

# Special Commission Briefing Paper

## The Question of the Efficacy of the UN Peacekeeping Force

### Background

The United Nations Peacekeeping Forces (UNPKF) are international armed forces, first used in 1948 to observe and oversee cease-fires in Kashmir and Jerusalem. Although initially not specifically mentioned in the United Nations (UN) Charter, the use of international forces as a buffer between warring parties pending troop withdrawals and negotiation practice that became known as peacekeeping—was formalized in 1956 during the Suez Crisis between Egypt, Israel, France, and the United Kingdom. Although peacekeeping missions have taken many forms, they have in common the fact that they are designed to be peaceful, that they comprise of troops voluntarily contributed by various member states, and that the troops serve under the authority of the UN Security Council.

Broadly speaking, the UN Peacekeeping Force is centred around three key principles - 1. to mitigate and prevent the outbreak of large-scale conflict, 2. end ongoing violent conflict, 3. To protect civilians.

Efficacy (in the context of the question above) alludes to the effectiveness of the UNPKF, and to what extent are they fulfilling the three key principles stated above.

In addition to the above, certain requisites must be met for the UNPKF to be successful:

- Be guided by the principles of consent, impartiality, and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate;
- Be perceived as legitimate and credible, particularly in the eyes of the local population;
- Promote national and local ownership of the peace process in the host country.

### Key Issues

#### Abuse of Power

A 1996 UN study identified a correlation between prostitution, sex abuse and human trafficking and the introduction of UN peacekeepers into the host nation, directly contravening the key tenet of 'protecting civilians'. Such an example is the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti following the 2004 coup d'état, in which there were confirmed accounts of crimes and human rights violations committed by United Nations soldiers, peacekeepers, and employees. There were a recorded 110 incidents of sexual abuse and 57 cases of murder. It must be reiterated that these are only the recorded cases, and the true figure is much likely higher. The proclivity of UN peacekeepers to engage in illicit and illegal practices diminishes and demeans the legitimacy of the peacekeepers, leading to conflict and hostility between locals and peacekeepers.

#### Endless operations

The very first two peacekeeping operations the UN launched were in Kashmir, and Jerusalem, around 70 years ago. 70 years on, these missions are ongoing and the peacekeepers still maintain a presence in the region, bringing into light the efficacy of the peacekeepers. The problem with peacekeeping is that, while it presents peacekeepers with a manageable assignment, ending it can prove impossible because it requires the parties to agree on where the imaginary line on a map called a border is to be drawn (in the case of territorial disputes).

If a line is drawn, politicians on one or both sides of it will complain that their country lost out in the bargain. To avoid the perception of defeat, political leaders will refuse to negotiate seriously, preferring

the status quo indefinitely to being accused of surrendering some of the territory over which the war was fought.

### Power of the Security Council over Peacekeepers

In order for a UN peacekeeping mission to be approved, it must be adopted via a resolution passed through the security council, which sets out the mandate, objectives and size. The disproportionate power of the P5 who have opposing interests led to the paralysis of the UN peacekeepers during the Cold War, with just 13 missions being approved from 1948 to 1987. This significantly limits the global impact of the peacekeepers, as they are weaponised and used as a political tool in geopolitics to block another nation’s agenda. Despite optimism following the end of the Cold War, there has not been much improvement on this front. This can be seen in the Rwanda Genocide of 1994, where the UN elected to withdraw peacekeepers with the onset of the genocide, and abandoned safe zones created by the UN. The inaction of the UN in Rwanda severely damaged the reputation of the peacekeepers, raising serious questions about the purpose of the peacekeepers.

### Key Facts

- The United Nations Peacekeeping Force have completed 61 missions
- 12 missions are ongoing: 6 in Africa, 1 in Asia, 2 in Europe, and 3 in the Middle East
- Annual budget of \$6.7 billion
- Women make up 30% of civilian peacekeepers, 10% of police peacekeepers, and 3% of military of military peacekeepers.
- UN Peacekeeping is made up of 116,919 total field personnel, with 123 countries contributing troops, police, and civilian personnel.
- Top 10 financial contributors to UN peacekeeping (2019)

Country	Funding Percentage of UN peacekeeping budget
USA	27.89
China	15.21
Japan	8.56
Germany	6.09
UK	5.79
France	5.61
Italy	3.30
Russia	3.04
Canada	2.73
South Korea	2.26

- Top 10 Contributors to UN Peacekeepers Personnel (2022)

Country	No. of Personnel
Bangladesh	6700
India	5832
Nepal	5794
Rwanda	5283
Pakistan	4399
Egypt	2800
Ghana	2747
Indonesia	2686
Senegal	2446
China	2240

### Previous Action and Proposed Reform

## *Brahimi Report*

In March 2000, the Secretary-General appointed the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations to assess the shortcomings of the then existing system and to make specific and realistic recommendations for change. The panel was composed of individuals experienced in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The result, known as the Brahimi Report after Lakhdar Brahimi, the Chair of the Panel, called for:

- Renewed political commitment on the part of Member States;
- Significant institutional change;
- Increased financial support.

The Panel noted that in order to be effective, UN peacekeeping operations must be properly resourced and equipped, and operate under clear, credible and achievable mandates.

Following the Brahimi report, UN Member States and the UN Secretariat continued major reform efforts, including through:

Capstone Doctrine (2008), outlining the most important principles and guidelines for UN peacekeepers in the field;

Peace Operations 2010 (2006), containing the reform strategy of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO);

2005 World Summit, establishing the Peacebuilding Commission;

High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, setting out a broad framework for collective security for the new century.

## Questions to Consider

1. Is the UNPKF effective and why?
2. Does the principles of UN peacekeeping need reform, before the efficacy can be addressed?
3. Is a structural reform of the UNPKF and associated bodies required in order to improve efficacy?
4. How can the key issues outlined above be tackled?

## Useful Links

[Are UN Peace Operations Effective? - World | ReliefWeb](#)

[Does UN Peacekeeping work? - UN](#)

[Effectiveness of the UN mission in the DRC](#)

[Patrolling The Lawless Sahara Desert With The Blue Helmets | VICE on HBO - YouTube](#)

[\(PDF\) Evaluating the Effectiveness of the United Nations Organizations: The Limits of Theories and Need for A 'New Analytical Framework' \(researchgate.net\)](#)

[Peacekeeping Works: An Assessment of the Effectiveness of UN Peacekeeping Operations \(ethz.ch\)](#)

[Evaluation of Conflict Prevention Pools United Nations \(oecd.org\)](#)

[Is The Future Of Peacekeeping Peaceful? | Shannon Zimmerman | TEDxUQ - YouTube](#)