

## **New Challenges and Priorities for UN Peacekeeping**

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United Nations peacekeeping is a collective effort. And, as the world around us changes, it is essential that the diverse stakeholders who authorize, finance and contribute personnel to peacekeeping operations collectively reflect on the role of peacekeeping in a changing global landscape. The Secretary-General has called for a major review of UN peacekeeping and we are currently embarking on this important and timely process. Today, I will highlight some of the issues which I feel need to be at the centre of this exercise, drawing on three years as the head of the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

In recent decades, the number and level of conflicts have declined and remain at historically low levels globally. UN peacekeeping operations played a role in helping to resolve several of these conflicts in the post-Cold War period, often by monitoring and supporting the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements, as in El Salvador, Mozambique, and Namibia. There are no guarantees and peacekeeping is a high risk endeavour, but it remains true that a country has a better chance of emerging from conflict and maintaining that peace when a peace operation has been deployed. Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cambodia – these

are just a few of the countries which, once trapped in war and strife, are now on the path to peace thanks in good measure to the UN peacekeepers.

But the conflicts of today, while fewer in number, are some of the most intractable. Some, like the Democratic Republic of Congo and even South Sudan today are confronting a second or third wave of conflict. And many of these formerly intrastate conflicts are becoming increasingly regionalized or even internationalized and, on average, more prolonged and deadly as a result. Today 87% of UN uniformed peacekeeping personnel are in Africa where we can see an arc of crisis extending from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. These conflicts are driven by a complex mix of factors including failing or incapable states, flare-ups of ethnic strife, transnational criminal and terrorist threats, and serious humanitarian and public health crises.

In this global context of fewer but more complex and entrenched conflicts, the Security Council has continued to turn to UN peacekeeping. Today, there are a record number of military, police and civilian personnel—almost 120,000—serving in 17 missions around the world. This will increase further in the coming months with the continued deployment of our latest mission to the Central African Republic and the reinforcement of our mission in South Sudan.

UN peacekeeping is striving to provide a dynamic response in some of the planet's most complicated and difficult places. Increasingly, the Security Council is asking UN peacekeeping to intervene earlier, when there may be an opening in the midst of ongoing conflict in order to buttress a fragile peace and protect civilians. In this way, both the changing nature of conflict and the changing role of UN peacekeeping have required us to adapt and respond.

In North Darfur, peacekeepers are serving in harsh terrain and in an increasingly hostile environment where, let us face it, there is little peace to keep, so that men, women and children caught between the warfare of two sides can have a better chance for a better life.

In South Sudan, military and police peacekeepers are bravely guarding our camps and our Protection of Civilians Sites so that tens of thousands of people, victimized by war and unimaginable brutality, can feel more secure.

By rapidly erecting protection of civilian sites for 90,000 civilians here -- sometimes from an empty plot of land -- we have shown that we are able to adapt under tough circumstances to respond to developing crisis.

In Mali, they are patrolling the streets of Kidal and helping repair roads and schools, knowing all too well the dangers that lurk around the corner, so that those who live there have a chance to return to normalcy.

By introducing unmanned unarmed aerial vehicles (UUAVs) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we have shown that we are able to modernize and use the latest technologies to monitor movements of armed groups and allow us to better protect vulnerable populations.

By going after armed groups in the foothills of North Kivu with determination and vigour, we are able to show that the United Nations will not back down when confronted by those who would threaten the most vulnerable.

I believe these examples of innovation have demonstrated our willingness to innovate and seek creative solutions. But a more systemic and collective effort is needed to further strengthen UN peacekeeping going forward.

Let me highlight a few points.

Almost 60 countries came together last week in the Security Council to discuss current trends in UN peacekeeping. I would like to build upon some of the trends which the Secretary-General identified and draw out some of their implications for UN peacekeeping today.

First, we are operating in very dangerous environments. More than two-thirds of all civilian, police and military personnel in our missions are

operating in contexts with significant levels of ongoing violence, including Darfur, South Sudan, Mali, the Central African Republic, and eastern DRC. This greatly impacts our ability both to start up new missions and to operate effectively and safely once we are deployed. To address this, as I will discuss, we need to modernize our capabilities to ensure we can achieve our mandated tasks while safeguarding our personnel. This requires work on the part of the UN Secretariat, but it also requires that UN Member States with capabilities step forward.

Second, several current peacekeeping operations are mandated to advance national reconciliation and dialogue in the absence of a peace agreement or even clear identification of the parties to the conflict. This may be driven by the very understandable desire of the Security Council not to stand by while civilians are killed in the midst of conflict, as in Darfur. In some cases, the Security Council has chosen to deploy a peacekeeping operation in order to buttress an opening, however incomplete, effectively using peacekeeping operations as a “wedge” to progressively build momentum, as in Mali and CAR. In South Sudan, conflict re-emerged well into the operations of UNMISS and, as a result, the revised mandate for this mission focuses heavily on its protection of civilians role while acknowledging the urgent need for a political solution.

Third, we must work in partnership with others to address transnational threats such as organized crime and terrorism. In northern Mali, rocket and

IED attacks, kidnapping and banditry confront civilians as well as national and international forces and UN peacekeepers. With regard to capabilities, we need to improve our ability to operate effectively and safely in these environments. We also need specialized expertise in organized crime. Within our mission in Mali, preparations are under way to establish a specialised cell, dedicated to counter-narcotics and transnational organised crime, to assist Malian police and other law enforcement agencies in addressing illicit criminal networks. In at least one mission today, in Lebanon, we have a maritime task force which may be a capability of increasing relevance to transnational challenges.

These transnational actors also present political challenges. They often have little stake in the countries where they operate and cannot easily be brought into a political process. The Security Council may also have less leverage to bring to bear on them, compared to armed groups dependent upon external support.

Fourth, the Security Council, in the face of these challenges, has begun to approve robust mandates in some cases. Security Council Resolution 2098, for example, authorized a Force Intervention Brigade for MONUSCO with a mandate to undertake targeted offensive operations against armed groups threatening civilians.

Robust mandates must be accompanied by robust capabilities and carried out with the full support of the Security Council. Such efforts to ensure a robust response are not unprecedented. The Rapid Reaction Force deployed to reinforce UNPROFOR in 1995 is not so different from MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade today. In the former Yugoslavia, Côte d'Ivoire, and elsewhere, UN peacekeeping has responded to threats to civilians and to constitutional order.

What do these developments mean for UN peacekeeping going forward?

First, as we look across our missions today, we see that some of the biggest challenges we face are political in nature. As I noted, many of the environments into which we have recently deployed lack a clear political framework to guide the government and other parties to the conflict towards an inclusive, non-violent post conflict political order. Without an agreed roadmap, the central political role of a mission can be challenged by all parties, but particularly by the government. Striking the proper balance between the two principles of consent and impartiality can be a challenge, as we see today in South Sudan and Mali. In eastern DRC, in contrast, operations by the Congolese army and MONUSCO against the M23 took place within a larger regional political framework, aimed at advancing a long-term solution to insecurity in the Kivus.

In situations such as this, it is critical that United Nations peacekeeping focus its early efforts on assisting the parties to establish a basic roadmap for peace. We must emphasize our good offices role and protect our impartiality. We must insist on a measure of political inclusivity in decision making, even in the early days of a post-conflict situation, to establish a degree of legitimacy in the interim political structure, and build confidence among a divided population that they will have some voice in how they are governed going forward. 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, democratic processes, mine action and core government functions to begin to progressively consolidate peace.

Second, the Security Council has made clear that it sees the protection of civilians at the centre of our responsibilities. This is also widely acknowledged by those countries contributing troops and police to UN peacekeeping. But, in these increasingly dangerous environments, protecting civilians demands a willingness to be proactive and decisive in high-risk environments.

For this reason, I am proud of our response during the crisis in South Sudan, where our flexibility and timely decision making saved countless lives. However, in the face of evolving threats to civilians in our operating environments, a static posture can no longer be the default approach to protection threats. It is no longer enough to protect by our mere presence.



Peacekeeping must move to an ethos of “proactive protection” whereby peacekeeping missions respond directly and decisively to threats at the tactical, operational and strategic levels. The campaign being undertaken by MONUSCO forces in eastern DRC to neutralize armed groups is an excellent example of this concept being put to successful use in the field.

Achieving this proactive protection approach across all of peacekeeping demands the ability to respond quickly when we cannot blanket large geographical areas. Increased mobility and agility will require new types of capabilities, modified equipment and accommodation, and new technology. Critical force multipliers and enabling capacities are central to providing missions with the necessary mobility, rapid reaction capacity, and robustness needed to implement complex mandates.

However, it is not just a question of capabilities. It also requires a change of mind-set among all Member States who participate in peacekeeping, whether they are troops and police contributors, or Security Council members. For proactive protection to work, Member States must be of the same mind on support for such activities, the financial regime under which capabilities will be deployed, and the importance of adopting a forward leaning, robust posture in the execution of peacekeeping tasks on the ground.

Progress has been made in developing guidance, training materials, and operational concepts of joint protection teams. But the UN's legitimacy is at stake every time the lives of civilians are at risk, and our performance in this area will rightly continue to be a measure of our success. This is in line with the most basic principles of the Charter – sovereignty, human dignity, human rights – which are translated concretely into our ways of working, such as through the Secretary General's Rights Up Front agenda. Peacekeeping must always respond humanely to individual suffering, disenfranchisement and marginalization.

DPKO and DFS are collaborating very closely in the implementation of reforms to the troop cost reimbursement regime for peacekeeping, with the objective of putting in place a system that is equitable and predictable. This effort, coupled with the important reforms in the management of Contingent Owned Equipment, represent a unique opportunity to institute improvements in the Organization's system for deploying and compensating personnel and capabilities provided by Member States. This may sound technical but it can make a real difference to peacekeeping as we know it. To achieve this goal, all of those involved, including those who provide the troops and those who pay the costs, must view the system as transparent and cost-effective. For any of this to be achieved, all of us must be prepared to be responsive and pragmatic.

We must recognize, however, that there will be limits to protection capability, and it is the search for political solutions and the support the extension of state authority that will provide more enduring protection. Ultimately, it must be host governments themselves that guarantee the basic security and rights of their people.

In some respects, each peacekeeping operation is unique and built upon slightly distinct coalitions of engaged Member States. However, it is essential to reinforce the process of peacekeeping itself. Politically, it is absolutely critical that the Security Council as a whole stands behind the peacekeeping operations it has authorized, not only its members' respective priorities. Without this collective support, the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping is severely diminished.

It is also important to reinforce the systems and standards that shape UN peacekeeping, in order to ensure that the types of innovation we have worked to pilot in recent years can now become standard practice when their value has been demonstrated. Only in this way can we ensure the instrument of peacekeeping is as prepared to take on the challenges of conflict today as it has the challenges of the last 60 years.

I am also keenly aware that we must continue to demonstrate strong and effective stewardship of the resources entrusted to UN peacekeeping in this difficult financial environment. We are finding opportunities to

enhance efficiencies and innovate. DPKO and DFS have established a High-level Panel on Technology and Innovation to ensure UN peacekeeping can benefit fully from the application of all types of technology, to improve effectiveness and efficiency. I have worked to put in place a process of periodic reviews of all missions, to ensure we are regularly evaluating conditions on the ground to ensure the most optimal allocation of resources, and civilian staffing review to align the civilian component of our mission to their evolving mandates.

With these points in mind, I see six critical priorities to strengthen peacekeeping.

First, we must expand the base of major contributors to peacekeeping while deepening the engagement of current contributors. Only in this way can peacekeeping retain its universal character and draw effectively upon the full array of capabilities across Member States and partners. Without this full participation, we see a growing gap between the capabilities required and the capabilities provided. Already we do see some positive progress. In Mali, we see the return to peacekeeping of several Western countries. In DRC, we see that South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi have stepped forward with dedicated, well trained and well equipped units. As I mentioned earlier, the UN is only as capable as the Member States that provide it with troops and police. We are grateful to all the countries that today contribute tens of thousands of uniformed personnel to serve in

some of the world's most dangerous places. However, we cannot reach our full potential if those with the most significant capabilities choose not to participate. When a broad cross section of the UN Membership puts boots on the ground it also sends a critical political signal, to the conflicting parties, of the international community's resolve and determination to see peace maintained.

Second is cooperation with regional actors. Both in peacekeeping and peacebuilding today, there is a more crowded playing field, with regional actors and parallel missions playing an active role in crisis response. A common thread across all missions is that we are one among multiple actors, missions, and envoys. There is a greater demand for coherence and inter-operability and, if strong strategic partnerships can be built, there is the possibility of improving our collective impact. I have dedicated a large amount of my time, in this position, to strengthening our partnerships with the AU, EU, CSTO, NATO and others. Many of them have the potential to respond rapidly, others to provide niche capabilities. The challenge is to build strategic partnerships with key stakeholders and translating partnerships into political and operational results.

A third and related priority is achieving more rapid deployment. When a crisis erupts, a race against time begins where we endeavour to deploy peacekeepers to stabilize a country before the situation spirals further into cycles of violence. This is particularly true when we are mandated to deploy

into situations where conflicts are ongoing, in which each day we are not on the ground is another day of violence, destruction and suffering. How a mission deploys is tremendously important for how it is perceived by the local population, the confidence it enjoys with the government and its capacity to effectively respond to security threats, and enable the wider array of post-conflict civilian tasks.

We continue to struggle to deploy peacekeepers in a timely manner. The solution must come collectively from the Secretariat and Member States and cut across force generation, logistics planning and military planning, legal negotiations, strategic sea- and airlift, and global supply chain management. Enabling capacities such as engineering, air and ground transport and medical support remain critical chokepoints. While we are working to shorten this process as much as possible, a hard limitation is the willingness of Member States to prepare troops to peacekeeping missions in advance of a Security Council resolution, and ensure that they can meet UN standards. Today, regional organizations are playing a vital bridging role in many cases; building more predictable stand-by arrangements with them is key.

Fourth, we must modernize the capabilities of our peacekeepers. For the new environments in which we operating, we need to ensure appropriate duty of care and enhance the capacities of our military and police to confront new threats. Once in theatre, there will be a requirement for

robust, highly mobile capabilities and/or an ongoing need for reserve capabilities to enable the rapid adjustment of posture. The ability to operate safely in an environment of asymmetric threat will require improved training, detection capabilities, proper equipment, better access to information, and improved contingency planning.

The fifth is performance. The UN will be held to an increasingly high standard of performance and will be expected to demonstrate consistent success to Member States and citizens around the world. The establishment of the Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership, which is now fully operational, will be beneficial to all of us: the Member States, in particular the troop- and police-contributing countries, field operations, DPKO and DFS and the broader Secretariat. The Office will play a critical role in identifying gaps that have an impact on the delivery of mandates by our missions, and helping to incorporate lessons learned and best practices from our peacekeeping operations. We also continue to implement the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy on misconduct and sexual abuse by civilian, military and police peacekeepers, and we are working with our member state partners to strengthen and refine the systems put in place over the past five years.

Sixth is helping to extend state authority so that countries can build and sustain peace themselves. This requires the enhancement of integrated planning, linked to appropriate financing arrangements. In addition to a

new mission in CAR, major reconfigurations and rightsizing exercises are planned this year in six of our largest missions. We need the flexibility – with full accountability -- to adjust mission postures and plans to unfolding events, drawing across all elements of multidimensional peacekeeping operations. Common funding pools to drive better coherence across the UN Country Team and mission, even including IFIs, would facilitate and even accelerate support to the extension of state authority. Ultimately, lasting peace in any country requires functioning and legitimate local state institutions which can protect their own citizens and provide basic services. This will also allow peacekeeping missions to transition and draw down.

Finally, the protection of civilians -- which is arguably our most challenging mandate. Peacekeepers are deployed in vast areas, often without the necessary means to reach those who look to them for protection. Absent a viable peace, amidst swirling conflict, it will never be possible for peacekeepers to protect everyone. But still, they must do their utmost to protect civilians. Our missions must analyze the threats, prioritise the resources, and use all their means to protect the most vulnerable. This entails risk, to be sure, and it requires that missions have the support of the Security Council, the commitment of all troop contributing countries, and determined leadership on the ground. Our missions must have the means to fulfil this mandate, including mobility, monitoring and surveillance tools, and close outreach to the population on the ground.



Politically, UN peacekeeping rests on a global partnership between the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries, and the Membership of the United Nations which, collectively finances it. With such a diverse set of stakeholders, systemic change is a challenge. I have worked to assure Member States that, through periodic reviews and difficult choices, we will allocate resources efficiently and effectively. I have travelled to missions with officials from our troop- and police-contributing countries to assess together the demands on the ground and the best ways to respond. And I believe that, over the past three years, we have demonstrated the value of specific innovations and I have seen some shifts in viewpoints and accumulated experience. Meanwhile, the demands on the ground do not heed the pace of multilateral institutions. For the sixth year in a row, more than 100 peacekeepers have died while serving in war-torn countries where some 175 million people are striving for a better future.

The scale of human suffering that we confront is immense. So too are the sacrifices being made by the dedicated men and women serving in peacekeeping operations today. This demands a collective response from all of us. 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.

*Check against delivery*

Thank you very much.