperation through planning and development of concept of operations for joint and coordinated patrols along shared borders; (b) helping to pool assets in specific areas (e.g., strategic airlift, medical and casualty evacuations) and coordinating arrangements for joint procurement of equipment and supply chain management; (c) extending limited support (in duration and scope) in areas such as transportation, fuel, rations, casualty evacuation etc., in line with UN HRDDP; (d) facilitating the design and implementation of relevant training, including related to IHL and IHRL, as well as mine clearance and mine risk education; (e) supporting community engagement, local peace initiatives, counter- and de-radicalization programs, as well as DDR and SSR; (f) monitoring security and human rights trends in relevant areas; and contributing to the mobilization of adequate international support to national and regional efforts.

**Related Capabilities:** liaison personnel (civilian and uniformed), relevant military and police units, aviation,

logistics, expertise (OSINT, political and civil affairs, human rights, information analytics)



## 29. CITY SECURITY

**Strategic Purpose:** Provide security or assist local security forces in securing cities critical to the maintenance of international peace and security.

**Description:** With more organized violence occurring in urban areas, cities have become increasingly important sites for political mobilization, and in some instances experiencing growing levels of urban fragility, disorder, and organized violence, including terrorism. Besieged cities are also a source of large numbers of civilian casualties and transnational organized crime. As a result, securing cities is increasingly salient for conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives. Peacekeepers could help secure key cities, including by assisting with mediation and political negotiations, guarding key sites and infrastructure, protection of civilians and vulnerable populations, assisting with safe and voluntary return of displaced persons, facilitating humanitarian assistance, and engaging in EOD. UN peacekeepers would work closely with other UN entities with mandates related to urban issues, such as UN Habitat and UNEP.

**Related Capabilities:** relevant military and police units, engineering, aviation, C-IED/EOD, expertise (intelligence, OSINT, civil affairs, human rights, information analytics, migration, organized crime, urban crimes, financial crimes, small arms)



## 30. MARITIME SECURITY

**Strategic Purpose:** Help maintain international peace and security at sea.

**Description:** UN peacekeeping operations have fielded riverine, inland and littoral water units since the 1990s.<sup>96</sup> The UN's largest maritime deployment, UNIFIL's Maritime Task Force (2006-), is currently comprised of five ships

<sup>96</sup> UN peacekeeping missions patrolled littoral waters in Haiti and Lebanon.

and has been used “to enhance ground operations by providing presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security, as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.”<sup>97</sup> More generally, Article 93 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides for the possibility of ships flying the UN flag in a variety of circumstances and command arrangements.<sup>98</sup> Future maritime peacekeeping missions could be part of the UN’s exploration of new instruments to address threats to maritime security and safety, working closely with the International Maritime Organization. They could be mandated to pursue a variety of tasks, including monitoring peace agreements within riverine areas; monitoring territorial waters; securing coastlines and conducting interdictions; protecting sea lanes, including shipping in transit; protecting critical infrastructure (e.g. undersea fiber-optic cables); conducting anti-piracy, anti-IUU (illegal, unreported, unregulated) fishing, and anti-smuggling operations (e.g. the Proliferation Security Initiative to reduce trade in WMD and related materials); mine-clearance operations; search and rescue operations; providing transport in littoral areas; capacity-building for host governments; and maritime confidence-building measures (CBMs) to help build trust and address, prevent or resolve uncertainties among states. Maritime CBMs could include monitoring “incidents at sea” agreements.<sup>99</sup> Since navies of neighboring states are far more likely to cross paths than land armies or air forces, maritime CBMs could be safety oriented and designed to prevent incidents between naval forces and establish general operating rules and signaling guidelines. Generating blue water capabilities may prove challenging given how expensive many naval assets are, and the UN would need to invest in more headquarters support to plan maritime operations.

**Related Capabilities:** naval assets, minesweepers, aviation, expertise (information analytics, other relevant areas)

## 5.3 Modalities

Any of the models described in Section 5.2 could be implemented in a variety of configurations. These include standalone UN missions; situations in which the UN is part of a sequenced set of mission deployments or operates alongside or “parallel” to other entities with separate command and control arrangements; jointly led efforts and hybrid missions, or at the other end of the spectrum, operations undertaken by state coalitions or international organizations with a Security Council mandate.

Over several decades, partnerships between UN and non-UN operations have significantly increased, demonstrating pragmatic, flexible and innovative international responses to peace and security challenges. Several factors have encouraged this trend, including an increase in regional operations, notably in Africa; the complexity of the environments in which UN peacekeeping operates, including the prevalence of asymmetric and other threats requiring the deployment of additional (and more kinetic) parallel forces; and political dynamics that, at times, make UN standalone deployments difficult.

Building on configurations that have historical precedent, six broad modalities can be envisaged to operationalize the peacekeeping models described in Section 5.2.

### 1. Standalone UN Missions

In this configuration, the mandate is implemented by a standalone UN-led mission. This could be newly established or a successor to an earlier UN mission, for instance a narrowly focused mission taking over from a multidimensional operation to address a specific issue (e.g. MINUSTAH to MINUJUSTH). Standalone UN missions are particularly well placed to cooperate closely with the UN Country Teams, regardless of whether they are structurally integrated or not. In addition to the current integration and coordination arrangements, this could involve modular approaches to mission configurations where missions delegate responsibility for implementing certain mandated tasks, along with the associated

<sup>97</sup> *United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Maritime Task Force Manual* (UN, September 2015).

<sup>98</sup> André Panno Beirão, “Why not eminently maritime UN peacekeeping operations?” *Contexto Internacional*, 39:2 (2017): 245-261, <https://www.scielo.br/j/cint/a/TmLfsdxD7W7gkkckny6q7Zb/?format=pdf&lang=en>

<sup>99</sup> For example, *Agreement Between the Government of The United States of America and the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas*, 25 May 1972, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/isn/4791.htm>

resources, to the relevant UN agencies, funds and programs or creating pillar structures where another UN entity assumes a large portion of the mandate under the overall leadership of the Head of Mission.<sup>100</sup>

## 2. Sequenced Missions

Under this configuration, the mandate is implemented in a sequential fashion with one organization or a multinational coalition passing the baton to another, ideally with a prior understanding to proceed that way. Done well, this should enable a constructive division of labor among different actors. In this modality, new UN-led missions could be created, in part, by re-hatting another organization's earlier operation, as happened in Liberia (2003), Burundi (2004), Sudan (2007), Chad (2009), Mali (2013), and CAR (2014).<sup>101</sup> Conversely, a UN-led mission could be replaced by a UN-authorized operation, as occurred when the NATO-led Implementation Force took over from UNPROFOR to help implement the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995.

## 3. Parallel Deployments

Under this configuration, the mandate is implemented by a UN mission that operates alongside a non-UN peace operation or other deployment. When UN peacekeepers operate alongside non-UN missions, the key issues will be ensuring their mandates complement one another and that they can develop effective practical

forms of cooperation and coordination. With parallel deployments, the relationship could assume a variety of forms, including:

- A** Small UN missions operating alongside regional forces, focused on a particular area of work or combining several. In the past, UN missions of this type were deployed to conduct monitoring and investigation activities including in the Dominican Republic (1965), Georgia (1993-2009), Liberia (1993-97), and Sierra Leone (1998-99).<sup>102</sup>
- B** Large, probably multidimensional, UN missions operating alongside non-UN missions of variable size and mandates. This type of arrangement could see non-UN missions perform liaison, monitoring and observation, protection, training and other functions, as happened in Ethiopia-Eritrea, Haiti, Burundi, Mali, and CAR.<sup>103</sup> Alternatively, non-UN missions could be mandated to conduct more robust tasks in support of the host country and/or to provide operational support of varying scope to UN missions, as happened in the Balkans, Tajikistan, DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and CAR.<sup>104</sup> In some instances, the UN mission and the regional force operating in the same country had distinct areas of operation (e.g. in Sudan).<sup>105</sup> UN missions could also provide support packages to non-UN missions operating in the same theater, as happened in the DRC.<sup>106</sup>

100 Eugene Chen, *A New Vision for Peace Operations* (Center on International Cooperation, New York University, 2024), pp. 36-39, <https://cic.nyu.edu/resources/a-new-vision-for-peace-operations/>

101 In these cases, UNMIL assumed peacekeeping responsibilities from ECOMIL (2003); AMIB was taken over by ONUB (2004); AMIS was replaced by UNAMID (2007); EUFOR TCHAD/RCA transitioned into MINURCAT (2009); AFISMA was re-hatted into MINUSMA (2013); and MISCA re-hatted into MINUSCA (2014).

102 DOMREP deployed alongside the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1965 to observe the situation and to report on breaches of the ceasefire or any events which might affect the maintenance of peace and order in the country. In Georgia, UNOMIG observed and cooperated with the CIS peacekeeping force deployed there. In Liberia, UNOMIL (1993-97) deployed alongside ECOMOG, to monitor a ceasefire and peace process during the country's civil war. In Sierra Leone, UNOMSIL (1998-99) monitored the military and security situation and the disarmament and demobilization of combatants, in cooperation with ECOMOG forces.

103 In Ethiopia-Eritrea, OLMEE (2000-08) was mandated to assist UNMEE and cooperate closely with it in the implementation of the June 2000 Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. In Haiti, UNMIH (1993-96) was mandated to assist in modernizing the Haitian armed forces and establish a new police force and did so alongside MICIVIH (1993-2000), a joint UN-OAS mission with a focus on human rights monitoring and institution-building. In Burundi, the AU Special Task Force was established in 2006, to protect returning rebel leaders following a ceasefire, while ONUB had a wider mandate to support efforts to restore lasting peace and bring about national reconciliation. In Mali (2013-24) and CAR (2016-22), EU Training Missions deployed alongside MINUSMA and MINUSCA.

104 Examples include NATO-led forces providing operational support to UNPROFOR (1992-95), UNMIBH (1995-2002), UNTAES (1996-98), and UNMIK (1999-); CIS forces assisting UNMOT (1994-2000); the EU-led Operation Artemis (2003) to stabilize security in Bunia, in the DRC Ituri region, and the 2006 EUFOR RD Congo to provide electoral support to MONUC. ONUCI, MINUSMA, and MINUSCA all benefited from the logistical and security support extended by the French operations Licorne, Barkhane, and Sangaris, respectively. More recently both the EACRF (2022-23) and SAMIDRC (2023-) worked alongside and in support of MONUSCO.

105 In Sudan, UNMIS (2005-11) supported the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, while AMIS (2004-07) was limited to the Darfur region and received logistical support from UNMIS.

106 MONUSCO was recently mandated to support SAMIDRC via information-sharing and technical and logistical assistance, including medical operations and casualty evacuations.

## 4. Joint Operations

In this configuration, the mandate is implemented by two or more organizations. But instead of operating alongside each other in parallel, they join to form a single mission, even though each organization retains its own line of authority, operates based on its own rules and processes, and (partly) finances the mission. To date, such missions have been very rare. This is partly because international organizations often have a practical preference for autonomy and face challenges with integrating their different bureaucracies and modes of operation. Two cases offer valuable lessons about how different organizations could pragmatically pool their resources and leverage their respective comparative advantages to address complex peace and security challenges: the pillar structure adopted for UNMIK in Kosovo (1999-) and MICIVIH (1993-2000) in Haiti. In Kosovo, the Security Council established a pillar structure whereby the UNMIK interim administration was divided into four sections, two led by the UN (humanitarian affairs and civil administration), one by the OSCE (democratization and institution-building), and one by the EU (reconstruction and economic development). The OSCE and EU deployed their missions using their own procedures and funds but under the UNMIK structure. Similarly, the key features of MICIVIH were a joint mandate defined by the UN and the OAS; a dual leadership, with the UN and the OAS each appointing one of the two heads of mission; integrated staffing and shared financing, with staff coming from both organizations, with each providing funding and other resources; as well as joint decision-making and coordinated reporting. These experiences were broadly positive and worth reviewing in the context of the ongoing efforts to strengthen peacekeeping and partnerships. However, there must be clarity of roles, responsibilities and expectations between the respective organizations for this type of modality to work smoothly.

## 5. Hybrid Operations

In this modality, the mandate is implemented by two or more organizations partnering to deploy a single mission characterized by shared command and control

arrangements. In contrast to Joint Missions, hybrid operations would have a single Head of Mission, be financed by the UN, and use UN rules and procedures, including recruitment processes to hire staff. To date, hybrid missions have also been rare, partly because of the preference for autonomy and challenges with integrating different bureaucracies mentioned above. UNAMID (2007-20) is the only example.<sup>107</sup> Unlike the Joint Mission modality described above, UNAMID had a single head, the UN provided all the resources and managed the operation based on its own rules and procedures. As Security Council resolution 1769 (2007) determined, UNAMID was financed through UN peacekeeping assessed contributions, subject to the joint administrative rules and regulations of the UN, and operated with “a unified command and control structure and backstopping provided by the United Nations.”<sup>108</sup> In the future, whether hybridity is a viable option will depend on the political context of the prospective mission.

## 6. UN-authorized Missions

Under this modality, the mandate is implemented by a peace operation authorized by the UN Security Council but conducted by a regional organization or a coalition of states under their own command and control arrangements. UN-authorized peace operations may or may not receive a UN support package. UN support packages could involve the deployment of military, civilian, and/or police personnel to deliver financial, technical, and/or logistical assistance. They could assume various forms, including logistical support packages designed to help sustain non-UN peace operations (e.g. the UN Support Office for the African Union/in Somalia, UNSOA/S, 2009-) or future African Union-led operations authorized by the Security Council and financed in part under the terms of Security Council resolution 2719 (2023).

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The six modalities sketched above draw from decades of innovative practice by the Security Council and offer it additional flexibility to deploy different peacekeeping models to address pressing peace and security challenges. In recommending and selecting a particular

<sup>107</sup> In UNAMID's case, the decision to forge a hybrid mission was the result of a political compromise with the host Government. S/2023/303, 1 May 2023, para. 11.  
<sup>108</sup> S/2023/303, 1 May 2023, para. 37.



course of action, the Secretariat and Council must remain open-minded, willing to continue their long tradition of innovation, and recognize the very different array of actors across the world's regions. Much will depend on the political and operational context, the nature of the challenges, the disposition of local and regional actors, resource availability, and other considerations which will make some modalities more suitable than others.

As new potential entry points for peacekeeping operations arise, both the Council and Secretariat should thoroughly analyze the pros and cons of each possible modality and weigh them against the costs of not deploying a mission. For the UN, standalone missions have the least cumbersome lines of authority, but they may not always be feasible or even desirable in certain contexts. The Council must recognize not only the

growing operational capacities of partners but also their well-established political and mediation roles. Modalities involving partners enable the pooling of resources and pragmatic divisions of labor that build on each actor's comparative advantages. When properly harnessed, partnerships can be a force multiplier.

The modalities identified above provide the UN with a toolbox to more effectively mobilize the political, financial, and logistical resources that other actors can bring to the table in pursuit of sustainable peace and security. In the realm of peacekeeping, they are a means to help deepen the networked multilateralism that the Secretary-General has called for. The more diverse the toolkit, the greater the chance that a formula can be found that is both politically acceptable and operationally viable.

# 6. Key Capabilities

Each peacekeeping model described above lists some specific capabilities. In some areas, the UN currently lacks the necessary expertise and capabilities, which will require additional generation efforts. Nevertheless, the UN is uniquely positioned to generate them from a broad set of partners, including its Member States. Furthermore, the UN has made many improvements since the last new peacekeeping operation was deployed in 2014, including improving its use of relevant technologies.<sup>109</sup> Drawing on this study and an assessment of current capability needs, the UN Department of Peace Operations will develop a pledging guide in advance of the 2025 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin that will elaborate on capabilities Member States can pledge to meet current and future needs. The study team suggests focusing on the following capabilities and related areas to help improve existing and future missions.

## Planning

Peacekeeping models, modalities, and modular approaches will be of little use without planners who are thinking about them and using them to develop proposals and contingency options for the Council. Tailored responses to crises require strong planning and analysis but the UN currently lacks sufficient capacity. This encourages templated approaches and makes it more likely the Organization will repeat the same mistakes. Faced with an unknowable future and operating in highly volatile environments, the UN must become a more serious planning organization. This requires a dedicated integrated planning capacity at UN headquarters and significantly strengthened integrated planning capacities at the mission level.<sup>110</sup> This capacity needs to be integrated across the civilian, police, military and support components of headquarters and missions, and be able to connect with external partners to deploy the right modalities and package of models. It should also be

retained throughout the mission's life cycle and include mechanisms to work closely with external partners and other parts of the UN system, such as those dealing with development, human rights, and other areas relevant to the context and potential mandate areas.

Stronger and more integrated planning capacities will ensure that context, appropriate local knowledge and analysis drive mission objectives and design. Well integrated and reinforced planning capacities will also help ensure that positive legacy considerations are part of every stage of planning, and that missions continuously adapt based on a clear-eyed assessment of their impact and changes in their operational and political environment.

In addition, a shift is needed towards proactive scenario planning and strategic foresight (in line with the Secretary-General's "Quintet of Change for a UN 2.0").<sup>111</sup> The Secretariat should be engaged in contingency planning for future operations, including, when it deems it politically feasible and appropriate, by placing scenarios and options before the Council. The earlier different options are discussed and seriously considered, the greater the chances for early action and prevention to be effective.

## Personnel

The most important capabilities on which UN peacekeeping depends are its personnel. It is vital that the UN deploys and employs the right people and that they are prepared and equipped to perform effectively. Military and police units must exhibit the right mindset and commitment to do so, even under extremely difficult circumstances. The UN's peacekeeping workforce—UN staff and personnel provided by Member States—will perform best if they can thrive in an enabling environment. If tangible factors, including facilities and equipment, or intangible

<sup>109</sup> See <https://operationalsupport.un.org/en/partnership-technology-peacekeeping>

<sup>110</sup> The C34 has called for "improved capacity to assess conflict situations, effective planning and management of United Nations peacekeeping operations and quick and effective responses to any Security Council mandate." C34 Report A/78/19, 2024, para. 24. See also paras 120 and 162.

<sup>111</sup> See <https://www.un.org/two-zero/en>

aspects, including cultural norms and practices, prohibit such an environment, missions will be less efficient and effective. As part of this effort, UN leaders should ensure enabling environments for women peacekeepers and Member States should remove systemic barriers to building national pipelines to enable “the full, equal and meaningful participation of women” peacekeepers at all levels.<sup>112</sup> Member States should identify, nurture, train, and retain women for peacekeeping deployments, place them in important positions, and maintain databases of uniformed women who have served in missions.

When it comes to generating specialized capabilities, the UN has a unique and unmatched ability to recruit from every region of the world via its 193 Member States. Traditional recruitment of civilian staff has favored broad job descriptions and length of experience over specific skill sets, leading to staff rotating between similar roles without gaining new skills. To address this, the UN needs to consider shifting towards skills-based, rather than experience-based, recruitment, prioritizing specialized capabilities, and encouraging younger candidates with fresh perspectives for whom the absence of prior UN experience is not seen as a shortcoming. Local cultural and political knowledge should also be prioritized, particularly by mission leadership.

In addition to changing how the UN recruits staff, some of the mechanisms it uses to generate Member State and other external expertise should be improved. Military staff officers (MSOs), for instance, must possess the skills required now, as well as those needed to support future types of missions. Today, too many MSOs lack the required experience and skills for their assigned tasks, which is a shared responsibility of the TCCs deploying them and those making selections at UN headquarters.

## Leadership

Leadership can make or break a peace operation. The most senior field positions are also the most demanding, covering an enormous range of complex issues such that effective leadership can only be exercised by coherent teams. Those teams should be diverse and

complementary in talents, experience, and skills, closely reflecting the needs on the ground; gender-responsive and include more women; and held accountable via effective and meaningful performance management mechanisms that inform considerations for renewal.

When appointing and selecting mission leaders, UN headquarters should adopt a merit-based process using broader profiles for searches. In existing missions, this should take account of the composition of serving senior leadership to ensure the team is cohesive and can implement the mandate effectively.

The UN should also be willing to tailor leadership structures to the unique circumstances and requirements of each mission. This could involve smaller missions led by Executive Representatives who also serve as Resident Coordinators,<sup>113</sup> and modular or pillar approaches to mission design and partnership arrangements (see Section 5.3 Modalities).

The values and behavior of UN staff and its leaders are also pivotal. All leaders of peace operations should be individuals deeply committed to and actively displaying the UN’s values of inclusion, integrity, humility, and humanity.<sup>114</sup> In their pursuit of sustainable peace, they should leverage the network of UN and partner organizations officials in their host state(s) and wider region, and they should connect, collaborate, strategize, analyze, plan and innovate towards shared goals. Leadership teams should be selected and assessed against these parameters. Once selected, they should undergo an obligatory, tailored and dynamic induction and in-briefing program. Mission leaders should maintain strong and fluid communication lines with UN headquarters and vice versa, ensuring alignment in their strategic approach. They should also strive for mutual respect and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the wider UN presence.

To meet these goals, mission leaders need support, including through mentoring, coaching, mental health support and opportunities to network with other serving UN leaders in and beyond their region. Since the demands placed on senior leaders will probably change during the

112 C34 Report, A/78/19, 2024, para. 168.

113 As was the case in UNIPSIL.

114 See the “UN Values and Behaviours Framework,” [https://i.unu.edu/media/unu.edu/page/24952/Values-and-Behaviours-Framework\\_Final.pdf](https://i.unu.edu/media/unu.edu/page/24952/Values-and-Behaviours-Framework_Final.pdf)

different phases of a field mission, the leadership team's composition should also adapt.

## Support Capabilities

All field missions require rapidly accessible support capabilities, often similar in form but varying in scale and composition depending on the operation and local conditions. Key planning variables include the security conditions, the number and balance of civilian and uniformed capabilities, the relative balance of essential field capacities (including for effective assessment of risk and performance) and remote capacities (both technical and transactional), the number and accessibility of sites, the required level of static vs mobile accommodation, and the existing level of available basic services, infrastructure and local capacities in the host territory.

The UN has well-established systems and capacities to provide or procure support to UN and non-UN missions, including for medical services, casualty evacuation, aviation and transport, rations, accommodation and facilities (with accompanying management of the energy, water, waste, and environmental footprint), human resources, information and communications technologies, legal and financial operations, reimbursement mechanisms. Effective support for modern field missions hinges on robust systems (including contracts and policies) that are designed to respond to context-specific operational demands and local markets. Ideally, support systems will generate greater local and national support and a positive legacy for host countries. This could come via UN investments in goods, services and infrastructure and capacity-building for national staff, through in-service training, as well as for local business communities to enable them to compete in UN procurement of services and goods.

In addition, the roles, configuration, and functions of the UN's strategic deployment stocks (SDS), consisting of material stock and enabling capacities, are critical to the peacekeeping enterprise. Specifically, the SDS enables the UN to effectively launch new missions, provide surge capacities, rotate stocks, and even support

emergency responses including health crises and natural and man-made disasters. This study strongly endorses the proposal to revise the SDS concept, to expand the scope of support to encompass all UN peace operations, Secretariat activities, and related agencies, as well to reflect deepened cooperation with regional organizations and other entities.<sup>115</sup>

## Data and Information Management

Peacekeepers need to establish information advantage as the basis for agile and effective operations. This requires enhanced situational awareness and impact monitoring involving multiple channels of data collection and peacekeeping-intelligence. In today's complex information ecosystems, it is an act of self-harm for UN peacekeeping not to have more dedicated data management and analytics positions.

After a slow start, UN peacekeeping has made considerable progress digitizing and standardizing data collection, processing, analysis, and visualization, and is trying to raise data literacy levels across its workforce. The UN 2.0 efforts to improve personnel skills and capabilities in innovation, data analytics, digital transformation, and strategic foresight are important and have been recognized as such in the Pact for the Future.<sup>116</sup> These developments are improving the ways peacekeepers integrate data analytics and helping leaders discern long-term trends and specific developments, challenges, and opportunities, as well as make more evidence-based decisions. Senior figures in the peacekeeping community are gradually embracing digital data analytics; SRSGs are explicitly using data analytics to strengthen engagement with the Council, and Reports of the Secretary-General now include temporal and spatial trends analysis in user-friendly visualizations. This transformation is gradually helping field missions better understand their operational environment, improving the UN's institutional memory on peacekeeping, and enabling the transfer of data and knowledge to other UN entities after peacekeepers leave.<sup>117</sup>

115 See Report of the Secretary-General, Budget for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 (A/76/730, 1 March 2022), Annex IV "Revised concept of strategic deployment stocks," pp. 93-102.

116 See UN 2.0 Quintet of Change, <https://www.un.org/two-zero/en> and Pact for the Future, para. 73a.

117 UN data will also be a gold mine for researchers to test hypotheses about the broader enterprise of peacekeeping.

Most of the remaining challenges in this area are not solely technical problems; they involve making full use of available data, including through further integration towards a logical data ecosystem designed to meet mission needs; establishing proper data governance, including by standardizing and consistently implementing data collection and analysis processes; and information management choices by the field missions concerning how to use the existing data systems.

## Strategic Communications

UN peacekeeping must improve how it communicates its most important messages to key audiences at the local, regional, and international levels. This requires effective outreach, timely provision of impartial and accurate information, the creation of compelling, story-driven and engaging narrative content to interact with target audiences, as well as robust and proactive counter-messaging to address mis- and disinformation.

However, UN strategic communications face several major constraints in addition to a lack of resources. First, UN communications cannot always say everything that should be said, especially when it involves politically sensitive topics. Second, there is a major skills deficit to compete effectively in the contemporary information environment. Major improvements will require leadership sensitization and buy-in, and much more training on modernized methods and channels of strategic communications. UN headquarters will also need modernized in-house skill sets and policy guidance. All field missions need robust dedicated strategic communications capabilities to reach key audiences and help them navigate and influence increasingly complex and frequently hostile information ecosystems. In conjunction with relevant units at UN headquarters, these capabilities should support missions, peace processes and political settlements, and help protect civilians, as well as manage threats, reputational risks, and expectations.<sup>118</sup>

Peace operations can achieve these goals by disseminating timely, impartial, and accurate information to key stakeholders in creative and engaging ways, including vital news and early warnings about potential threats;

producing compelling narratives about the mission's activities and impact that build support and help manage expectations of key target audiences; and mitigating the real-world harms created by MDMH on both missions and on vulnerable groups in host countries.<sup>119</sup>

## Information Integrity

While strategic communications and information integrity are inextricably linked and should be mutually reinforcing, there are distinctions. Digital communications have enabled the spread of false or misleading information at an unprecedented scale and speed, and their influence is likely to increase as internet penetration rises. In peacekeeping settings, harmful information poses a strategic and operational challenge. Actors critical of the UN have misconstrued mandates and slandered missions and their personnel, sometimes resulting in the loss of life of local civilians and peacekeepers.

In response, UN peacekeeping must enhance its information integrity—the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of information. To do so, UN headquarters and missions need the skills and capabilities to analyze the “ABC” of disinformation (actors, behavior, content); anticipate vulnerable moments and the seeding of new narratives; establish and manage measures to mitigate, prevent and respond to MDMH, through integrated capacity in the field and headquarters; and learn how to deploy effective preventive and countermeasures. Moving forward, UN field missions need dedicated capacity for monitoring, analyzing, and responding to MDMH. Specifically, specialized capabilities in computational science, data and political analysis, especially disinformation specialists; resources to strengthen information integrity, including through capacity-building, network-building, community engagement, and media literacy; and structures to enable whole-of-UN responses to build resilience and manage and evaluate those responses.

118 *Policy: Strategic Communications in Peace Operations* (UN Ref. DPO 2024.04 / DPPA 2024.01, 1 June 2024), para. 7.

119 *Information Integrity: Addressing Mis/Dis/Malinformation and Hate Speech in Peacekeeping Settings* (UN DPO Policy, forthcoming 2024), para. 20.

## Standby and Rapid Deployment Capabilities

When peacekeepers are required for new missions or to reinforce existing ones, they are usually needed quickly. The UN must improve its human resource processes and structures to get the right people in the right place quickly, including via standby capacities and mechanisms for surge deployments. The PCRS and its rapid deployment level have contributed greatly to accelerated deployment timelines for uniformed units. They complement the UN's Standing Police Capacity, the justice and corrections standing capacities, as well as the civilian Standing Surge Capacity, which can deploy civilian personnel within 10 days' notice for up to 90 days.

These capabilities could be improved by ensuring staff profiles match prospective mission needs and finding a way to fund deployment costs (travel and sustainment), perhaps through a dedicated trust fund. To improve the rapid deployment of uniformed contingents, more could be done to plan and exercise for different scenarios involving the simultaneous deployment of multiple units, including as a vanguard brigade. One scenario could include enabling units on standby for disaster relief operations as envisaged in Model 21. Another interesting proposal is establishing a center of excellence for (uniformed and civilian) observers to generate a cadre of specialized personnel who are prepared for rapid deployment.<sup>120</sup>

## Security and Welfare for Peacekeepers

Peacekeepers are deployed in challenging, non-permissive environments that put them under intense stress and strain. Health and safety incidents remain the leading causes of fatalities and injuries. The UN is therefore right to dedicate increased attention and resources to mental health support for uniformed and civilian personnel and ensuring working environments free from harassment and abuse. In addition, all uniformed personnel in remote locations must have access to the internet, no matter what country deploys them.

And with UN peacekeepers increasingly becoming targets of direct attack, the Organization must invest further in defensive technologies. The first step is carefully considering the lessons from the UN's most dangerous operations concerning the security and safety of its peacekeepers and installations. Then, UN peacekeepers need to be given sufficient resources to defend themselves, including gender-responsive equipment. In part, this can be achieved by better use of sensing technologies and community engagement to make areas of operations more transparent.

In practical terms, the UN owes its personnel excellent medical support, irrespective of where they are stationed. All field missions should have adequate medical facilities and support capabilities, including the continued mainstreaming of telemedicine. In organizational terms, MINUSMA's Patient Evacuation Coordination Center stands out for supporting quick and better decision-making by its use of commercial stand-alone aero-medical evacuation teams, mobile damage control surgical teams, and telemedicine.

Second, it is vital to improve UN counter-IED capabilities and related medical response. With IEDs now the weapon of choice of violent extremists targeting UN personnel, peacekeepers need the capabilities to defeat the device, prepare the force, and ideally, attack the network. Peacekeepers also need to be equipped with lifesaving skills to stabilize casualties at the IED site and from other attacks through training such as the Field Medical Assistants Course.<sup>121</sup>

Third, the increase in the production, employment, and success of unmanned systems by armed groups must change the way the UN prepares to use and counter-UAS. This is increasingly urgent given that in September 2024 UN peacekeepers were attacked for the first time by an improvised armed UAS (in eastern DRC).

And fourth, the UN cannot afford to have its bases overrun by hostile forces. Member States should invest in effective base defenses and rapid reinforcement capabilities. The task is complicated because any static

120 See Annika Hilding Nordberg et al, *United Nations Truce Supervision Organization: Role, Relevance, Function, and Utility – Lessons for Future Peace Operations* (EPON and GCSP, 2024),

<https://www.nupi.no/en/publications/cristin-pub/united-nations-truce-supervision-organization-role-relevance-function-and-utility-lessons-for-future-peace-operations>

121 See <https://peacekeepingresourcehub.un.org/en/training/rtp/FMAC>

command and basing arrangements will be vulnerable to actors armed with sensing technologies, satellite imagery, electronic warfare capabilities, and UAS. The deployment of AI-enabled computer vision models could be especially useful for threat detection while quick reaction forces will be vital for reinforcement when things go wrong. In all these areas, the UN should build on its bi- and multilateral training- and capacity-building partnerships (e.g. the Triangular Partnership Program,<sup>122</sup> Light Coordination Mechanism, Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping<sup>123</sup>), which have made useful progress related to C-IED, telemedicine, field medicine, engineering, C4ISR, and camp security.

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122 See <https://operationalsupport.un.org/en/triangular-partnership-programme-tpp>

123 See <https://operationalsupport.un.org/en/partnership-technology-peacekeeping>

# 7. Success Factors

The impact of UN field missions on local political, economic, and social dynamics is complex and defies simplistic categorizations as either successes or failures. Reality is more complicated. All UN missions have a mix of achievements and shortcomings that affect host country trajectories to varying degrees. And many factors contribute to the outcomes. In 2008, the UN’s “capstone” document identified legitimacy, credibility, and the promotion of national and local ownership as important success factors.<sup>124</sup> The most recent 2024 C34 report highlighted the following critical factors: well-defined, realistic and achievable mandates; political will; leadership; performance and accountability at all levels; adequate resources; policy, planning and operational guidelines; absence of caveats that have a detrimental impact on mandate implementation and performance; and training.<sup>125</sup> All these remain relevant and important. Looking to the future, this study identifies the following factors as critical.

## Security Council Leadership and Unity

No amount of new peacekeeping tools will deliver the desired results if the Security Council is divided, unwilling or unable to consistently support its field missions, especially when challenges arise. A divided and reactive Council undermines its credibility and reduces its leverage on the conflict parties and might work at cross-purposes, making it difficult to mobilize broader support for peacekeeping and fueling skepticism among current and potential host governments and populations. Peacekeeping’s best chance of success is when the Security Council demonstrates sustained leadership and unity of purpose, including by injecting momentum into deadlocked peace processes, without which its operations lack viable exit strategies.<sup>126</sup>

A broader set of options, as outlined above, will hopefully help facilitate discussions among Council members and with current or potential host governments. But several other steps are needed. First, all Member States, especially those sitting in the Council, must “support the implementation of Security Council resolutions through [their] bilateral and multilateral engagements”, as they promised in the 2018 Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations.<sup>127</sup> Second, the UN membership, including via the General Assembly, should never tire of reminding the Council of its responsibilities as several dozen Member States did during the recent Security Council open debate on the future of peacekeeping.<sup>128</sup> Third, the Secretariat should also look to step up its informal engagements with all the members of the Council (permanent and elected), but also other stakeholders, notably T/PCCs, regional, and other actors, to mobilize broader political support for mandate implementation. Under certain circumstances, both regional actors and the elected members can play significant roles in fostering consensual options in the Council. Finally, the Security Council should cooperate more effectively with the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, including the Peacebuilding Commission, as called for in the Pact for the Future.<sup>129</sup> This will build host state cooperation for UN efforts by reinforcing national ownership and help mobilize additional international political attention and resources for countries undergoing a UN transition.

## Cooperation and Support of Host Governments

Peacekeeping success is closely correlated with the level of cooperation and support it receives from the host government and other concerned parties. Beyond host government consent being a core principle of UN

124 *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*, pp. 36-40.

125 See C34 Report, A/78/19, 2024, paras 92 and 106.

126 See the commitments made by the Security Council in S/PRST/2024/5, 25 September 2024.

127 Action for Peacekeeping, *Declaration of Shared Commitments* (2018), para. 5, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p-declaration-en.pdf>

128 See UN press release, SC/15813, 9 September 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15813.doc.htm>

129 *Pact for the Future*, Action 41 and para. 69c.



peacekeeping, what matters most is the willingness of host governments to cooperate fully and continuously with peacekeepers and, when problems arise, look for solutions with an open mind.

In today's polarized international environment, working with a UN operation could enable host governments to reduce the impact of geopolitical tensions and rivalries while also offering them a greater range of choices and relationships. Unfortunately, relations between missions and host governments can sometimes be challenging and even breakdown completely when the main political objectives of the mission's mandate and those of the host government diverge, or when suspicion and mistrust set in. Unconstitutional changes of government can pose uniquely difficult challenges.

When tensions arise, both the Security Council and host government(s) should recall that peacekeeping operations are designed to ensure the main conflict parties and local population can all enjoy the many benefits of peace. This recognition should override any other consideration. Moreover, the Council should remind host governments of their responsibilities to their people and to the UN, as well as of their commitment to advancing the peace process or related key reforms. Without the required political will from the host government and other parties, progress on areas of mission mandates can become impossible.

Similarly, there are steps that the UN can take to help foster continuous, close cooperation. First, the Council as a collective and penholders individually should systematically seek the views of host governments and other stakeholders on issues pertaining to mandates, especially in advance of their renewal, and find the most effective formula for such consultations. Such consultations should be done without compromising the authority of the Council and should ensure that mandates remain relevant and appropriate. Second, missions should always be mindful of the imperative to act transparently and impartially, and be deliberate in their efforts to build trust, including by frequent meetings between their leadership and the host authorities to assess mandate

implementation and identify ways to improve delivery. Encouragingly, nowadays, most UN peacekeeping missions have developed formal coordination mechanisms to foster cooperation with the host government on strategic and operational issues.<sup>130</sup> Third, missions can also help strengthen host government cooperation by being creative in response to requests for support from local and national authorities and prioritizing the delivery of tangible benefits to the local population and key stakeholders.

## Delivering Tangible Benefits

Peacekeeping has a greater chance of success when missions deliver tangible and sustainable benefits that are visible and felt by host communities. Accommodating requests for support from host communities will increase missions' legitimacy, effectiveness, and ability to engage with local and national stakeholders on key aspects of mandate implementation. Where this is not possible, missions should explain why and do so in ways that are context and culturally sensitive.

Of course, the expected benefits will vary significantly by context, mandates, and available resources but prioritizing areas that directly benefit local populations should be an overarching goal. Examples could include proactively protecting civilians when mandated to do so; using a mission's engineering assets for essential infrastructure repairs, its medical assets to provide healthcare, or its air assets to facilitate transportation of local stakeholders and people; prioritizing local and regional procurement; supporting sustainable energy solutions; or using programmatic funding, quick impact projects (QIPs), or trust funds to help meet critical needs and generate local employment.<sup>131</sup>

Additional programmatic funding and resources for QIPs should be sought when needed. With these predictable resources, missions could make important contributions to peacebuilding and complement recovery and development efforts led by national governments and supported by development partners, including those in the UN

130 These include MONUSCO's joint government-UN working group, and the High Level Coordination Forum and Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission established by UNMISS. See Action For Peacekeeping+ (5th Progress Report, September 2024), pp.16-17, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/a4p-fifth-progress-report>

131 For example, Community Violence Reduction (CVR) programs are an important tool that are flexible and reactive and can generate employment and training for youth in high-risk areas.

Country Team and IFIs.<sup>132</sup> The Peacebuilding Fund could also be an important source of funding and vector for integration. Missions and Country Teams should ensure the maximum level of complementarity and coordination between the different actors and funding sources, including through the Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. In some cases, dedicated liaison capacity with IFIs should be considered.<sup>133</sup>

## Regional Support

In addition to support from the Security Council and host populations, UN peacekeeping has a better chance of success when supported by neighboring states and the relevant regional arrangements. These actors have considerable stakes in the outcome: when missions succeed, they are among the most immediate beneficiaries, and when missions fail, they are the most impacted. Regional actors also frequently lead the political processes that UN missions are supporting and contribute increasing numbers of peacekeepers.<sup>134</sup> In sum, there is a mutual interest for the UN and regional actors to ensure investment in peacekeeping pays off.

The policy challenge is to convert this convergence of interests into tangible results. Two steps could help. First, the UN can further enhance its partnership with regional actors, building on progress already made in this respect: it can work to ensure synergies between its efforts and those of regional actors and it should keep regional actors informed about its activities and the problems confronting them, both political and operational. The goal is to ensure regional actors are invested in the success of UN missions as vital to the whole region. If achieved, regional actors would be more likely to support missions when they face practical challenges, including those linked to freedom of movement, step up engagement with host countries and other stakeholders to facilitate all aspects of mandate implementation, leverage regional normative and policy instruments to ensure greater synergy with the UN, and resist calls for missions to

drawdown or exit prematurely. Second, regional actors themselves can play important roles in fostering Security Council unity and action as well as host state consent in support of mandate implementation. When regional actors rally behind a course of action, they can often influence the Council's deliberations, cohesion, and decisions.

## Achievable Objectives, Sufficient Resources, Realistic Expectations

Peacekeeping missions are set up for failure if they are given unattainable objectives and insufficient resources and capabilities. This creates a serious capabilities-expectations gap. Addressing this challenge requires the Secretariat to provide the Council "with regular, frank assessments and realistic recommendations of the highest standards to support [its] decision-making."<sup>135</sup>

But even when mandates are not unreasonably ambitious and resources not a critical impediment, it is important that key (local and international) stakeholders also hold realistic expectations about what peace operations can deliver, how long it will take to build peace, and what factors are key to success. This requires better and frequent communication between the UN and its field missions, conflict parties, local populations, and international stakeholders to ensure clarity on the scope and limitations of peacekeeping operations. Longer-term peacebuilding and sustaining peace objectives should also be integrated in the mandate development stage, including collaborative approaches with UN Country Teams and consideration of programmatic peacebuilding resources available either through, or external to, the mission itself.

## Commitment and Local Knowledge

The workforce for UN peacekeeping should be comprised of individuals who are committed to building peace between the conflict parties and engaging with conflict-affected communities more broadly. Peacekeeping is

132 Mission and UN Country Team activities in support of sustaining peace are both part of the UN "sustainable development cooperation framework," which is jointly signed by the Resident Coordinator and the host government and serves as the common strategic framework for the UN system activities in support of sustaining peace (as per the 2023 revision of the integrated assessment and planning policy).

133 As recommended by the Independent Strategic Review of MINUSCA, March-June 2024.

134 See Paul D. Williams and Thong Nguyen, *Neighborhood Dynamics in UN Peacekeeping Operations, 1990-2017* (International Peace Institute, 2018), <https://www.ipinst.org/2018/04/neighborhood-dynamics-in-un-peacekeeping-operations>

135 Report of the Secretary-General, "Overall performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations," S/2023/646, 1 September 2023, para. 75.

not an ordinary job; it requires determination, hard work, risk-taking, and people who care about the fate of local populations and the countries where they are deployed. In recent decades, peacekeeping operations have frequently demonstrated that some of their greatest impact materializes at the local level, far away from capitals where ordinary people are most disenfranchised and in need of help.

Most peacekeeping models will benefit from a more sustained shift towards people-centered approaches that engage communities to build trust and develop space for political solutions rather than simply to extract information and provide top-down solutions. This requires further professionalization of community engagement across all mission functions and developing a more sophisticated understanding of the specific priorities, concerns, and expectations of the communities disaggregated by gender, age, and other identity markers. Transparent two-way communications with local actors should be the norm to build trust and an environment for collaborative engagement.

Although most UN peacekeeping staff care deeply about the populations they serve, the rigidity of the traditional human resources framework can lead to the same personnel remaining in hardship duty posts for years, creating cynicism, complacency, and fatigue that negatively impact mandate implementation. Just as new models of peacekeeping need to be more agile, mobile, and flexible, so does the UN's workforce. The UN should revisit this issue more strategically. Furthermore, to the extent possible and without compromising their impartiality, missions should rely more on local staff for political and similar expertise and knowledge. This already happens in some missions and areas (e.g. civil affairs) but not in others.

## Adaptability

In unpredictable and complex environments, the ability of UN missions to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances and fleeting opportunities will be key. This will be enhanced if missions have appropriate processes and tools to regularly generate information and analysis about which of their activities are having a positive effect and which are more problematic. In turn, missions need the ability to make evidence-based decisions on strategic and

operational adjustments on an ongoing basis. As emphasized above, this includes stronger integrated operational planning at mission headquarters and sector/field office levels. Hence, tools that enhance a mission's situational awareness and assess its activities deserve further engagement, notably the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS) and situational awareness tools and systems.<sup>136</sup> There is also a good case for establishing a UN "fusion-cell" of data specialists in a central location, ideally close to missions.

At the same time, the rigidity of some of the UN's regulatory frameworks, such as the one for human resources, reduces the ability of missions to adapt to changing demands. Budgetary factors can also have considerable implications on mandate implementation and the level of flexibility missions may have. For example, missions have to absorb any increases in civilian staffing costs (international and national), during the budget year. In addition, in light of the liquidity challenges, the Secretariat has been asked to use the peacekeeping reserve fund (\$150 million) as the first point of borrowing for missions. This has reduced the amounts in the reserve fund to about \$40 million, which would limit start-ups and potential mandate expansions when needed.

## Performance

The UN has made important progress by defining performance standards for its personnel, their training, and equipment, as well as incentives for outstanding performance.<sup>137</sup> Mission leadership, uniformed personnel and units, and civilian personnel should all have their performance more effectively assessed. It is most helpful (and fair) for assessments to be based on clear standards and directly tied to mandated tasks. Leaders' assessments should encompass their own performance and the extent to which they create an enabling environment for their subordinates. Regular, integrated discussions on performance at mission level should occur for all uniformed contingents and civilian sections. This can ensure leadership is aware of outstanding performance and can take remedial measures if performance shortfalls are identified. The ongoing revision of the military unit

<sup>136</sup> See <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/cpas>

<sup>137</sup> See SCR 2436 (2018).

evaluation tool should be completed and rolled out as soon as possible to ensure that key elements of operational effectiveness are assessed effectively, including mindset and posture.

When poor performance is identified, the UN and the relevant Member States need mechanisms and integrated performance feedback based on credible assessments to enable the personnel or units concerned to perform better. Personnel or units that consistently underperform despite efforts to take remedial measures should be removed. Issues related to poorly performing units need to be resolved quickly given the risk to mandate implementation and the financial implications of cash-strapped missions continuing to reimburse underperforming units. Additional improvements to performance assessments and related decisions should be made at different levels, ranging from stronger evaluation capacity in military force headquarters, more effective mechanisms to address civilian underperformance, to more effective and timely decision making at headquarters to address serious performance issues.

## **Conduct and Accountability**

All peacekeeping models should include a robust framework to prevent misconduct, ensure accountability if it occurs, and provide support to victims. If peacekeepers violate the UN's standards of conduct, there is cascading harm to victims, communities, the reputation of the UN and implicated Member States and, ultimately, to mandate implementation. This includes mission leadership. When leaders' conduct and performance risk undermining mandate implementation or endanger peacekeepers, headquarters must take quick and effective action.

UN field missions therefore require adequately resourced conduct and discipline elements. Conduct and discipline resources should be factored into an integrated planning process and based on an assessment of the inevitable risks of misconduct. Missions must manage risks of misconduct, including regular revisions to key risk management tools based on evolving circumstances and the Council should be regularly updated on these risks. Importantly, conduct and discipline functions remain relevant through any transition of a UN peacekeeping presence, since issues of misconduct, particularly those related to sexual exploitation and abuse, require case management and support to victims long after an incident may have occurred (see below). These

functions should be preserved and funded throughout the closure of a mission, as the UN does with cases of post-traumatic stress disorder. Depending on the modality adopted, risk assessments will also be needed when considering support that the Secretariat might provide to UN-authorized missions. The UN's extensive experience of managing the risks of misconduct should be a critical resource to partners seeking to ensure the good conduct and accountability of peacekeepers, including in situations of parallel or joint deployments.

## **Effective Transition**

The withdrawal of a peacekeeping mission or the reconfiguration of the UN presence can be pivotal in a country's pathway to peace and development. Such transitions are an opportunity for the UN system to adapt its strategy, priorities, funding, and footprint to shifting realities on the ground. Smooth transitions are supported by the host government(s), the main conflict parties, the UN Resident Coordinator and Country Teams, as well as relevant regional actors. They are also informed by early strategic planning and integrate activities across all UN actors. Transitions should preserve the positive impacts and legacies of missions and increase the prospect for longer-term national development, with the support of well-resourced Resident Coordinator Offices and Country Teams.

But transitions can also bring risks, which the Security Council should recognize and manage by demonstrating its unwavering political support to UN missions. Risks can also be mitigated by building relevant national capacity, especially in areas that will be transferred after mission withdrawal; engaging the local population so that expectations are aligned with realities; and by leveraging existing (sub)regional capabilities and resources. Council members must also ensure that mandates involving early transition strategies and contingency plans account for the overall capacity of the UN field presence and allocate sufficient resources from the assessed budget to implement the transition. When transitions involve non-UN missions, effective partnership and collaborative decision-making mechanisms will be crucial. Finally, the UN needs to reimagine mission liquidation as being more than just about logistics. As noted above, it involves issues that require attention and funding well after the last peacekeeper and their equipment depart.

# 8. Conclusions

UN peacekeeping is not only the Organization's most well-known brand, but also one of its most successful tools. This study affirms peacekeeping's value as a versatile, effective, and cost-effective multilateral tool to help prevent and reduce the negative consequences of armed conflict and other crises that threaten international peace and security. In sum, peacekeeping is a worthy investment. The Security Council and other relevant actors would be wise to provide the necessary political support and financial resources. The stakes are high, both for the Council's credibility and for the countries and populations who will suffer the worst consequences of future conflicts and crises.

To remain fit for purpose, peacekeeping must continue to adapt and evolve, as it has done in the past. The UN should help by streamlining its processes and enhancing its planning capabilities. Embracing a modular approach based on the models presented here (and potentially others) can help peacekeeping adapt to changing circumstances once again. As it does so, the study team offers four conclusions that emerge from our preceding analysis.

First, there is a strong link between peacekeeping and the broader prevention and peacebuilding agendas, as well as the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. In the *New Agenda for Peace*, the Secretary-General called on the UN's Member States to "go beyond lip service and invest, politically and financially, in prevention."<sup>138</sup> Investing in peacekeeping and the capabilities highlighted in this study is one way to meet this call. The link between peacekeeping and prevention could be reinforced by seeking entry points for preventive deployments or other missions that support prevention, and sustaining investments in the capabilities and missions that prevent smoldering conflicts from erupting again. Peacekeeping missions are also among the UN's most prominent peacebuilding actors. The forthcoming UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review presents an excellent opportunity to further strengthen the impact missions and their partners can have on peacebuilding outcomes, as well

as their links to the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

Second, our world faces mounting peace and security challenges that call for inclusive, principled, and effective multilateral action. Peacekeeping can help galvanize such multilateralism. The peacekeeping enterprise has a demonstrated track record of bringing together a wide range of actors in an array of official multilateral forums, including the C34, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial processes, as well as long-standing transnational networks such as the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centers and International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations.<sup>139</sup> At a time when geopolitical and other rivalries are intensifying international divisions in many areas, a shared commitment to peacekeeping continues to bring together many diverse actors inside and outside the UN system. Peacekeeping's potential to help mitigate these challenges and, at times, overcome them in the pursuit of peace should be embraced and strengthened.

Third, although much public discourse continues to focus on the limits and weaknesses of peacekeeping, it is important to recall how many countries are better off today because they embraced peace missions. As the independent research cited in this study attests, across the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa, there are countries and populations that are more stable and prosperous, in no small part, because they invited UN peacekeepers to help them build a more peaceful political order.

Finally, while peacekeeping works much of the time, it is not a magic wand. Unless the belligerents in armed conflicts display a genuine commitment to make peace, no UN mission will be able to resolve their conflicts for them. We hope this study can help persuade conflict parties that engaging in multilateral action within the UN framework offers them an effective way to achieve durable peace.

<sup>138</sup> *A New Agenda for Peace*, p. 11.

<sup>139</sup> See <https://www.iaptc.org> and <https://challengesforum.org/about/history/>

# List of Abbreviations

<b>AFISMA</b>	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>AMIB</b>	African Union Mission in Burundi
<b>AMIS</b>	African Union Mission in the Sudan
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>C-IED</b>	counter-improvised explosive devices
<b>C34</b>	UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping
<b>C4ISR</b>	command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
<b>CAR</b>	Central African Republic
<b>CBM</b>	confidence-building measure
<b>CICIG</b>	International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala
<b>CIMIC</b>	civil-military cooperation
<b>CPAS</b>	Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System
<b>CRSV</b>	conflict-related sexual violence
<b>DDR</b>	disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
<b>DOMREP</b>	Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic
<b>DPPA</b>	UN Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>EACRF</b>	East African Community-Regional Force
<b>ECOMIL</b>	ECOWAS Mission in Liberia
<b>ECOMOG</b>	Military Observer Group of the Economic Community of West African States
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EOD</b>	explosive ordnance disposal
<b>ERW</b>	explosive remnants of war
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUFOR</b>	European Union force
<b>EULEX</b>	EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
<b>FACA</b>	Central African Armed Forces
<b>FARDC</b>	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>HRDDP</b>	UN human rights due diligence policy
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDDRS</b>	Integrated DDR Standards
<b>IDPs</b>	internally displaced persons

<b>IEDD</b>	improvised explosive device disposal
<b>IEDs</b>	improvised explosive devices
<b>IHL</b>	international humanitarian law
<b>IHRL</b>	international human rights law
<b>IFIs</b>	international financial institutions
<b>ISR</b>	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
<b>IUU</b>	illegal, unreported, unregulated
<b>KFOR</b>	Kosovo Force
<b>MDMH</b>	misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, and hate speech
<b>MICIVIH</b>	International Civilian Mission in Haiti
<b>MINUGUA</b>	UN Verification Mission in Guatemala
<b>MINUJUSTH</b>	UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti
<b>MINURCAT</b>	UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
<b>MINURSO</b>	UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
<b>MINUSCA</b>	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR
<b>MINUSMA</b>	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
<b>MINUSTAH</b>	UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti
<b>MISCA</b>	African Union Mission in the Central African Republic
<b>MONUA</b>	UN Observer Mission in Angola
<b>MONUC</b>	UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>MONUSCO</b>	UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>MSO</b>	military staff officer
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>OCHA</b>	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OHCHR</b>	UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner
<b>OLMEE</b>	OAU Liaison Mission in Ethiopia/Eritrea
<b>ONUB</b>	UN Operation in Burundi
<b>ONUC</b>	UN Operation in the Congo
<b>ONUCA</b>	UN Observer Group in Central America
<b>ONUMOZ</b>	UN Operation in Mozambique
<b>ONUSAL</b>	UN Observer Mission in El Salvador
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>OSINT</b>	open source intelligence
<b>PCRS</b>	UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System

<b>PHEIC</b>	public health emergencies of international concern
<b>QIP</b>	quick impact project
<b>RDL</b>	Rapid Deployment Level (in the PCRS)
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SAMIDRC</b>	SADC Mission in the DRC
<b>SCR</b>	UN Security Council resolution
<b>SDS</b>	UN strategic deployment stocks
<b>SFOR</b>	Stabilization Force (NATO-led) in Bosnia
<b>SGBV</b>	sexual and gender-based violence
<b>SNA</b>	Somali National Army
<b>SPM</b>	special political mission
<b>SPT</b>	specialized police team
<b>SRSG</b>	UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General
<b>SSR</b>	security sector reform
<b>T/PCC</b>	troop- and police-contributing country
<b>TOC</b>	transnational organized crime
<b>UAS</b>	unmanned aerial systems
<b>UNAMID</b>	AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (Sudan)
<b>UNAMIR</b>	UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda
<b>UNAMSIL</b>	UN Mission in Sierra Leone
<b>UNAVEM</b>	UN Angola Verification Mission
<b>UNDP</b>	UN Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	UN Environment Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFICYP</b>	UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
<b>UNHCR</b>	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNIFIL</b>	UN Interim Force in Lebanon
<b>UNIOGBIS</b>	UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau
<b>UNIPSIL</b>	UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
<b>UNISFA</b>	UN Interim Security Force for Abyei
<b>UNMAS</b>	UN Mine Action Service
<b>UNMEE</b>	UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
<b>UNMIBH</b>	UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>UNMIH</b>	UN Mission in Haiti
<b>UNMIK</b>	UN Mission in Kosovo



<b>UNMIL</b>	UN Mission in Liberia
<b>UNMIS</b>	UN Mission in Sudan
<b>UNMISET</b>	UN Mission in Support of East Timor
<b>UNMISS</b>	UN Mission in South Sudan
<b>UNMIT</b>	UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
<b>UNMOGIP</b>	UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
<b>UNMOT</b>	UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan
<b>UNOCI</b>	UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire
<b>UNOCT</b>	UN Office of Counter Terrorism
<b>UNODC</b>	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UNOMIG</b>	UN Observer Mission in Georgia
<b>UNOMIL</b>	UN Observer Mission in Liberia
<b>UNOMSA</b>	UN Observation Mission in South Africa
<b>UNOMSIL</b>	UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
<b>UNOSOM</b>	UN Operation in Somalia
<b>UNOVER</b>	UN Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea
<b>UNPREDEP</b>	UN Preventive Deployment Force (Macedonia)
<b>UNPROFOR</b>	UN Protection Force (former Yugoslavia)
<b>UNSAS</b>	UN Standby Arrangements System
<b>UNSOS</b>	UN Support Office for Somalia
<b>UNTAC</b>	UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia
<b>UNTAG</b>	UN Transition Assistance Group (Namibia)
<b>UNTAES</b>	UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, Western Sirmium
<b>UNTAET</b>	UN Transition Authority in East Timor
<b>UNTEA</b>	UN Temporary Executive Authority
<b>UNTSO</b>	UN Truce Supervision Organization
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WMD</b>	weapons of mass destruction

# Endnotes

- i The simulations concluded that a UN investment of \$200 billion between 2001-2013 in peacekeeping operations with strong mandates, would have reduced major armed conflict by up to two-thirds relative to a scenario without peacekeeping operations and 150,000 lives would have been saved compared to a no-peacekeeping scenario. Håvard Hegre, Lisa Hultman, Håvard Mokleiv Nygård, "Evaluating the Conflict-Reducing Effect of UN Peacekeeping Operations," *The Journal of Politics*, 81:1 (2019): 215-232, <https://doi.org/10.1086/700203>
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