

Statement of Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations

Hervé Ladsous

Debate of the Fourth Committee on Peacekeeping

28 October 2014

It is a pleasure to be here with you for the fourth time. In previous statements to this Committee, I have reported to you on efforts we have taken, together with DFS, to enhance the capacity of the Organization to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations. We have, introduced new technologies, established periodic reviews of missions, worked to broaden the base of contributors, and created a new Office of the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership. I have also set out for you, each year, growing demands on United Nations peacekeeping.

As Ameerah will describe in her remarks, the scale of UN peacekeeping operations today and those supported by DPKO and DFS are remarkable. Our missions must operate in remote areas, across massive distances and in unfortunately increasingly hostile and asymmetrical environments. The scale of peacekeeping is matched by its complexity. Our missions support sensitive political processes. They work to shore up weak state institutions. They reach out to local communities caught up for decades in violence and conflict. And they do so with commitment and courage.

The conflicts of today, while fewer in number, are deeply rooted. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Darfur, and South Sudan today, are in a second or third wave of conflict. And many are complicated by regional dimensions that are key to their solution. In fact, some two-thirds of peacekeeping personnel today are deployed in the midst of ongoing conflict, where peace agreements are shaky or absent.

Conflicts today are also increasingly intensive, involving determined armed groups with access to sophisticated armaments and techniques. They involve a mix of armed groups as well as transnational criminal networks and, in Mali, terrorist organizations. In the past year, we have also seen the outbreak of the devastating Ebola virus which may have enduring security, economic and social impacts. It is critical that all stakeholders work together to fight Ebola and preserve the hard won peace in West Africa.

In this global context, the Security Council has continued to turn to UN peacekeeping, approving comprehensive and at times robust mandates. The Council has also mandated re-hatting of AU forces in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR), indicating a shift in how peacekeeping generates forces and capabilities. We have worked to provide enhanced capabilities to meet these challenges. Our 117,000 military, police, and civilian personnel serving in 16 missions, face constantly evolving challenges. It is essential that the diverse Member States who contribute personnel, authorize and finance peacekeeping operations come together to find these creative solutions.

In this respect, the Secretary-General's review of peace operations is timely. The Secretary-General will appoint his high-level panel shortly. This Panel must, by necessity, work closely with TCC/PCCs and other key stakeholders to make sure the recommendations have an impact. We will also work to ensure synergies with the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture and the High-level Review on Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. On the panel and its review, once the Panel issues its report, the Secretary-General will then prepare a report for consideration by the General Assembly and

Security Council some time before the 2015 General Assembly. The review will examine all UN peace operations, including both peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Looking across our missions today, we see three inter-linked challenges that must be addressed by the Panel but also in our collective efforts in the year ahead.

The first is **safety and security**. In Mali, we remember the 9 Nigerian peacekeepers killed by a mine in September. Terrorist groups target peacekeepers: they have driven vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices in MINUSMA checkpoints and laid mines on the way to water points and airstrips. In the past year, we saw car-jackings in Darfur, kidnappings in the Golan Heights, and a recent fatal ambush in the capital city of the Central African Republic. In the first two weeks of October alone, we lost fifteen peacekeeping personnel to hostile attacks. All this is flagrant violation of international law. UN peacekeepers serve in the cause of peace. They impartially implement mandates given to them by the Security Council. Once again I strongly condemn all such attacks against our colleagues and call on host authorities to fully investigate and bring to justice those responsible.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of our missions to respond swiftly to situations that are dangerous and always changing. In UNDOF, solutions were found to secure the release of all detained peacekeepers. We have sought additional capabilities to provide better situational awareness and have adjusted the Mission's posture in response to new threats.

Safety and security are a shared responsibility of host governments, the UN and Member States. The UN must constantly update its policies, tactics, techniques and procedures to address new types of threats, including how to counter improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and related challenges in environments that I reiterate are asymmetrical. We must harden our

vehicles and reinforce our compounds and this will have resource implications. We will work with troop- and police-contributing countries to adapt pre-deployment training to these new types of operating environments to ensure a high level of preparedness.

Second, we must have the willingness and ability to effectively **protect civilians** across our missions. In keeping with the Secretary-General's Rights Up Front initiative, this must be understood as our most important obligation in missions with this task. We must come with the determination, capabilities, and resources required.

Protection by presence alone cannot be the default approach to address threats against civilians. In South Sudan, for example, it is because we were flexible and we were timely in decision-making that we saved countless lives. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, MONUSCO demonstrated its resolve not back down when confronted by those who would threaten the most vulnerable. The Mission's posture has also opened new opportunities to extend state authority into areas previously controlled by lawless armed groups. In the Central African Republic, the Bangui Task Force is an innovative arrangement to ensure the close cooperation the United Nations military and police forces in securing and stabilizing the capital. There should be a change in the way we execute the protection of civilians mandate, embracing a proactive posture focused on anticipating, to the degree possible, threats to civilians.

Despite their best efforts, it is not possible for peacekeepers to protect everyone. What is vital is that military and police components in the field do their utmost while insisting host states meet their obligations to protect civilians. To implement our mandates, including

protection of civilians, our missions must receive all the necessary resources and means, including mobility and monitoring and surveillance tools.

Third, is the imperative to help advance political dialogue and create the conditions for **reconciliation**. This is a political and a peacebuilding challenge.

Historically, peacekeeping operations have been able to assist and even accelerate peace processes and help to support stabilization and early peacebuilding efforts. Yet, when there is no viable roadmap, it is a tremendous challenge to advance peacebuilding. In Darfur, for example, the Security Council deployed a peacekeeping operation to address tremendous human suffering. Collectively we have not found the political conditions to permit genuine reconciliation. As the crisis in South Sudan shows us, the lack or delay of a host government's consent or the lack of political will to advance the peace process will also continue to be an important obstacle for an effective mandate implementation. And yet, reconciliation is the enduring path toward both the protection of civilians and for safety and security for our peacekeepers.

We must support the good offices efforts of our SRSGs and protect mission impartiality. And when there are political openings, we must be prepared with the required plans and expertise to assist in strengthening the rule of law, DDR, SSR, mine action, democratic processes, and core government functions to consolidate peace in close cooperation with national and development partners.

With these challenges in mind, I see several critical priorities to strengthen peacekeeping. It is my hope that these will be areas of particular focus for the Secretary-General's Panel.

First, we must strengthen the capabilities of our peacekeepers to ensure we can achieve our mandated tasks while safeguarding their safety and security. I am pleased to inform you that DPKO and DFS have recently developed a strategic agenda for uniformed capability development over the medium term. These priorities areas are: rapid deployment, standing capabilities; increased mobility of all units in-theatre including aviation support; enhanced medical support; IED survivability measures; improved information and analysis; expertise to address transnational threats such as organized crime, and last but not least planning and implementation.

This uniformed capability development agenda complements the on-going work on UN standards for military units. In an innovative and transparent way, no less than forty-five member states have supported this effort. So once approved a plan for the implementation of these should begin in early 2015 and will of course involve you member states as well.

The Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership is now fully operational. It works closely with TCCs and PCCs, helps to identify gaps that impact on the delivery of mandates, makes recommendations to enhance the safety, security and welfare of uniformed personnel, and incorporates lessons learned and best practices from our peacekeeping operations.

The ongoing implementation of revisions to the troop and COE reimbursement frameworks will also help ensure that peacekeepers are properly equipped with appropriate capabilities. Amongst other measures, as you know, there will be a new premium for the quick deployment of enabling capabilities will support countries who rapidly provide critical force multipliers such as helicopters. We currently lack about 20 helicopters. We also require

medical units or engineering support. In addition, new provisions for the rotation of aging COE will enable TCCs to ensure that their equipment is fully operational and sustainable which is still not the case in many missions and that is a concern. Similarly, a new premium for exceptional performance in situations of risk will help to duly recognize service by UN peacekeepers.

Technology, applied appropriately, is a critical tool for improving mobility, increasing situation awareness, strengthening our efficient use of resources, taking better care of the environment, and much more. By introducing unarmed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we have shown that we are able to modernize and use the latest technologies from the 21st Century, not the 20th or 19th Century to monitor movements of armed groups and allow us to better protect vulnerable populations not to mention saving human lives as we did in April when we saved the lives of people who were drowning in Lake Kivu. Ameerah and I established a High-Level Panel on Technology and Innovation which should be ready to share its findings by the end of the year. Ameerah will have more to say on this.

To ensure that we possess the appropriate capabilities, we must expand the base of major contributors to peacekeeping while deepening the engagement of current contributors.

At the recent Summit on Strengthening International Peace Operations, held as the side-event of the general debate of the 69th UN General Assembly, some 30 countries joined the Secretary-General to renew their commitment to UN peacekeeping and announce new military and police contributions. I was heartened not only by the practical contributions but by the expressions of support. This event will be followed by meetings over the coming year

focused on needed capabilities. Last week I travelled to Belgrade to attend the regional Roundtable on UN peacekeeping which aimed to enhance the participation of western Balkans countries. I am happy to announce that we will host a gathering of the Chiefs of Defence Staff of current and potential contributors here at the UN in February.

A related priority is rapid deployment. The rapid deployment of specialized expertise through our Standing Police Capacity, Justice and Corrections Standing Capacity, and Mine Action Rapid Response Team continue to make valuable contributions to field missions. However, with regard to peacekeepers, enabling capacities such as engineering, air and ground transport and medical support remain chokepoints. We are working to improve our internal processes. On the part of Member States, it would be helpful for them to prepare troops for peacekeeping missions in advance of a Security Council resolution and ensure that they can meet UN standards. To address the increased demands for formed police units, I urge your support for our efforts to establish a Formed Police Unit Stand-by capacity.

A third and related priority is cooperation with regional organizations. Both in peacekeeping and peacebuilding today, regional organizations and other parallel missions play active roles in crisis response. Regional organizations today play a vital bridging role in many cases. Building more predictable stand-by arrangements with them is key. Regional actors are vital partners for political engagement and many other elements of crisis response. I have dedicated much of my time to strengthening our partnerships with the AU, ECCAS, ECOWAS, EU, CSTO, NATO and others. Many of them have the potential to respond rapidly, others to provide niche capabilities.

A fourth priority is improved intelligence and situational awareness. We need to enhance our collection and analysis of a range of intelligence sources so that we can take informed decisions at the tactical, operational and strategic levels. In this regard, technology is a powerful force enabler. In Mali, as you know, when the All Sources Intelligence Fusion Unit – the ASIFU – is fully online, we will have an unprecedented ability to gather and analyse information relating to threats to UN peacekeeping personnel and to the local population. I would like to recognize the participation of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden in the provision of intelligence units to the ASIFU. I hope that other countries looking for ways to reengage with peacekeeping will consider providing similar enabling capacities in other missions to help us deal with asymmetrical threats.

The fifth priority is performance. We are held to an increasingly high standard of performance by the international community and the citizens where we are deployed. We also continue to implement the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy on misconduct and sexual abuse by civilian, military and police peacekeepers alike. In addition, in the past three years, we have introduced policies that set clear and non-negotiable thresholds for personal conduct for those who work in the UN family and those supported by the UN. The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and the Policy on Human Rights Screening of United Nations Personnel are distinct yet complementary. Full implementation of both policies requires continued engagement and cooperation with Member States. I extend my sincere gratitude to those Member States who have cooperated with us to ensure compliance with these policies.

Sixth is helping to extend state authority in the form of police, courts, prisons and local authorities so that countries can build and sustain peace themselves. This requires the enhancement of integrated planning, linked to appropriate financing arrangements. We need

to adjust mission postures to unfolding events. Common funding pools could help advance better coherence across the UN Country Team and mission, even including IFIs. Ultimately, lasting peace in any country requires functioning and legitimate local state institutions which can protect their own citizens and provide basic services.

In this connection, notable progress has been made through the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections. In the Central African Republic, for example, joint teams are being established within the MINUSCA structure to support a single rule of law framework. In Liberia, to support the rule of law aspects of Ebola, the Global Focal Point is funding a joint project covering police, justice and corrections.

In pursuing innovation, we must continue to demonstrate strong and effective stewardship of the resources entrusted to UN peacekeeping. We are working to improve effectiveness and efficiency. I have worked to put in place a process of periodic reviews of all missions to ensure the most optimal allocation of resources, and civilian staffing reviews to align the civilian component of our mission to their evolving mandates. Ameerah will speak to these efforts in greater detail.

Ultimately, let us not forget peacekeeping is a political instrument. It depends upon the political support of the international community. With such a diverse set of stakeholders, however, systemic change is a challenge. Meanwhile, the demands on the ground do not heed the pace of multilateral institutions. Each year, for the past six years, more than 100 peacekeepers have died while serving in war-torn countries. I wish to express my condolences to the families of these peacekeepers and my deepest gratitude and respect for

those who have given their lives to bring a better future to the 175 million men, women and children living where peacekeepers serve.

The scale of human suffering in the countries where we operate is immense and demands a collective response from us all. The review of peace operations launched by the Secretary-General may provide a timely opportunity to this end. I hope it will benefit from your active engagement.

When the UN can speak in one voice, the result will be a strengthened and renewed instrument for the advancement of international peace and security in an increasingly complex and challenging world.

In closing, I wish to recognize all those brave men and women who serve peacekeeping every day and recall with sorrow all those, too many, who have paid the ultimate price. We honour their memory and will continue to work towards the cause they sacrificed their lives for.

I thank you very much indeed Mr. President.