

ISSN 2706-7297

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS JOURNAL

VOLUME 11

ISSUE 11

MAY 2025



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS, 29 MAY 2025

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International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers Journal
Volume 11, Issue 11, May 2025

Published in : May 2025

Published by : Civil-Military Relations Directorate
Chief Adviser's Office, Armed Forces Division
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

Printed at : Galaxy International
308 & 309, Shadhin Bangla Super Market
Mirpur-1, Dhaka-1216

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EDITORIAL

Since its independence, Bangladesh has been committed to maintaining peace and fostering strong international relations. This commitment is evident through its active involvement in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO), which began in 1988 with the Bangladesh Army, followed by the inclusion of the Police in 1989 and the Navy and Air Force in 1993. This year, Bangladesh commemorates 37 years of dedicated and glorious service in the UNPKO as one of the leading 'Troops and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCC).' Bangladeshi peacekeepers have earned international acclaim for their professionalism, competence, impartiality, integrity and humanitarian approach, establishing themselves as a model of peacekeeping. This distinguished role has not been achieved without sacrifice; 168 peacekeepers have lost their lives and 272 have sustained serious injuries while performing their duties, demonstrating Bangladesh's unwavering commitment to promoting global peace and stability.

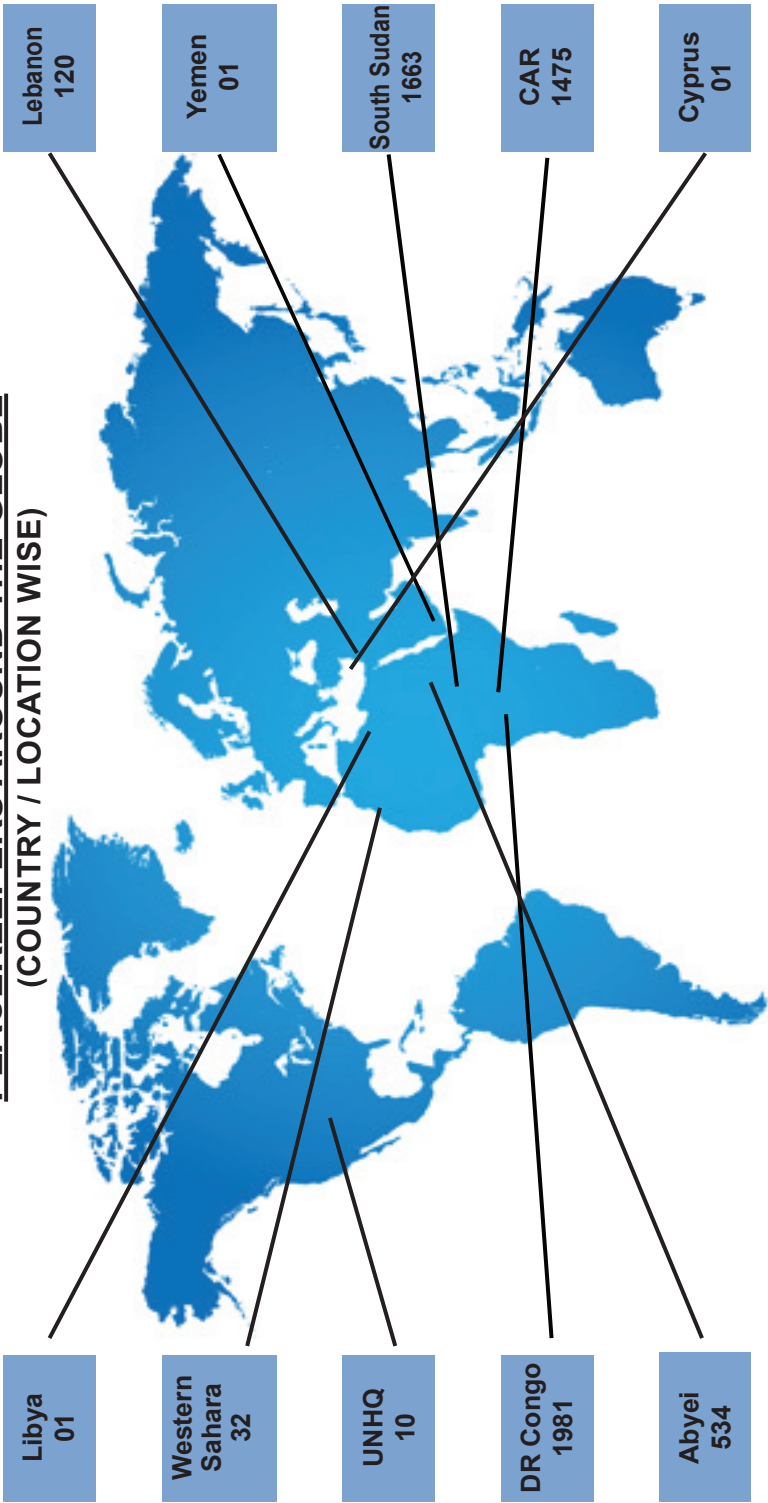
Each year, May 29 is observed globally as the "International Day of UN Peacekeepers" to honour the contributions of peacekeepers and pay tribute to those who have lost their lives or sustained injuries in service. In observance of this day, the Armed Forces Division, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladesh Police, presents the 11th edition of the United Nations Peacekeepers Journal. This issue highlights the significant contributions of Bangladeshi peacekeepers across various United Nations missions. It includes articles that reflect on the achievements of peacekeepers and explore strategies for addressing current and future challenges in multidimensional mission environments. Additionally, the journal emphasises gender mainstreaming and women's pivotal role in peacekeeping. The articles are based on personal experiences and reviews of relevant literature, offering valuable insights into the intricacies of peacekeeping operations and deepening our comprehension of this essential domain.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Board of Editors for their steadfast support in reviewing the articles and ensuring the timely publication of the journal. Our heartfelt gratitude extends to all the authors for their innovative and insightful contributions, despite their demanding schedules. We received many submissions for this issue, but due to space constraints, we couldn't include all the articles. We remain optimistic that future editions will offer even more comprehensive and innovative content, exploring new dimensions of UN peacekeeping and fulfilling the expectations of our esteemed readers. We look forward to continued collaboration and support from all sides in our future endeavours.

COMPLETED PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS **AROUND THE WORLD**

Ser	Country/Location	Name of Mission	Total
1.	Afghanistan Afghanistan-Pakistan	UNAMA/ UNSM/UNGOMAP	11
2.	Angola	UNAVEM & UNAVEM III	635
3.	Bosnia	UNMIBH	177
4.	Burundi	BINUB	6
5.	Cambodia	UNAMIC/ UNTAC/UNMLT	1301
6.	Congo	MONUC/MONUSCO	40987
7.	Croatia/East Slovenia	UNTAES	76
8.	East Timor	UNAMET/UNTAET/UNMISSET	2718
9.	Ethiopia / Eritrea	UNMEE	1108
10.	Georgia	UNOMIG	131
11.	Haiti	UNMIH/ MNF/MINUSTAH	5382
12.	Iraq	UNGCI/UNMOVIC	124
13.	Iran	UNIIMOG	31
14.	Ivory Coast	MINUCI/ONUCI/UNOCI	32850
15.	Kosovo	UNMIK	539
16.	Kuwait	UNIKOM	8239
17.	Liberia	UNOMIL/UNMIL	23794
18.	Macedonia	UNPREDEP	7
19.	Mozambique	ONUMOZ	2622
20.	Namibia	UNTAG	85
21.	Rwanda	UNAMIR	1022
22.	Sierra Leone	UNAMSIL/ UNIOSIL	11981
23.	Somalia	UNOSOM-I –II/AMISOM	1973
24.	Sudan	UNMIS	14660
25.	South Sudan	UNMISS	13808
26.	Tajikistan	UNMOT	40
27.	Uganda / Rwanda	UNOMUR	20
28.	Western Sahara	MINURSO	452
29.	Yugoslavia (former)	UNPROFOR / UNMOP	1584
30.	CAR & Chad	MINURCAT	60
31.	Darfur	UNAMID	3614
32.	Lebanon	UNIFIL	3079
33.	West Africa	UNOWA	2
34.	UNSOA (Nairobi)	UNSOA	1
35.	Syria	UNSMIS	18
36.	Mali	MINUSMA	14802
37.	CAR	MINUSCA	11470
38.	Somalia	UNSOM	7
39.	Office of the African Union	UNOAU	1
40.	Abyei	UNISFA	1067
41.	UNHQ	UNDPKO	58
42.	Cyprus	UNFICYP	7
43.	Yemen	UNMAHA	6
44.	Sudan	UNITAMS	3
Grand Total			2,00,558

**CURRENT DEPLOYMENT OF BANGLADESH
PEACEKEEPERS AROUND THE GLOBE**
(COUNTRY / LOCATION WISE)



Total Deployment: 5,818
(Updated on 30 April 2025)

**Total Completed Deployment of Bangladeshi
Peacekeepers-Force Wise
(Updated on 30 April 2025)**

Bangladesh Army	Bangladesh Navy	Bangladesh Air Force	Bangladesh Police	Total
1,62,035	7,414	9,294	21,815	2,00,558

**Supreme Sacrifices for World Peace
(From April 1989 to April 2025)**

Bangladesh Army	Bangladesh Navy	Bangladesh Air Force	Bangladesh Police	Total
131	04	09	24	168

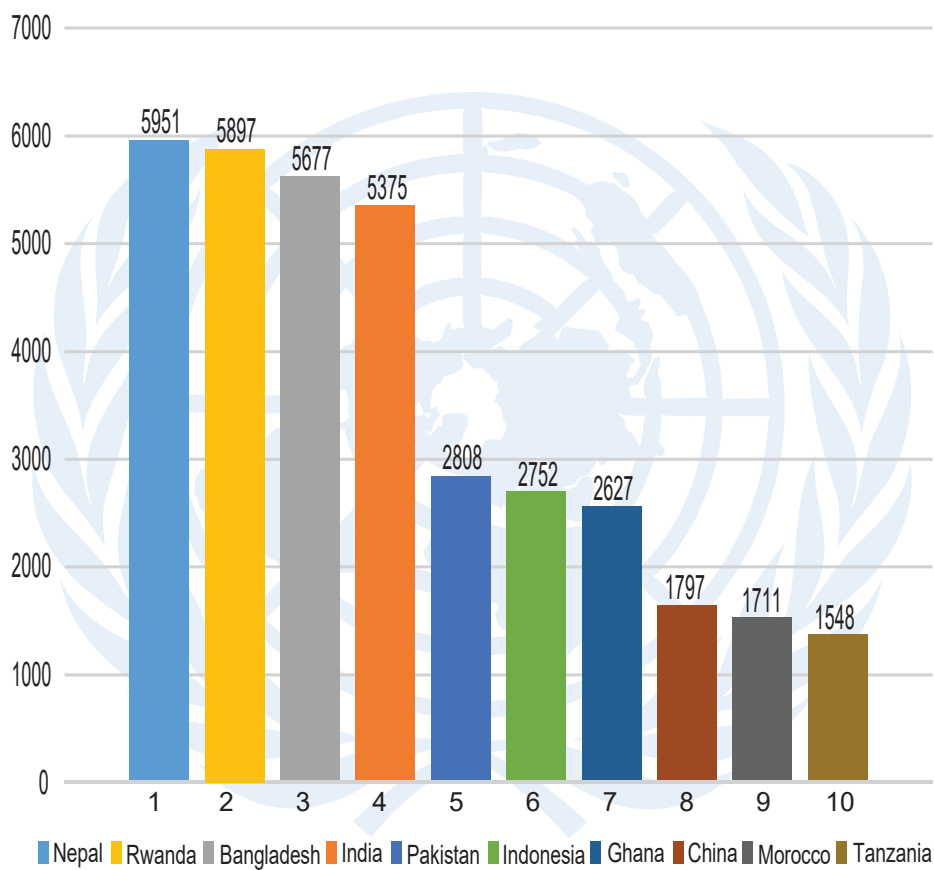
**Summary of Injured Peacekeepers
(From April 1989 to April 2025)**

Bangladesh Army	Bangladesh Navy	Bangladesh Air Force	Bangladesh Police	Total
241	09	07	15	272

Participation of Female Peacekeepers in UN Mission

S/N	Forces	Participated	Currently Deployed
1	Army	1,513	358
2	Navy	54	08
3	Air Force	151	07
4	Police	1,927	71
Grand Total		3,645	444

CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN OPERATIONS
(Report Date : 28 February 2025)



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Current Conflict Trends in the UN Peace Operational Environment and Critical Challenges for Bangladesh Peacekeepers

Major General S M Asadul Haque, ndc, psc

Introduction

Over the past few decades conflicts have evolved significantly in different regions of the world presenting new challenges and complexities for UN peacekeepers. This transformation has necessitated a re-evaluation of strategies and an urgent adaptation to emerging trends within the peace operational environment. Many factors, including intra-state wars, asymmetric warfare, terrorism, and cyber threats, characterise the current conflict landscape. Ethnic tensions, political instability, economic disparities and competition over natural resources often fuel these conflicts, posing unique challenges for peacekeepers.

The UN missions in Africa operate in extraordinarily complex and dynamic conflict environments marked by a proliferation of non-state armed groups, cross-border insurgencies and severe humanitarian crises. According to the UN Department of Peace Operations, over 100,000 peacekeepers are deployed worldwide, with around 60,000 stationed in African countries.¹ The Global Terrorism Index (2023) reported that the Sahel account for 35% of all terrorism-related casualty in 2022.² This surge in extremist violence complicates peacekeeping efforts, as peacekeepers often find themselves targets of sophisticated attacks, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and ambushes.³

Furthermore, intercommunal conflicts and ethnic violence have intensified, particularly in countries like South Sudan and CAR.⁴ The evolving nature of asymmetric techniques and logistical constraints demand adaptive and resilient strategies to safeguard peacekeepers and fulfil their mandates. As the international community continues to rely on peacekeeping operations for conflict resolution, understanding and addressing these critical challenges is imperative for the success and safety of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Africa.

Bangladeshi peacekeepers, with their unwavering professionalism, dedication and effectiveness, have garnered a reputation for their service in diverse and challenging environments. However, the evolving nature of conflicts presents critical challenges that must be addressed to ensure the continued success and more importantly, the safety of Bangladeshi peacekeepers.

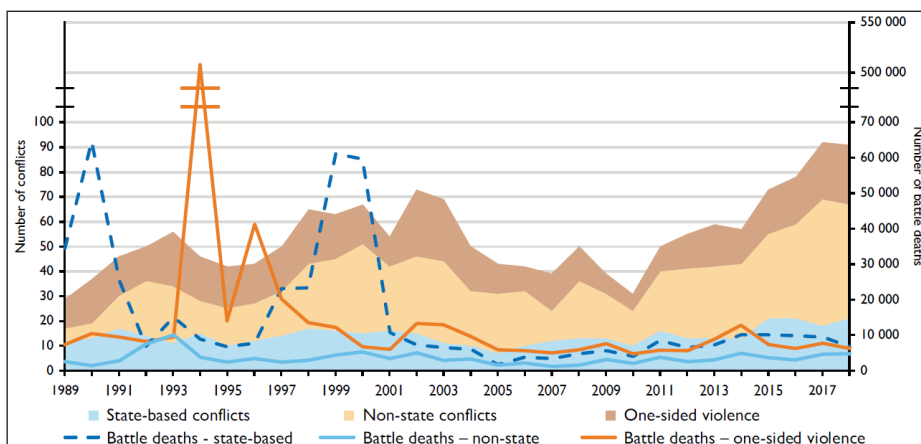
Against this backdrop, this article delves into the current conflict trends vis-a-vis the operational dynamics of peacekeeping missions and the critical challenges for Bangladeshi peacekeepers amidst the complexities of modern conflicts. This article also offers insights into potential strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in UN missions.

Evolution of Conflict Trends

Conflicts in Early Days of UN Peacekeeping (1948-1960): In the 1940s-1960s, conflicts were state-based, and peacekeepers served as a buffer between opposing factions, ensuring adherence to the terms of an established peace agreement.⁵ Some examples may be UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Middle East following Arab-Israel War (1948), UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) from 1948 to 1950 and United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

Conflicts in the Early 60s till the End of the Cold War: During this period there is blending of inter-state and intra-state conflicts which is applicable for the first armed peacekeeping mission with UNEF-I during the Suez Crisis in 1956 and the first large-scale force deployment involving nearly 20,000 troops in the Congo (ONUC) in 1960.⁶

Figure 1: Conflict Trends in Africa (1989-2017)



Source: <https://www.prio.org/publications/12112> (2019)

Conflicts after the Post-Cold War Scenario: Post-Cold War conflicts can be divided into the following categories:

- a. **State-based Conflicts:** A state-based conflict is a conflict between two armed groups, at least one of which is a state; for instance, the M23

group, allegedly supported by Rwanda, is engaged in a state-based conflict against the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), impacting the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) mission.

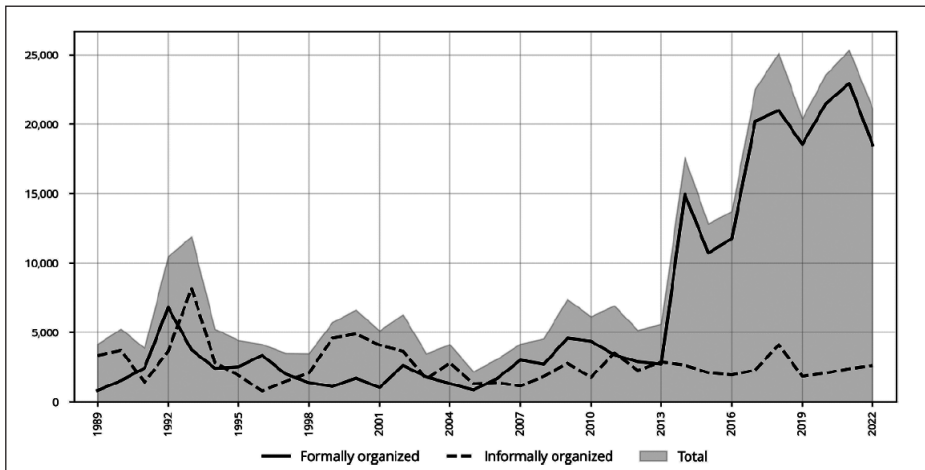
b. **One-sided Conflict:** One-sided conflict refers to a common occurrence in the context of modern peacekeeping operations.

c. **Non-State Conflicts:** Such conflicts are not affiliated with the state. Communal clashes also fall into this category. Such conflicts are predominantly prevalent in mission areas.

Current Conflict Trends in the UN Peace Operational Environment

Evolution of Asymmetric Warfare: Asymmetric warfare has evolved significantly over the past few decades, fundamentally altering the landscape of global conflict and posing substantial challenges to UN peace operations. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, conflicts involving non-state actors increased from 32 in 2000 to 62 in 2020. Moreover, the lethality of these conflicts has escalated, with civilian casualties rising sharply. In 2020, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported over 120,000 fatalities in non-state conflict zones, a significant increase from 80,000 in 2010.

Figure 2: Fatalities in Non-State Armed Conflict (1989-2022)

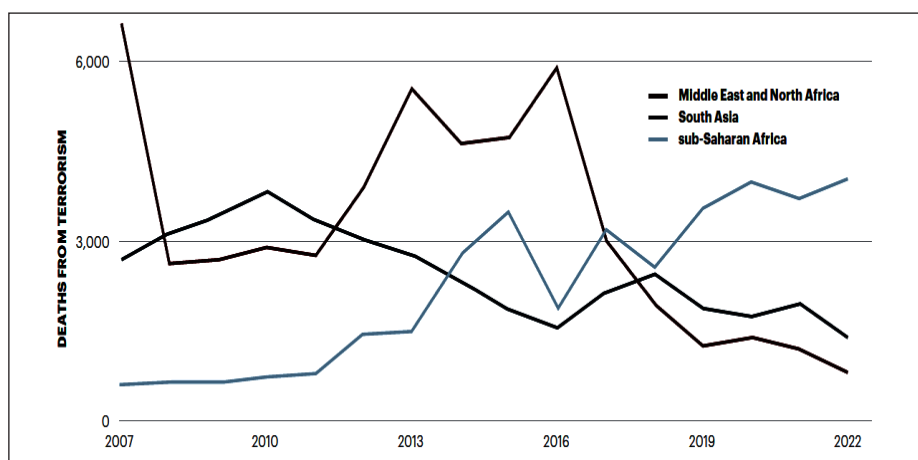


Source: *Journal of Peace Resolution*⁷

Increasing Involvement of Non-State Actors: The involvement of non-state actors in global conflicts has surged dramatically, reshaping the dynamics of warfare and complicating UN peacekeeping operations.⁸

SIPRI further evidences this, noting that conflicts involving non-state actors increased from 30% in 2001 to nearly 60% by 2021.⁹ ICRC reports that in 2022, 70% of civilian deaths in conflict zones were attributed to actions by non-state groups.¹⁰ This trend presents critical challenges for Bangladeshi peacekeepers in UN missions.

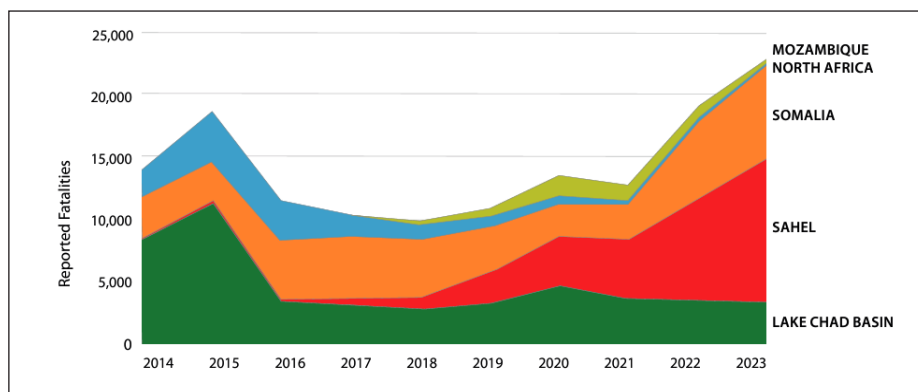
Figure 3: Trend in Terrorism Death by Regions (2007-2022)



Source: Global Terrorism Index 2023

Increased Civilian Casualties: Recent conflicts have seen a marked increase in civilian harm. According to ACLED, civilian fatalities in African conflict zones rose by 35% between 2018 and 2022, reaching over 10,000 deaths annually. OCHA reported in 2022, 60% of all conflict-related deaths in Africa were civilians, highlighting the disproportionate impact on non-combatants.¹¹

Figure 4: Fatalities Linked to Militant Islamist Groups in Africa by Theatre



Source: ACLED¹²

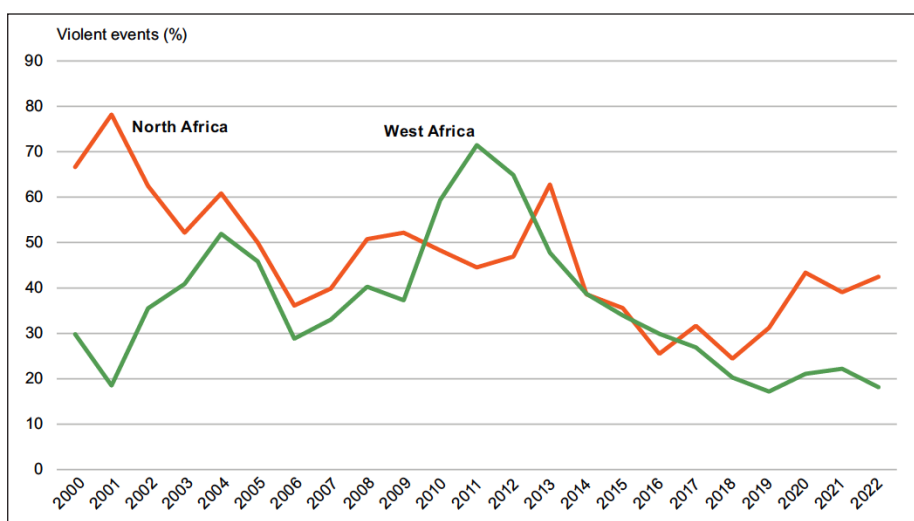
Intensified Humanitarian Crises: The intersection of prolonged conflicts, widespread displacement and systemic underdevelopment has created dire conditions for millions. According to OCHA the number of people needing humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected African countries rose to 113 million in 2023, up from 88 million in 2018.¹³ The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported that, as of 2023, there were over 31.7 million IDPs in Africa due to conflict and violence, a substantial increase from 19 million in 2015.¹⁴ This surge in displacement exacerbates vulnerabilities, with 60% of IDPs lacking adequate access to food, clean water and healthcare, according to the World Food Programme (WFP).¹⁵

Environmental Impacts: According to UNEP, more than 40% of internal conflicts over the past 60 years have been linked to exploiting natural resources, such as minerals, timber and water. In Africa, this nexus is particularly evident.¹⁶ For instance, the ongoing conflict in the DRC has led to extensive deforestation, with UNEP estimating that over 2 million hectares of forest have been lost between 2010 and 2020 due to illegal logging and mining activities.¹⁷ Generally defined as a reduction in the delivery of forest ecosystem services, can have long-term impacts on biodiversity, climate and local livelihoods. The quantification of forest degradation, its dynamics and proximate causes can help prompt early action to mitigate carbon emissions and inform relevant land use policies. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is largely forested with a relatively low deforestation rate, but anthropogenic degradation has been increasing in recent years. It is assessed that the impact of eight independent variables related to land cover, land use, infrastructure, armed conflicts and accessibility on forest degradation is measured by the Forest Condition (FC). Additionally, conflicts in the Sahel region have intensified land degradation and desertification, affecting over 80% of arable land, as reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).¹⁸

Urban Conflict: Civilians in conflict zones complicate military operations and necessitate a focus on humanitarian assistance and protection mandates. Urban areas have become the primary battlegrounds, where non-state actors, militias and state forces engage in protracted and intense combat. According to DPO, over 50% of current UN peacekeeping missions are deployed in countries where urban warfare is prevalent, such as Mali, South Sudan and the Central African Republic.¹⁹ The urban environment, characterized by dense populations, complex infrastructure and civilian presence, complicates military operations and heightens the risk of civilian casualties.²⁰

Political Violence: The recent spate of military coups has exacerbated an already volatile environment, undermined democratic institutions and contributed to widespread unrest.²¹ Six successful military coups occurred in West Africa between 2020 and 2023, mentionably Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso cases. This resurgence of military takeovers has suspended constitutional processes, further destabilising the region.²² ECOWAS has reported that these coups have resulted in increased political violence and civilian unrest, with over 2,500 politically motivated fatalities recorded in 2023 alone, up from 1,800 in 2020.²³

Figure 5: Violent Events per Sub-Region, 2000-2022



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development data

Geopolitical Instability: Africa's geopolitical landscape is marked by a complex web of regional conflicts, often fueled by external powers pursuing strategic interests. The recent military coups in the Sahelian belt, followed by the disintegration of ECOWAS and the expulsion of foreign forces, including the UN, from Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, have made the security situation complicated.²⁴ Waning Western domination vis-à-vis increasing Russian and Chinese influence has aggravated the scenario.²⁵

Lack of Global and Regional Consensus: Variations in political interests among key international stakeholders often lead to inconsistent mandates and insufficient resources for peace operations. According to the UNPO fact sheet (2023), African missions account for over 70% of all UN peacekeepers, yet they frequently suffer from fragmented support due to

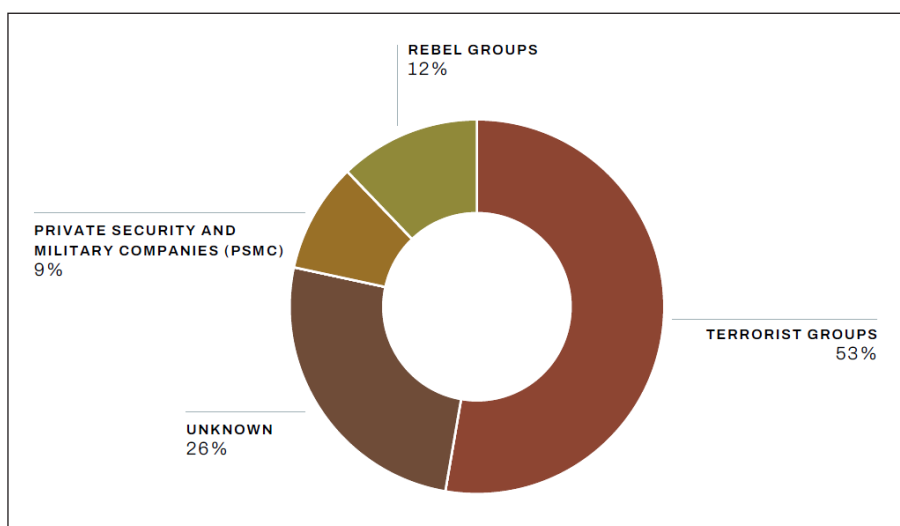
differing geopolitical interests. For instance, the MINUSMA faced tremendous operational challenges, partly due to divergent views among UN Security Council members, which impacted the mission's strategic direction and resource allocation.²⁶ Furthermore, regional organisations like the African Union (AU) sometimes have conflicting priorities with the UN, complicating coordinated efforts.

Rising Anti-UN Sentiment: Rising anti-UN sentiment in Africa is a significant challenge in the UNPO environment. In Mali, for instance, the MINUSMA mission faced increasing hostility from local communities and the junta leaders, who accuse the UN of failing to protect civilians and stabilise the region despite a decade-long presence, which contributed to the ultimate forced withdrawal of this mission. The growing perception that UN missions serve foreign powers' interests rather than local populations further fuels such sentiment, complicating the operational environment for peacekeepers.²⁷

Lack of Good Governance: Weak governance structures, characterised by corruption, lack of transparency and inadequate public services, contribute to persistent instability and conflict. Such corruption tends to undermine government institutions.²⁸ The World Bank's Governance Indicators for 2022 highlight that many African nations fall in the bottom quartile for government effectiveness, regulatory quality and control of corruption. Poor governance exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities and fuels grievances that can lead to conflict.²⁹

Technological Advancements and Cyber Warfare: Technological innovations, such as drones, advanced surveillance systems and cyber capabilities, are increasingly employed by state and non-state actors. According to UNIDIR, the use of drones in African conflicts has surged by 60% from 2018 to 2022, enabling precise targeting but also posing risks of civilian casualties.³⁰ These attacks often disrupt communication networks, undermine governance structures and exacerbate the vulnerability of civilian populations. Moreover, cyber warfare is emerging as a critical threat, with cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure, communication networks and data systems becoming more frequent.³¹

Figure 6: Use of UAS by Armed Groups in Africa (2018-2023)



Source: UNIDIR

Critical Challenges for Bangladeshi Peacekeepers

High-Risk Security Environments: Bangladeshi peacekeepers face significant challenges operating in high-risk security environments, particularly in conflict-prone regions of Africa. The security threats include asymmetric warfare, such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), ambushes and attacks by non-state armed groups, including jihadist factions like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). The unpredictability of these threats requires Bangladeshi contingents to operate with heightened vigilance, adaptability and resilience.³² The high-risk environments also expose peacekeepers to severe physical and psychological stress, complicating their ability to fulfil mandates effectively.³³

Logistical and Resource Constraints: Peacekeeping missions in conflict zones like Mali, DRC, and South Sudan are often characterized by harsh terrain, inadequate infrastructure and vast geographical areas, which make the movement of troops and supplies exceptionally difficult. For instance, in the DRC, where Bangladeshi peacekeepers form a crucial part of the MONUSCO mission, the lack of reliable road networks and the vast distances between areas of operation create formidable obstacles.³⁴ Moreover, the lack or delay of host government consent and bureaucratic complications often delay urgent operational replenishments, especially in the DRC and South Sudan.³⁵

Language and Cultural Barriers: The linguistic diversity in peacekeeping operational areas often limits effective communication between peacekeepers and the local population. A study by the UN Department of Peace Operations found that 40% of peacekeepers identified language barriers as a critical impediment to mission effectiveness.³⁶ In recent years, researchers have shifted their focus to studying the effects of peacekeeping in a geographically disaggregated manner. One of the factors that is yet to be fully examined is the variation among peacekeeping troops at the local level and its impact on peacekeeping effectiveness. Specifically, peacekeeping troops greatly vary across two dimensions: unit types, e.g., infantry, engineering, aviation, etc. and their country of origin. It is argued that mixing different unit types increases peacekeepers' specialization in skills and equipment, thereby improving their effectiveness. However, this effect is moderated by the diversity of troop contributing countries (TCCs). Furthermore, cultural differences, such as variations in social norms, religious practices and gender roles, can lead to misunderstandings and hinder relationship-building efforts, which are crucial for successful peacekeeping.³⁷

Harsh Terrain and Climate: The African continent has varied terrain and unpleasant climate. For instance, in Mali, where Bangladeshi peacekeepers had been significantly involved, temperatures soar to over 40°C (104°F) in the summer, while sandstorms, known as 'Haboobs,' frequently disrupt operations and limit visibility. Similarly, heavy rains and muddy terrain in the DRC can hinder troop movements, supply chain logistics and communication networks, exacerbating the already challenging security situation.³⁸ These environmental conditions strain physical endurance and impact the effectiveness of military equipment and vehicles, often not designed to operate optimally under such extremes.

Lack of Infrastructure: Many African regions where peacekeepers are deployed suffer from underdeveloped or damaged infrastructure due to ongoing conflict, political instability and economic constraints. For instance, roads are often unpaved in countries like the CAR and South Sudan and transportation networks are rudimentary, making it difficult for peacekeeping forces to mobilize quickly and efficiently. Moreover, the lack of reliable electricity and communication infrastructure poses a considerable obstacle to effective peacekeeping operations.³⁹

Risks for Physical and Mental Health: The harsh climates, such as extreme heat and humidity in regions like South Sudan and Mali lead to dehydration and Ebola. Over 60% of peacekeepers deployed in African

missions suffer from at least one health issue during their deployment, with infectious diseases being the most common. Beyond the physical dangers, the mental health of peacekeepers is also a critical concern. Prolonged exposure to conflict, witnessing violence and the stress of operating in high-risk environments lead to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).⁴⁰

Political and Diplomatic Constraints: The success of UN peacekeeping missions often depends on the political will of the host government and the support and cooperation of regional and international actors. However, in many African countries, the political landscape is fraught with instability, corruption and conflicting interests, which can undermine the effectiveness of peacekeeping efforts. For instance, UNMISS has faced significant challenges due to South Sudanese government's lack of political commitment and influence of external actors with competing agendas. Additionally, the UN Security Council also impose diplomatic constraints due to the diverging opinions of its members.⁴¹

Keeping Pace with Technological Advancement: The rapid evolution of technology in military and peacekeeping operations has introduced both opportunities and challenges. Advanced surveillance systems, including drones and satellite imaging, have become essential for monitoring conflict zones, yet integrating these technologies into existing frameworks requires substantial training and resources. While such technologies enhance operational effectiveness, they also underscore the need for continuous skill development and infrastructure upgrades. The integration of advanced technologies by non-state actors and insurgent groups further complicates the operational environment.

Continuous Update of Training and Capacity Building: According to the UNDPO, over 80% of peacekeeping missions are in complex and evolving conflict environments, necessitating constant training protocol updates to ensure operational effectiveness. However, updating training programs to include the ever-evolving cutting-edge technologies remains a significant challenge. Furthermore, the diverse cultural and operational contexts in missions like Mali and the Central African Republic require tailored training approaches to address local dynamics effectively.

Prospects and Ways Forward for Enhanced Peacekeeping Outcomes

Training and Skill Development: BIPSOT provides comprehensive pre-deployment training that covers conduct and discipline, human rights, and protection of civilians, ensuring that peacekeepers are well-prepared to meet operational challenges.⁴² These training initiatives are complemented by

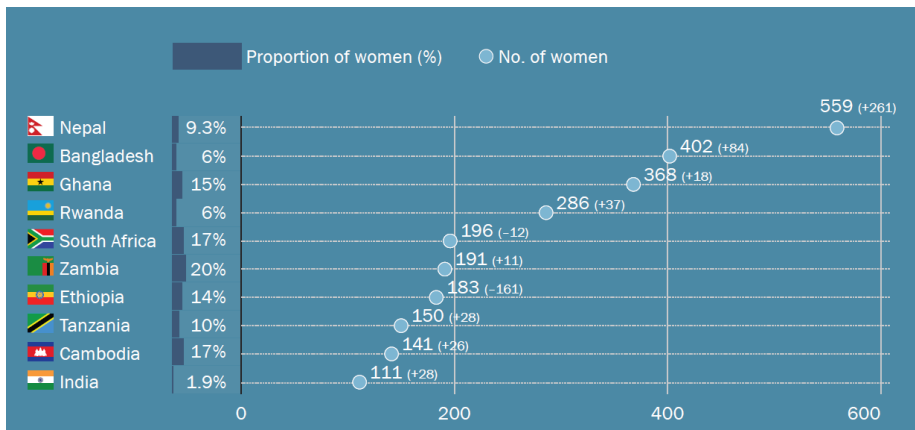
practical skill-building, such as medical support, infrastructure development and community engagement, which are crucial in conflict-affected regions. The Bangladesh Army also emphasises training to enhance communication skills through operational language training for all the peacekeepers. It also ensures that each peacekeeper is well conversant about their specialised skills and trained on advanced combat techniques, cultural sensitivity, conflict resolution and international humanitarian law.⁴³

Investment in Advanced Technology: Induction of modern technology and equipment is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in UN missions, especially in complex conflict zones like Africa.⁴⁴ In recent years, the Bangladesh Army has procured and deployed many modern equipment in UN missions, such as MRAP vehicles, UAS, LAV, modern jammers, ROV, various Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (CIED) and modern communication gadgets. In future, it should procure more updated surveillance, force protection and communication equipment and aim to establish its production chain through technology transfer. Through deployment in peacekeeping operations, its officers and men are being trained on the operation and maintenance of modern equipment, contributing to its overall modernisation efforts.

Building Strategic Partnerships: Bangladesh has been actively engaging in military diplomacy to build strategic partnerships that enhance its peacekeeping capabilities. This is evident through its participation in various international forums, such as the Indo-Pacific Armies Management Seminar (IPAMS), which Bangladesh co-hosted with the U.S. Army Pacific in 2022. This platform brought together senior military leaders from 24 countries to discuss peacekeeping, regional security and cooperation, highlighting Bangladesh's commitment to fostering regional stability through dialogue and collaboration.

Focus on Gender Equality: According to UGPS 2018–2028, the female ratio of each military contingent must be raised to 15% by 2028. To enhance peacekeeping outcomes, the Bangladesh Army must prioritise gender equality within its ranks, reflecting broader UN peacekeeping commitments. In 2023 and 2024, female peacekeepers comprised only about 6% of the total number of Bangladeshi peacekeepers, far below the target designated by UGPS.⁴⁵ Bangladesh Army should invest in targeted recruitment, retention, and leadership training programs for female personnel, ensuring a more inclusive and representative peacekeeping force that aligns with UN mandates and contributes to sustainable peace in African missions.

Figure 7: Top 10 contributors of Female Military Peacekeepers by highest number of women, 2023 monthly averages



Source: SIPRI Yearbook, 2023

Community Engagement, Cultural Awareness and Public Relations: Effective community engagement and cultural sensitivity are essential for Bangladesh Army to enhance its peacekeeping outcomes in African UN operations. Peacekeepers who understand and respect local customs, traditions and languages can build trust and foster cooperation with local populations, which is critical in conflict-affected areas.⁴⁶ To address this, Bangladesh Army should invest in comprehensive pre-deployment training that includes language skills, cultural awareness and community engagement strategies tailored to the specific African regions where they operate.⁴⁷ Engaging with local communities in mission areas through initiatives such as humanitarian aid, education and infrastructure projects can build trust and foster positive relationships. Besides, Bangladesh Army should leverage media and digital platforms to highlight their contributions and successes in UNPKO. This will enhance transparency, build public support and counter negative narratives.

Continuous Evaluation and Adaptation: The dynamic nature of conflicts requires peacekeeping forces to regularly assess their strategies and adapt to emerging threats, such as the rise in asymmetric warfare and complex humanitarian crises.⁴⁸ To address this, Bangladesh Army should implement regular performance reviews, real-time data analysis and feedback loops involving peacekeepers and local stakeholders. It should also regularly assess the effectiveness of mandate implementation strategies, gather feedback from peacekeepers and local stakeholders and adapt approaches to meet evolving challenges and dynamics in UNPO environments.

Fostering Strategic Partnerships and Diplomatic Engagement: Strengthening diplomatic ties with key UN member states can enhance Bangladesh's influence in UNPKO. Bangladesh should seek greater involvement in key UN committees and decision-making bodies related to peacekeeping. This engagement will provide a platform for advocating its interests, contributing to policy formulation and ensuring its perspectives are considered when allocating missions and resources.⁴⁹ Bangladesh should also seek bilateral cooperation with conflict-ridden countries, capitalising on its peacekeepers' goodwill and local knowledge to establish lasting friendships and defence ties. Joint peacekeeping deployments with other Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) through sharing personnel and equipment may open a new arena for strategic cooperation in the domain of peacekeeping.

Enhancing Regional Cooperation and Integration: Collaborating with regional partners to establish joint training programs can enhance interoperability and collective preparedness. Being a leading and experienced TCC, Bangladesh may assume the lead role in establishing a regional cooperation mechanism among the UN member states in Africa to train and mentor them as future TCC. On the other hand, Bangladesh may assume the leadership role in establishing the South-East Asian Peacekeeping Hub to foster training and logistics cooperation among the TCCs of this sub-region.

Logistics Support and Infrastructure Development: Bangladesh Army should streamline supply chains, ensuring the timely provision of essential goods and services. This includes establishing efficient procurement processes, inventory management systems and reliable transport networks. Investing in infrastructure at home and mission areas is crucial for effective peacekeeping. Developing well-equipped bases, medical facilities and communication hubs will provide a solid foundation for operations. Infrastructure development also supports the welfare of peacekeepers, ensuring they are well-supported and motivated.

Personnel Selection and Welfare: To keep pace with the UN and field missions' requirements, the UN mission's selection policies should be regularly updated and amended as and when required based on feedback from the ground. Priority should be on operational requirements rather than welfare. However, ensuring the welfare and morale of peacekeepers is vital for mission success. Providing adequate healthcare, recreation and family communication support can enhance their well-being. Welfare initiatives should also include post-deployment support, addressing any physical or psychological issues arising from their service.

Conclusion

The evolving conflict landscape in Africa presents significant challenges and opportunities for Bangladesh Army's peacekeeping contingents under UN mandates. As conflict trends shift towards asymmetric threats, increased civilian involvement, and complex humanitarian crises, Bangladeshi peacekeepers face critical challenges that require strategic adjustments. Enhancing gender equality, community engagement, continuous evaluation, and regional cooperation are pivotal to improving peacekeeping outcomes.⁵⁰ Furthermore, integrating cultural sensitivity training can address the gap where African communities feel disconnected from peacekeeping forces. Regular evaluation and adaptation have proven to increase mission success, highlighting the importance of agility in dynamic conflict environments. Lastly, regional cooperation with bodies like the AU and ECOWAS can enhance operational synergy, as missions with strong regional ties are more effective.

Bangladeshi peacekeepers play vital role to maintain world peace but they face significant challenges in mandate implementation. By addressing resource constraints, enhancing training programs, ensuring safety, security and promoting collaboration and innovation, Bangladeshi peacekeepers can effectively navigate these challenges and contribute to sustainable peace. The international community must support these efforts to ensure the success of UN peacekeeping missions and the protection of vulnerable populations in conflict zones.

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Brief Biography



Major General S M Asadul Haque, ndc, psc was commissioned in the Regiment of Infantry on 16 December 1993. Over the course of his distinguished military career, he has completed all mandatory professional courses, including the Junior Command Course at the College of Combat, MHOW, India, and The Law of Armed Conflict Course in Turkey. He is an alumnus of both the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) and the National Defence College (NDC), Mirpur.

With extensive experience in command, staff and instructional roles, Major General Asad has successfully commanded an Infantry battalion and a Composite Brigade. His instructional appointments include tenure at the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA), the School of Infantry & Tactics (SI&T), and the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC), Mirpur, where he served as both Directing Staff and Senior Instructor.

Major General Asad possesses significant expertise in United Nations peacekeeping operations. He has served in two UN missions—first as Military Observer in UNMISSET, East Timor (2003–2004) and later as a Military Staff Officer in MONUSCO, DR Congo (2009–2010). Notably, he also held a P-4 staff position in the Office of Military Affairs, Department of Peace Operations, United Nations Headquarters, New York, USA. Additionally, he represented Bangladesh at an International Peace Cooperation Symposium in Japan, engaging in bilateral discussions with Japanese officials to strengthen international peace, cooperation and mutual understanding.

Major General Asad is the incumbent the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 11 Infantry Division. In this capacity, he is responsible for overseeing the division's operational readiness, training and administrative functions to ensure combat effectiveness and strategic preparedness. He plays a key role in planning and executing military operations, enhancing force capability and coordinating with higher headquarters to align division-level objectives with national defence strategies. Additionally, he provides leadership in fostering discipline, morale and professional development within the formation. His extensive experience in peacekeeping and international military cooperation further contributes to strengthening Bangladesh Army's global engagements and operational effectiveness.

Establishing A Robust Supply Chain Network: A Case Study of Bangladesh Navy's Ships Under United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), MTF

Commodore Md Shafiqur Rahman, (S), NUP, ndc, hdmc, psc, BN

Introduction

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was established on 23 March, 1978, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 425 and 426.¹ The initial mandate was to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, restore international peace and security and assist the Lebanese government in re-establishing its authority in the area. The situation evolved following the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, leading to the imposition of a naval blockade by Israel around the Lebanese coast on 13 July, 2006. In response to a request from the Lebanese Government, the Maritime Task Force (MTF) was deployed on 15 October, 2006, under UNSCR 1701.² This marked a significant development as it was the first-ever Naval Task Force utilized in a UN peacekeeping mission. The MTF's primary objective was to lift the Israeli naval blockade. Even after the blockade was lifted, the MTF continued its operations with a mandate to protect Lebanese territorial waters from the trafficking of illegal arms, a mission known as Maritime Interdiction Operation (MIO).

In 2010, Bangladesh government committed to provide naval assets to UNIFIL, demonstrating its dedication to international peacekeeping. Since then, Bangladesh Navy (BN) has consistently provided ships to UNIFIL, showcasing its ongoing commitment to the UN. Bangladesh Navy Contingent (BANCON) joined the MTF on 6 May, 2010, with two ships, BNS OSMAN and BNS MADHUMATI. BANCON has consistently displayed professionalism and dedication in various operations, exercises and logistical endeavours. BN ships patrol MTF-approved sea areas to monitor and secure Lebanese waters and coastlines. They also provide training to Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) Navy personnel.

This article delves into the challenges and strategies employed by Bangladesh Navy in establishing a successful supply chain network for its ships operating under the UNIFIL MTF mandate. It is based on the practical experience of the author, who served as the contingent logistics officer during the initial deployment. This study will explore the various aspects of supply chain management, the challenges encountered and the solutions implemented to ensure effective logistical support for BN ships operating in a distant and complex environment.

Background: UNIFIL and the Maritime Task Force

The UNIFIL mandate has evolved significantly since its inception. Originally focused on confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces and restoring peace, it has expanded to include the disarmament of militias and the prevention of arms smuggling.

Following the withdrawal of the Israel Defence Force (IDF) from Lebanon in 2000, Security Council Resolution 1559 was issued in September 2004, calling for the:³

- a. Withdrawal of all remaining foreign forces.
- b. Disbandment and disarmament of all militias (Lebanese and non-Lebanese).

The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli conflict led to Security Council Resolution 1701 in August 2006, extending and strengthening the UNIFIL mandate. During the hostilities in July 2006, Israel declared a naval blockade around the Lebanese coast.⁴ The deployment of the MTF, at the request of the Lebanese Government, was a landmark event that prompted Israel to lift the naval blockade.

The MTF's main task is to support the Lebanese Navy in monitoring its territorial waters, securing the Lebanese coastline and preventing the unauthorized entry of arms or related material through sea into Lebanon. This Maritime Interdiction Operation is crucial for maintaining stability in the region.

Bangladesh Navy's Commitment

Bangladesh Navy's commitment to UNIFIL reflects its broader commitment to international peace and security. The deployment of naval assets to the MTF demonstrates BN's willingness to contribute to global peacekeeping efforts. BN provides training and development to Lebanon's Armed Forces, contributing to regional maritime security.

Challenges Faced in Establishing the Supply Chain

Establishing a reliable supply chain for BN ships operating under UNIFIL MTF posed several significant challenges. These challenges ranged from logistical hurdles to political and economic complexities which are briefly discussed below:-⁵

- a. **Distant Logistics:** Operating in Lebanon, approximately 6000 km from Bangladesh, presented a major logistical challenge. The vast

distance increased lead times, transportation costs and the complexity of coordinating supply chain activities.

b. **UN Restrictions:** The UN imposed restrictions on port operations, limiting MTF ships to operating between only three ports in the Mediterranean Sea viz. Beirut (Lebanon), Mersin (Turkey) and Limassol (Cyprus). Additionally, the ships operated on a self-sustenance basis, meaning that the UN is not responsible for providing supply chain or logistical support.

c. **Infrastructure Limitations:** Initially, limited infrastructure in Lebanon to support BN ships complicated logistical coordination, which was eventually overcome with BN initiatives and management with other authorities.

d. **Policy and Guideline Scarcity:** Being BN's first MTF deployment, there was a lack of comprehensive guidelines for logistics operations. This requires developing new procedures and protocols to ensure effective supply chain management.

e. **On-Ground Realities:** Establishing a comprehensive supply chain network while adhering to government financial and audit regulations proved challenging. Balancing operational commitments with strict financial compliance required careful planning and execution.

f. **Limited National Support Element (NSE):** Due to cost constraints, establishing a National Support Element (NSE) under the umbrella of Bangladeshi government was not feasible. This meant that BN ships had to rely on their own resources and innovative solutions to manage the supply chain.

g. **Complex and Volatile Product Market:** The political instability in Lebanon contributed to a complex and volatile product market. Sourcing and procurement were challenging due to uncertain supply, fluctuating prices and potential disruptions.

Strategies and Solutions Implemented by Bangladesh Navy

Despite these considerable obstacles, BN was able to establish a strong and sustainable supply chain network for its ships participating in the UNIFIL MTF. BN adopted a variety of methods and tactics, including the following:-

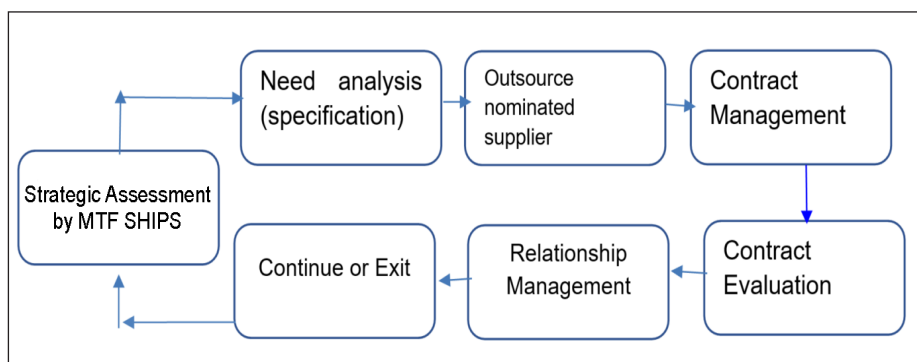
a. Outsourcing to Ship Chandlers

(1) BN used a plan of strategic outsourcing by working with ship

handlers to get important supplies and services. The ships chose ship handlers once a year using a tendering procedure overseen by Bangladesh Embassy in Lebanon. These handlers provided dry and fresh produce, petroleum oil and lubricants (POL), spare parts, maintenance and repair services, transportation, port services and other goods.⁶

(2) **Process of Outsourcing:** The diagram included in the case study illustrates the step-by-step outsourcing process. The need for supplies and services is identified and the requirements are specified. Then, potential ship handlers are identified and invited to submit proposals. The proposals are evaluated based on various factors, including price, quality and experience. A contract is awarded to the selected ship handler and the supply chain activities are outsourced which is shown by flow chart below:-

Flow Chart-1: Supply Chain Activities



Source: Author's self-construct

b. Performance-Based Logistics (PBL)

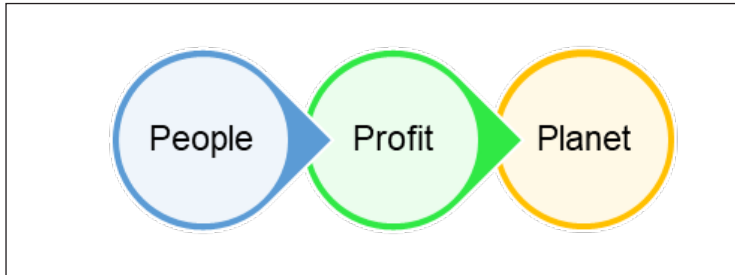
BN emphasized performance-based logistics in its agreements with ship handlers. This approach focused on ensuring that the handlers met specific performance targets, such as timely delivery, quality of supplies and adherence to service level agreements. This incentivized the handlers to provide high-quality services and ensured that BN ships received the necessary support to maintain operational readiness.⁷

c. Ensuring Supply Chain Sustainability:

(1) BN recognized the importance of supply chain sustainability and incorporated sustainability considerations into its procurement and

logistics practices. This involved selecting suppliers who adhered to environmentally friendly practices, minimizing waste and promoting ethical sourcing.

Flow Chart-2: Supply Chain Sustainability



Source: Author's self-construct

(2) **3P Principle of Sustainability:** BN adopted the “3P” principle of sustainability, focusing on People, Profit and Planet.

(a) **People:** Ensuring fair labour practices, promoting ethical sourcing and supporting local communities.

(b) **Profit:** Optimizing costs, improving efficiency and generating economic value.

(c) **Planet:** Minimizing environmental impact, reducing waste and promoting environmentally friendly practices.

d. Adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

BN developed and implemented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all aspects of supply chain management. These SOPs provided clear guidelines for procurement, inventory management, transportation and other logistics activities, ensuring consistency and efficiency in operations.

e. Effective Inventory Management

BN implemented effective inventory management practices to optimize stock levels and minimize waste. This involved using techniques such as Economic Order Quantity (EOQ) to determine the optimal quantity of supplies to order at a time.

f. Strong Coordination with the Bangladesh Embassy

BN maintained close coordination with Bangladesh Embassy in Lebanon, which provided crucial support for logistical coordination,

procurement and communication with local suppliers and authorities.

g. Team Building and Motivation

Recognizing the importance of human capital, BN invested in team building and motivation initiatives. This fostered a positive work environment, enhanced collaboration and improved employee morale, all of which contributed to the success of the supply chain operations.

h. Financial Prudence

BN maintained strict financial discipline, adhering to government financial and audit regulations in all procurement and logistics activities. This ensured transparency and accountability in the use of public funds.

j. Strategic Fit

BN ensured that its supply chain strategy aligned with its overall operational objectives and the requirements of the UNIFIL MTF mandate. This involved careful consideration of factors such as the operational environment, the needs of the ships and their crew and the constraints imposed by UN regulations.

Key Aspects of the Supply Chain Management System

BN's supply chain management system under UNIFIL MTF incorporated several key aspects which are highlighted below:-⁸

Outsourcing Decision: The decision to outsource supply chain activities to ship chandlers was a strategic one, driven by the need to overcome infrastructure limitations and logistical challenges. Outsourcing allowed BN to leverage the expertise and resources of specialized service providers, improving efficiency and reducing costs.

a. **Need Analysis:** BN conducted thorough needs analysis to determine the specific requirements of its ships and their crew. This involved assessing the demand for various supplies and services, considering factors such as operational tempo, maintenance schedules and crew size.

b. **Specification:** Clear and detailed specifications were developed for all goods and services procured through ship chandlers. This

ensured that BN received products and services that met its quality standards and operational requirements.

c. **Sourcing and Procurement Process:** BN implemented a transparent and competitive sourcing and procurement process. This involved inviting bids from multiple ship chandlers, evaluating their proposals based on price, quality, performance and selecting the best value option.

d. **Strategic Fit:** BN's supply chain strategy was aligned with its overall operational objectives and the requirements of the UNIFIL MTF mandate. This ensured that the supply chain effectively supported BN's mission and contributed to the achievement of its goals.

d. **Drivers:** BN identified and leveraged key drivers of supply chain performance, such as efficient transportation, effective inventory management and strong supplier relationships.

e. **Inventory Management:** BN implemented effective inventory management practices to optimize stock levels and minimize waste. This involved using techniques such as Economic Order Quantity (EOQ) to determine the optimal quantity of supplies to order at a time.

f. **3rd Party Logistics (3PL):** BN utilized 3PL services provided by ship chandlers for transportation, warehousing and other logistics activities. This allowed BN to focus on its core operational tasks while outsourcing non-core functions to specialized service providers.

BN Execution of Supply Chain

All logistical demands were managed locally under the directives of NHQ.⁹ In addition to procurement through the Ship's Chandler, various items were acquired via the Ship's Standing Procurement Committee. The diverse logistical requirements in the mission area posed challenges, necessitating the formation of the following committees for effective management:

a. **Standing Demand Scrutiny Committee:** This committee conducted a thorough review of all demands raised by departments to ensure their validity and necessity.

b. **Standing Procurement Committee:** This committee managed the purchase of items within the CO's financial authority.

c. **Standing Inspection Committee:** Responsible for inspecting the quality and quantity of purchased items through the Ship's Chandler or the Standing Procurement Committee. No item was accepted onboard without clearance from this committee.

d. **Standing Spares Committee:** Oversaw the entire process of spares procurement, including demand scrutiny, purchase and inspection. It also determined whether items or equipment required repairs through the Ship's Chandler or external local workshops.

e. **Local Survey Standing Board (LSSB):** Conducted onboard surveys per Fleet Orders (FO) and NHQ instructions. Based on the committee's recommendations, follow-up actions such as repairs or disposals were taken.

f. **Standing Disposal Committee:** Executed the final disposal of surveyed items following FO and NHQ directives.

g. **Standing Committee for Fuel Price Exploration:** Assessed market fuel prices as required.

h. **Outsourcing Ship's Chandler:** A Ship's Chandler was appointed annually through a tendering process managed via Bangladesh Embassy in Lebanon. The Chandler supplied dry and fresh provisions, POL, commodities, spares, maintenance/repair services, transport and port services. Based on the embassy's recommendation and the ship's committee report, NHQ approved the proposal, leading to the contract signing with the nominated Chandler. The senior ship coordinated the entire process.

j. **Collection of Dry/Fresh Provision:** Supply orders for dry and fresh provisions were placed well in advance. Fresh provisions were collected weekly, while dry provisions were obtained weekly, depending on operational requirements and deployment schedules. A Standing Inspection Committee verified all supplies upon arrival, ensuring quality and quantity standards were met. Any discrepancies resulted in item replacement or return. Provisions collected from locations other than Beirut (such as Mersin and Limassol) were arranged via LOG ORDER in advance under the same Ship's Chandler. The onboard SMO ensured food hygiene and monitored expiration dates for crew health.

k. **Procurement of Various Stores and Spares:** To maintain operational readiness, stores and spares were regularly procured through the Ship's Chandler or the Standing Procurement Committee (within the CO's

financial limits). Where applicable, prior or post-facto approvals were obtained from NHQ.

l. Storage Facility: The ship had a storage capacity of 15 days for dry provisions and 12 days for fresh provisions. Storage facilities included two refrigerated rooms (for meat and fish), a cool room (for fresh fruits, vegetables and liquid items), and two storerooms (for dry goods, condiments etc.).

m. Food Management: Considering the demanding nature of sea deployments, a balanced diet was provided to the crew in consultation with the onboard SMO. The daily meal plan consisted of five meals: Breakfast, Tea-break, Lunch, Afternoon Tea and Dinner. To enhance morale and provide variety, select Lebanese and international meals were occasionally included, adhering to budget constraints. Efforts were made to minimize food waste.

n. Inspection and Audit Monitoring: Being stationed far from home and lacking regular audits poses challenges in logistics operations. However, periodic guidance from NHQ via telephone and visits from audit teams significantly improved supply chain management.

p. Sustainability: Sustainability encompassed the ship's responsibility towards its personnel, operational commitments and environmental conservation. Welfare measures were aligned with UN mandates and the ship consistently achieved high operational success. Comprehensive SOPs were in place for waste disposal and environmental preservation as part of the supply chain framework.

q. Finance and Cost Management: Financial discipline was paramount in BN's logistics operations, ensuring adherence to government financial and audit regulations. Self-sustenance in logistics was reported to the MTF command to facilitate seamless maritime operations under the UN mandate.

Comparison with Other Nations

Other MTF-participating nations included Germany, Türkiye, Greece and Indonesia. While Germany and Indonesia relied on their home-country supply chains, other nations managed localized networks. BN's achievement was particularly commendable as it successfully established a localized supply chain in a challenging environment.

Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

BN's experience under UNIFIL MTF provides several valuable lessons and best practices for supply chain management in similar contexts which are highlighted below:-

a. **Importance of Strategic Outsourcing:** Outsourcing can be a highly effective strategy for overcoming infrastructure limitations and logistical challenges, especially in remote or unfamiliar environments.

b. **Value of Performance-Based Logistics:** PBL ensures that service providers are held accountable for meeting specific performance targets, leading to improved quality and reliability.

c. **Need for Sustainability Considerations:** Integrating sustainability into supply chain practices promotes ethical sourcing, reduces waste and minimizes environmental impact.

d. **Essential Role of SOPs:** SOPs provide clear guidelines and ensure consistency in supply chain operations.

e. **Significance of Effective Inventory Management:** Optimizing inventory levels reduces waste and ensures that necessary supplies are always available.

f. **Criticality of Strong Communication and Coordination:** Effective communication and coordination with all stakeholders, including embassies, local authorities and suppliers are essential for success.

g. **Importance of Team Building and Motivation:** Investing in human capital fosters a positive work environment and improves employee morale.

h. **Necessity of Financial Prudence:** Adhering to financial regulations ensures transparency and accountability.

j. **Alignment with Overall Objectives:** The supply chain strategy must be aligned with the organization's overall operational objectives and the requirements of the mission.

k. **National Support Element (NSE):** Main requirement of MTF is the availability of the ship throughout the deployment period. Therefore, keeping the ship operationally available always NSE is badly needed. Adequate running spares in the shore container should be always available so that all defects can be rectified within the shortest possible time.

Conclusion

Bangladesh Navy's successful establishment of a robust supply chain network under UNIFIL MTF serves as a compelling case study in effective logistics management in a challenging operational environment. By adopting a strategic outsourcing approach, emphasizing performance-based logistics, ensuring supply chain sustainability and implementing effective inventory management practices, BN overcame significant obstacles and provided reliable support to its naval ships.

This case study highlights the importance of adapting supply chain strategies to the specific needs and constraints of the operational environment. BN's experience demonstrates that even with limited resources and infrastructure, it is possible to establish a sustainable and efficient supply chain network through careful planning, innovative solutions and a commitment to excellence. The lessons learnt from this case study can be valuable for other organizations and military forces operating in similar environments. The experiences of author and Bangladesh Navy have created a legacy of effective and sustainable supply chain management within the UNIFIL MTF. This success story not only enhances BN's reputation but also underscores Bangladesh's commitment to global peace and security.

Notes and References

1. See United Nations Security Council (UNSC) *Resolution 425*, 19 March, 1978.
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Brief Biography



Commodore Md Shafiqur Rahman, (S), NUP, ndc, hdmc, psc, BN joined Bangladesh Navy on 01 July 1990 and was commissioned in the Logistics Branch on 01 July 1993. Throughout his career, he has held key positions such as Logistic Officer of Ships and Establishments, Instructor, Staff officer to command and Headquarters, Director of Budget at Naval Headquarters, and Commanding Officer of Logistics Depot. He has completed various professional courses at home and abroad and visited countries like the USA, India, China and Türkiye. Commodore Shafiq received the “Commendation Letter” from the Chief of Naval Staff and the ‘Nou Utkorsho Podok (NUP)’ for his dedicated service. He is also a graduate of Higher Defence Management Course (HDMC) and National Defence Course-2024 at NDC. Presently he is appointed as Director of Budget at Naval Headquarters.

Fleet Sustainability vis-a-vis Aviation Logistics Chain Management at CAR

Wing Commander AKM Solaiman, psc

Introduction

According to Dag Hammarskjöld (1905-1961), second UN Secretary General from 1953-61, "Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it." Peacekeeping is the single activity for which the United Nations is most known, and it is the most effective instrument available to the international community for the maintenance of peace and security. Again, action undertaken to preserve peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers is also bemoaned as peacekeeping.¹

Logistics Concept of Operations (LOGCONOPS)

The UN peacekeeping logistics support concept is based on the integration of UN Owned Equipment (UNOE), contracted and contingent-provided resources i.e., Contingent Owned Equipment (COE).² All mission support or service function at a peacekeeping mission, regardless of their origins are considered common to the mission. These resources must be made available on a uniform and equitable basis, depending on mission assessed priorities, irrespective of whether the TCC provide the goods or services. Thus, logistics issues become paramount in terms of Wet Lease (maintenance with TCC) arrangement for any sorts of deployment to UN.³

UN missions can vary in size from a small group of observers, (who may be civilians, police, military, or a mixture), to a combined force consists of land, sea and air elements with numbers exceeding thousands in total. Thus, different logistic concepts will be needed for different mission to fulfil its logistic requirements. All these logistic concepts will have to be sustainable for a specific mission considering the operational task, space and time, manpower, material, environment, climate, infrastructure etc. It may include elements that are mobile or static, civilian, or military, with in-theatre warehousing or national re-supply lines or, in most cases, a combination of all elements.

UN Logistics Planning Principles

UN logistics are centralized, comprehensive, tailorable (modular), flexible (scalable) and unremitting. Common to all aspects of UN Mission these are required for mobilization and the interoperability of multinational efforts.

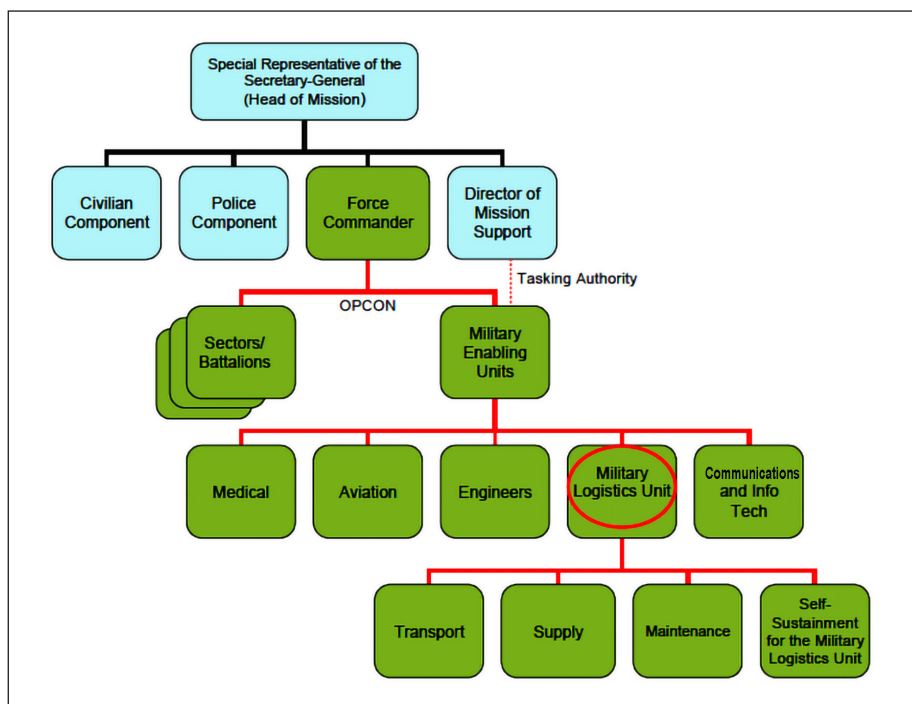
UN logistic operation for all Mission has common principles for planning and implementation which are as follows:-⁴

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| a. Responsibility, | b. Foresight, |
| c. Flexibility, | d. Economy, |
| e. Simplicity, | f. Cooperation, |
| g. Sufficiency, | h. Accountability, |
| j. Visibility, and | k. Interoperability. |

Logistic and UN Field Operation: A Modus Operandi

UN operation are complicated by several peculiar characteristics that fundamentally impact upon the provision of operation support viz., political complexity and dynamic nature of each operation scenario; geographic, topographic and climatic variations of theatres of operation; number of individual nations involved in each operation; variations in national standard in training, equipment, operational procedures, operational support language and communication differences.⁵

Figure:1 UN Mission Integrated Support Structure



Source: Author's self-construct

BANAVN MOB in Bouar is almost 430 km far from capital Bangui. So, for any need of resupply, it is unwieldy to explore Bangui for non-technical spares where time and speed matter most.

UN Mandate in MINUSCA

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) ratified its mandate by UN Resolution No. 2449 dated 15 November 2019 to Robust Peacekeeping. It means proactive deployment, mobile, flexible and robust posture of military elements of MINUSCA. Under 'Robust Peacekeeping' umbrella, MINUSCA is authorized to use force i.e., "Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter."

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Lease Arrangement

MOU signed on 06 July 2020 states regarding the lease arrangement between UN and Bangladesh. Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) Manual 2017 further describes in detail on the BAF participation in MINUSCA. UN has commonly two types of lease arrangement viz., wet and dry lease.⁶

BANAVN Helicopters' Availability for Air Tasking

LOA 2020-003 signed on 11 November 2020; helicopters shall be available as per following:-

- a. Minimum availability of 02 (two) X Mi 171 sh Armed Military Utility Helicopters daily.
- b. Individual helicopters availability rate should be at least 23 days per month (21 days in February).
- c. Helicopters must be available on 24/7, at least one (01) helicopter for day/night (with NVG) (24 hours per day, 07 days per week) basis, except as indicated below; and
- d. Helicopters maintenance (five days per month) and any repair or modification requiring removal of helicopter from service needs to be planned and coordinated in advance with the Mission's authorized United Nations Chief Aviation Officer (CAVO) to preserve MINUSCA operational capabilities. The maintenance regime and authority for releasing the helicopters back to service is the sole responsibility of the Government and does not require permission of MINUSCA.
- e. **Flight Time:** The Government shall be capable of providing an average 135 hours of flight time per month for the fleet of three (03)

helicopters (45 per helicopters) not to exceed 1620 flight hours for the term from 10 July 2020 to 09 July 2021 and onward.

Services to be Rendered by BANAVN-1

Services are mentioned in the Letter of Assist (LOA) signed between Government of Bangladesh and UN dated 11 November 2020. The purpose of the services is to support the UN peacekeeping activities mandated by the UN Security Council (UNSC) in CAR with sufficient and satisfactory capability.⁷ These services may include, but not limited to are shown in Table-1 below:-

Table-1: Services to be Rendered by BANAVN-1

Armed Role	Utility Role
Fire Support Including Suppressive Fire	Support for Air Mobile Operations
Combat Resupply	Patrol, Observation & Monitoring Flight
Air Patrol with Armed Troops on board	Search & Rescue
Troop's Insertion & Extraction	Area Surveillance & Reconnaissance
Armed Escort	CASEVAC/MEDEVAC
Combat Recovery	Cargo Transportation (Internal & Sling)
Air Mobility Transportation of Troops	Troops & Passenger Transportation
Task beyond LOA	
Electoral Support Mission	
Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) Reconnaissance	
Detainee Mission	
Crew Currency/Proficiency (CC/CP) Mission	
Force Package	

Source: Author's self-construct

Map:1 BANAVN Probable Tasks Areas in MINUSCA

Source: <https://banavn.tasksarea/doo/minusca>

Binding Limitation: Considering the ground scenario of MINUSCA, such services may involve operation into hostile areas or fields where there is no ground support or where airfield security cannot be guaranteed.

MINUSCA Air Assets: Commercial and Military

Senegal Aviation (SENAVN) repatriated from MINUSCA in the month of April 2020. So, military air assets became insignificant to run UN mandate in CAR thus UN sourced Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) as its right peace partner.

At present, MINUSCA aviation operates four (04) fixed wing (FW) aircrafts and ten (10) rotor wing helicopters after the repatriation of SENAVN.⁸ These are shown in the Table-2 below:-

Table-2: MINUSCA Air Assets

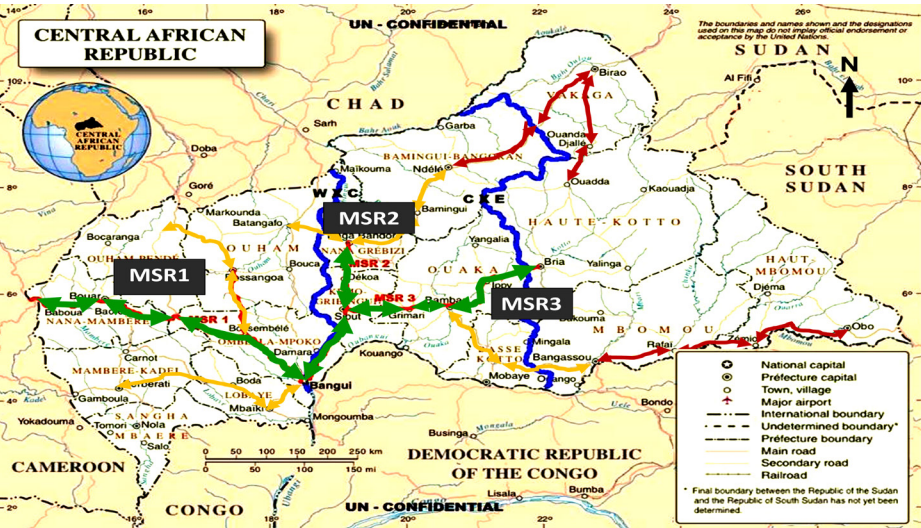
Ser	Name of air asset	Quantity	Contract Type	Contingent	Country
a.	Let L-410	02	Under commercial contract	-	Russia
b.	Antonov 74	02	Under commercial contract	-	Russia
c.	Mi 8 Helicopter	01	Under commercial contract	-	Russia
d.	Mi 17 Military Helicopter	03	Letter of Assist (LOA)	PAKAVN	Pakistan
e.	Mi 17 Helicopter	03	Letter of Assist (LOA)	SRIAVN	Sri Lanka
f.	Mi 24V Military Attack Helicopter	03	Letter of Assist (LOA)	SENAVN (repatriated)	Senegal
g.	Mi 171 sh Armed Helicopter	03	Letter of Assist (LOA)	BANAVN-1	Bangladesh
Total		17			

Source: Author’s self-construct

Logistic Constraints in CAR

CAR has three Main Supply Road (MSR) that provides lifeline. The MSR-1 (length 610 km) leading from Cameroon to Bangui is the main lifeline.

Map-2: Main Supply Route (MSR) of CAR



Source: <https://alt.army.lk/MSR/minusca>

Whole country depends on the serviceability and effectiveness of MSR-1, MSR-2 and MSR-3 which are the internal transportation lines for delivery of goods. Road condition is not good except in capital and MSR-1 (Cameron-Bangui). There are ups and down on the route which forces the vehicle to reduce speed. Elephant grass on the roadside and thick jungle facilitates the miscreants to hide undetected. The scenario in road and transport sector of CAR is highlighted in the photos given below:-

Photo-1: Road Condition near Bangui Photo-2: Vehicle crossing a risky bridge



Photo-3: Ubangi River

Photo-4: Busy main road of Bangui, capital of CAR



Source: Author's self collection

Challenges of CAR: By Default

Continent identified challenges upon arriving in the mission area. Much of them are by default. Some of them are shown in the Table-3 below:-

Table-3: Challenges of CAR

Ser	Types of Challenges	Challenges
a.	CAR related challenges	Road/weather conditions Porous Border Internal Security Forces (ISF) deployment
b.	MINUSCA related challenges	Overstretched layout Joint Activities with FACA Unsuccessful political dialogue hampering operations Communication issues Information on operation capabilities
c.	TCC related challenges	Language barrier Standards of training Logistic chain management(LCM) challenge

Source: Author's self-construct

Aviation Logistics Chain Constraints at CAR

Logistic Chain Management (LCM) is absent in MINUSCA in case replenishment/resupply of spares. Bangladesh is almost 8,000 km far from CAR, so replenishment of items is impossible when helicopter become AOG. Besides, by default constraints, there are other aviation logistics chain constraints that may hinder sustainable helicopter operation as per LOA. Following are the areas where Contingent has very few options to avoid or adapt:-

- a. Landlocked country.
- b. Language barrier hider communication, understanding and cooperation when needed.
- c. Lack of road communication within the country. Only 03 MSRs connects key cities and UN installations.
- d. Lack of international flights operation.

- e. Main Supply Road (MSR)-1 (connecting to Cameroon) is closed due to COVID-19, general election and recent increase of Armed Group's activity. As such, Commotion of MSR-1 connected to Cameroon result no ration supply and at times stopped.
- f. No Host Nation Support (HNS).
- g. Logistics Services Provider (LSP) i.e., DHL is only available in CAR which is also not efficient in handling international cargo in a professional manner.

Operational Challenges vs Logistics Sustenance

On the other hand, some operational challenges result in more/frequent consumption of spares. BANAVN needs to adapt with the following plan for logistics sustenance:-

- a. Prioritizing and sequencing of effort.
- b. Unpredictable weather forms up.
- c. Limited tarmac availability hinders maximum sortie generation for a given period.
- d. Brown out during landing and take off of helicopter.
- e. Hot and humid weather.
- f. Aerodrome handling services are limited.
- g. No hangar facilities so helicopters kept outside; thus un-serviceability rate of spares increases than normal phenomenon.
- h. BANAVN has limited container-based storage facilities. Accommodation is being used for storage of delicate and fragile items/spares.
- j. In CAR, all the helipads/airfields are not having refueling facility. Thus, payload is being compromised. As such, frequent flying and more air tasking are generated.

Resupply Management Under Wet Lease Arrangement

The transportation of consumables, Major Equipment (ME) and Minor Equipment i.e., Self- Sustainment (SS) under the wet lease arrangement is a national responsibility.⁹ In accordance with the direction issued to the TCC, no cargo (other than personal belongings within the authority entitlement) will be permitted on board within the UN chartered aircraft.¹⁰

BANAVN-1 Inventory Management

BANAVN has only finished products as inventory. Here inventory management also includes warehousing/storing and processing to issue to end user.

BANAVN-1 received items in three modes mainly through sea transportation, helicopter air lift and during passenger rotation also. As per Statement of Unit Requirement (SUR), MOU and recommendation of BOO (conveyed at Air HQ to ascertain requirement), and after studying the reconnaissance visit report, different types and lines of items and equipment issued to BANAVN-1 apart from 03xMi 171 Sh helicopters (complete and serviceable condition). Following are the short details of items received:-

Table-4: BANAVN-1 Inventory Management

Ser	Mode of receiving items	Line items	Remarks
a	By sea transportation (ME, SS and COE)	2,873	With 36 sea containers Veh-20, Gen & trailer-16
b	During Troops deployment	722	Contingent arrived on 29 May 2020
c	During helicopter deployment/ Air lift	1,111	Hel arrived on 20 Jun 2020
d	Item received during BANSFC rotation	28	-
e	Item received during BANBATT rotation	37	-
f	Received through DHL	10	Helicopters spares
g	Received through individual (hand carry)	200	-
h	Purchased through Dte Air Trg	39	Sports and Gym
j	Purchased through Dte Air Trg	10	Music
k	Purchased locally (Cameroon & CAR)	05	Brought On Charge (BOC) on ledger (F-670)
Total		5,035	
l	Item demanded by BANAVN-1 and yet to be received	63	Dues in at 201 MU
m	Demand forwarded for BANAVN-2	1,250	Dues in (yet to be received)
Grand total		6,348	

Source: Author's self-construct

BANAVN COE Management

Helicopters: 03 X MI-171Sh armed helicopters are being used by BANAVN-1 to carry out flying activities tasked by MINUSCA. Helicopters are being handled by the Engineering Section and operated by the Unit crew. Details are appended below:-

Table-5: Details of Helicopters

Ser	Manufacturer Ser No	Registration No	BAF Ser No	UN No and Call Sign	Location	Fuel Capacity of Each Helicopter
a.	171S00050147466U	S3APQ	466	UNO 3111P	HLS Boaur	With Drop Tank Fitted 5400 Ltr
b.	171S00050177668U	S3APU	7668	UNO 3112P		Without Drop Tank 2700 Ltr
c.	171S00050177669U	S3APV	7669	UNO 3113P		

Source: Author's self-construct

Armament and Ammunition Items: Armament items are being maintained by the Armament personnel of BANAVN-1 under Armament Cell in the 3xCOE containers, 4xUNOE Containers (CLHU 2677651, FCIU 3379120, NUU 2100485 and SGCU 1880673) and accommodation (D1 and D3) that are issued against them on loan and as per signed MOU dated on 06 July 2020 and LOA. Helicopters ammunition is also being maintained by the armament section in the above containers including containers at FDS Bangui (Ex SENAVN) and Boaur.

Communication Items: Communication items are being maintained by the Communication personnel of BANAVN-1 under Communication Cell in the 1xCOE container and accommodation (D1 and D3) that are issued against them on loan and as per signed MOU dated on 06 July 2020.

Engineering Items: Engineering items are being maintained by the Engineering personnel of BANAVN-1 under Engineering Cell in the 3xCOE containers and accommodation (D1 and D3) that are issued against them on loan and as per signed MOU dated on 06 July 2020.

Aviation Logistic Chain Management to Attain Full Spectrum Fleet Sustainability

Backup Spares: Bench stock of spares for above vehicles is being maintained for smooth operation of BANAVN-1. Besides, any urgent requirement of spare (mainly misc items) is met by procuring from local market (subject to availability in CAR/Cameroon).

Re-supply of Spares Management: Contingent may need to undertake local purchase for some items to meet immediate requirements of contingents. AFD's instruction and policy of Air HQs need to be followed strictly in consultation with Government Order (GO). LP needs to be undertaken by raising a Note Sheet by the contingent and subsequent approval from Air HQs.

CAR is a landlocked country. Air transportation of spares is the only available means for resupply. Pakistan Aviation (PAKAVN) and Russian Aviation (contractual) managed their need through support flight from respective countries. Pakistan conducted support flight in every after 06 months and Russia is conducting regular cargo flight by An-124 for many other requirements of GoCAR.

Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Facilities: Periodic maintenance is being carried out regularly. Repair of vehicles is also being done in MT workshop. Sometime the repair jobs of MT equipment are carried out from local market based on requirement.

Maintenance and Repair Facilities of Helicopters: Periodic maintenance like 10 hrs, 25 hrs, 50 hrs, 100 hrs, 200 hrs and 300 hrs inspections are being carried out by the technicians in Bangui and Bouar as required.

Submission of Demand to Source of Supply: Items which are not available in the BANAVN-1 respective inventory and could not be locally procured/found, in that case users should place their requirement to Log Cell by a letter providing with the necessary information i.e., Section/reference/par Number of the item, quantity required, last date of issue, class of store, present stock, priority of demand etc.

Demand of Product/Services to MINUSCA

Items/services required for the serviceability of UNOE, Water line, AC, Sewerage and Engineering etc are to be demanded to MINUSCA's respective offices. Mainly Mission Support Cell (MSC) is the POC for all support. However, For Sector West (Bouar), demand may be submitted to MSC Boaur and for BANAVN Maintenance Camp, Bangui to MSC Bangui.

Items Received through DHL

Contingent may require some items from BD against AOG requirement. 201 MU may send some equipment/spares through DHL as this is the only Logistics Service Provider (LSP) available in Bangui. Again, they are not professionally efficient to handle international cargo. Moreover, cost of releasing goods is more. To address this issue, BANAVN-1 has appointed a Freight & Forwarder (F&F) agent (Mr Nelson) as per advice of MINUSCA to release resupply (COE). For such issue, Contingent needs to write COE Unit with an information to MovCon for authorization, after getting all information from 201 MU BAF. Bangui Camp needs to monitor the process. Upon authorization from MovCon, the same is to be handed over to Mr Nelson for releasing items from DHL. Here, F&F agent will take his commission apart from VAT & Tax of CAR Government.

Items received During Rotation of BANSFC/BANBATT/BANLQRF

There may be occasions when items/spares may arrive through BANSFC/BANBATT/BANLQRF rotation flight. On receiving information from 201 MU, BANAVN Bangui Camp may get the items from M'poko Airport. Mentionable, 201 MU may be advised to provide a Red band on BANAVN packages so that these can be traced/identified immediately upon arrival at destination airport.

Interoperability

MINUSCA may arrange Logistics Conference by involving aviation stakeholders like Russian Aviation, Sri Lanka Aviation, Pakistan Aviation and BAF Aviation. They may share understanding, views, procedures, loan of urgent required spares for having better interoperability among the aviation assets thus achieve mandated task in full capacity.¹¹

Host Nation Support (HNS)

HNS agreement exists between UN and Government of CAR (GoCAR) in a limited scale regards to air traffic control, civilian labour and airport services. However, it is felt to have a wide range of agreement thus to expedite capacity and capability building of GoCAR.¹²

Conclusion

BANAVN deployed in MINUSCA on 29 May 20 with 3xarmed helicopters. During this time, some of the items got unserviceable due to hot and humid weather condition, prolonged use (items issued from the stock of Haiti),

consumable in nature, fair, wear & tear (FWT) and recurring etc. From the experience of operating in MINUSCA, CAR for the last 01 year, BANAVN-1 has managed inventory despite challenges due to changing decision of mission leadership like MOB has been changed for the contingent from Bangui to Bouar.

Logistic preparation for any mission is a continuous process and for initial deployment it is outlandish. For several decades, United Nations peacekeeping has evolved significantly in its complexity.

Despite challenges and non-availability of resupply arrangement hinders capability and performance of contingent as well. CAR is second poorest country in the world and scarcity of logistics is not at all expected. Again, it is a landlocked country. So, resupply through air is the only available means and that to be supplied from Bangladesh.

Adhering logistics principles of UN, backup spares management by the contingent, interoperability and HNS will lead better management of fleet availability.

Storage management has become an issue as no hangar is provided by UN till now. However, construction of one hanger facility will commence soon in the helipad area. Again, contingent is placed in a very small place at Bouar that also restricts construction of storage area inside contingent.

Recommendation

Maintaining an aviation asset is a force capability requirement where TCC is the peace partner. Challenges in the field may disrupt and posed risk to gadget mandated task in full. However, following recommendations are made for short term to medium term solution to attain fleet sustainability:-

- a. Developing a sourcing strategy like market of Cameroon may be explored.
- b. Interoperability may be taken up between other aviation operators like Russia, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.
- c. TCC may discuss with UNHQ while finalizing MOU regarding the gaps in concept of operation (COPOPS) and mandate.
- d. TCC may take up case with UNHQ to alleviate gaps in mission process i.e., changing mindsets of military and civilian stakeholders.

e. Assets vs capacity must be taken into consideration before deployment.

f. Items like recurring, Fair, Wear and Tear (FWT), frequent use, consumable, life components, conditional nature are to be considered more while sourcing items to mission area.

g. Sustainability of helicopter as per LOA i.e., 2 helicopters at a time needs to be serviceable. Other 01xhelicopter may need to be kept reserve/staggered to attain fleet sustainability as per LOA.

h. Inspection of helicopter may be planned considering fleet sustainability i.e., 75%.

j. Extensive liaison may be done with PAKAVN, SRIAVN and Russian side to have information on how to get helicopter sustainable in the long run considering the weather condition of CAR.

k. Enhancing accountability of spares would avoid duplication of expenditure.

l. Effective and knowledge-based training in home country would lessen risk of accident and incident.

m. Resupply flight may be done like Pakistan in every 06 months by Bangladesh Biman/C-130J to attain full spectrum operational capability. This will ensure generation of more flying hours which will in turn enable of receiving of more reimbursement by the Government of Bangladesh.

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Brief Biography



Wing Commander AKM Solaiman, psc was commissioned on 24 December 2001 in Logistics Branch. Besides professional duties, he worked in staff, Instructor and command appointment. He has completed different professional training from Bangladesh Air Force, Bangladesh Army and Indian Air Force as well. He did staff course from DSCSC, Mirpur and is a proud 'Mirpurian'. He has participated in United Nations Mission in (MONUSCO) DR Congo and MINUSCA, CAR. He graduated in BBA and completed Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) in Supply Chain Management (SCM)^P from International Trade Centre (ITC), Switzerland which is an affiliated organization of UN. His area of expertise is Logistics Planning and Decision Making (LPDM) and Logistics Risk Management (LRM). Presently, he is serving as Deputy Director Plans, Air Headquarters.

Protecting Civilians and Promoting Human Rights: Evaluating UNPOL's Efforts in South Sudan

Al-Beli Afifa

Introduction

The United Nations Police (UNPOL) in South Sudan has been commissioned for multiple tasks with several priority goals including protecting civilians and promoting human rights in the country that has faced challenges since gaining independence in 2011. UNPOL's strategies and tactics are important for meeting the short-term security needs of the population, while establishing the longer-term commitment to human rights and the rule of law.

The core strategy of UNPOL in South Sudan has been the deployment of a strong police presence in conflict affected areas especially the capital Juba and other strategic locations. It is imperative to maintain this presence to deter violence and create a sense of security for civilians. UNPOL is implementing community policing efforts that seek to build rapport with local communities (critical in a context where the inter-communal fabric is damaged, distrust of authorities is widespread, and grievances are entrenched in historical and contemporary levels of violence). Many of these initiatives include an approach where police work directly with community leaders and local organizations to build cooperation as a means to increase the legitimacy of police actions and improve human rights consciousness among ordinal population.

In addition to community policing, UNPOL has engaged in capacity building for local law enforcement agencies. This includes training South Sudanese police officers in human rights standards, conflict resolution, and effective policing techniques. This training is critical in a country where the police has long been under-resourced and poorly trained, often leading to human rights abuses. A well-equipped and well-versed police service can effectively discharge their responsibilities in protecting civilians and upholding human rights.

The strategies of UNPOL can be assessed with respect to their effectiveness, using certain indicators, such as the reduction of violence and human rights violations. There has been a reduction in violence in areas where UNPOL had a visible presence, especially related to inter-communal conflicts and domestic violence. In addition, the establishment of protection of civilian sites (PoCs) has become safe havens for vulnerable populations, in particular women as well as children, who are usually the most affected by any level

of violence. However, challenges remain as the overall security situation in South Sudan remains fragile and sporadic outbreaks of violence continue to challenge its efforts.

Despite these successes, UNPOL encounters considerable challenges in fulfilling its mandate. One of the major hurdles is the political situation in South Sudan, with a backdrop of power struggle and factionalism. UNPOL's effectiveness is often limited by political instability, making it difficult for local authorities to assist or comply with foreign forces due to fear of losing control or movement. In South Sudan, the culture of impunity makes it difficult for UNPOL to implement the rule of law and hold people accountable for human rights violations. Working in a place with limited infrastructure presents logistical challenges. UNPOL faces challenges responding to violence and supporting local law enforcement in distant and inaccessible areas of South Sudan.

UNPOL's engagement in South Sudan represents a complex interplay of strategies aimed at protecting civilians and promoting human rights in a challenging environment. Some advances have been made, and in some areas violence has decreased and the capacities of local law enforcement have been expanded, but threats remain substantial. Additionally, the political environment, logistical challenges as well as community perspectives are vital for UNPOL's efforts to be effective. UNPOL provides valuable lessons learnt from their experience in South Sudan that can help future missions grapple with some of the intricacies and challenges of operating in such a complex environment. The study will investigate what strategies have been adopted, how effective they have been, what challenges UNPOL faces, what collaboration UNPOL has with local law enforcement and what community perception is of their presence.

Objectives

Objectives of this article are outlined below:-

- a. To examine the policing strategies and tactics of the United Nations Police (UNPOL) in South Sudan and their impact on the protection of civilian's human rights;
- b. To evaluate the impact of these strategies on limiting violence and human rights abuses;
- c. To determine the main barriers and constraints affecting the implementation of UNPOL mandate within South Sudanese complex political prerogatives;

- d. To review the nature and effectiveness of UNPOL's collaboration with local law enforcement and government agencies to uphold law and order and human rights;
- e. To assess the changes in safety, security and human rights observance, the perceptions and experiences of local communities related to the scale of UNPOL's presence and activities; and
- f. To capture and analyze lessons learnt from UNPOL engagement in South Sudan to inform planning for UN peacekeeping operations in similar contexts in the future.

Methodology

This study followed exploratory analysis to interpret and analyse the UNPOL's strategies and effectiveness in South Sudan. Existing secondary sources have been taken as the sources of data including documents of the United Nations, academic articles and publications, and non-government organizations with human rights specialization. Based on thematic and comparative analysis, the research will evaluate UNPOL's role in securing the protection of civilians, advancing the promotion of human rights and directly confronting operational barriers. The intent of conducting a synthesis literature review using hundreds of secondary sources to achieve a holistic understanding of UNPOL roles and impact on the ground in South Sudan.

Table-1: Analytical Framework

Objective	Core Variables	Indicators	Data Sources	Analysis Methods	Expected Outcomes
Explore UNPOL strategies and tactics in South Sudan	UNPOL Strategies & Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature of interventions (patrols, community policing, etc.) - Frequency of operations - Focus on human rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN reports - Academic articles - Policy documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic analysis - Content analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of key strategies used by UNPOL in conflict areas
Assess the effectiveness of UNPOL strategies in reducing violence	Effectiveness of Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decrease in violent incidents - Reduction in civilian casualties - Human rights improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict data (UCDP, ACLED) - Human rights reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Meta-analysis (if applicable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of whether UNPOL's interventions reduced violence and improved security

Objective	Core Variables	Indicators	Data Sources	Analysis Methods	Expected Outcomes
Identify obstacles and challenges faced by UNPOL	Obstacles & Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political instability - Logistical challenges - Limited resources - Cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNPOL mission reports - Interviews with experts (secondary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic analysis - Comparative analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear identification of barriers affecting UNPOL's performance
Examine collaboration with local authorities and agencies	Collaboration with Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature of joint operations - Capacity-building efforts - Information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNPOL and local government reports - Case studies from similar missions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insights into the effectiveness of collaboration and joint efforts
Study local community perceptions of UNPOL's presence and activities	Local Community Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community safety perceptions - Trust in UNPOL - Observance of human rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey reports - Human rights organizations' feedback - Media reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of how communities view UNPOL's effectiveness and human rights impact
Document lessons learnt from UNPOL's engagement in South Sudan	Lessons Learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successes and failures - Adaptation to challenges - Best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNPOL evaluation reports - Previous peacekeeping missions - Academic studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparative analysis - Synthesis of findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lessons for improving future peacekeeping operations

Source: Author's self-construct

Thematic and Comparative Analysis of the issues

Strategies and tactics employed by the United Nations Police (UNPOL) in South Sudan

UNPOL, part of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), aims to protect civilians and promote human rights. UNPOL employs a multitude of strategies, which can be categorized into several broad classes as mentioned below:-

1. **Community Policing:** Community Policing serves as a cornerstone of UNPOL's strategy, focusing on the trust building between law enforcement agencies and local communities. This has been particularly

vital in South Sudan where historical grievances are combined with mistrust and suspicion of authorities that rendered policing impossible. Moreover, through interaction with community members, UNPOL attempts to learn about the security problems and concerns of the community members from his/her perspective, which aids in developing relationships to address crime and violence related intractable problems in the community. Not only does this type of community engagement result in crime prevention, but also in reconciliation and subsequently rebuilding the trust between the people and law enforcement agencies in a post-conflict context such as South Sudan.

2. Capacity Building and Training: Capacity Building and Training initiatives are another critical aspect of UNPOL's operations. Its aims to help local police forces in good governance under the framework of human rights and international standards. Under this initiative, training module has been developed and organized on the investigation process, crowd management, and gender-sensitive policing which are essential in the context of specific challenges faced by the South Sudan law enforcement agencies. The UNPOL equipped the local police with the basic skills and knowledge necessary to develop a more effective model that serves the community and preserves the future of human rights.

3. Patrolling and Monitoring: On a regular basis, the UNPOL continues to conduct patrolling and monitoring activities with the aim of deterring violence and abuses of human rights. These patrols focus on the most volatile regions with the highest potential for conflict breaking out. UNPOL not only provides a deterrent presence but also airs a sense of security for vulnerable populations, especially in regions where law enforcement is overwhelmed or lacks adequate capacity to address the challenges of the times. Other agencies of UN accompanied and coordinated to further strengthen the arrange of vigilance and cover for magnum communities.

4. Protection of Civilians Sites (PoC): In addition to the purposes of upholding peace by UNPOL, provisions in a mission also include the establishment of sites where civilians that are displaced due to conflict may take shelter within PoC Sites. UNPOL plays an essential role in safeguarding these sites, protecting them from being attacked, whilst ensuring the rights of the residents. UNPOL presence inside PoC sites is paramount both to preventing violence themselves and hence enabling humanitarian assistance.

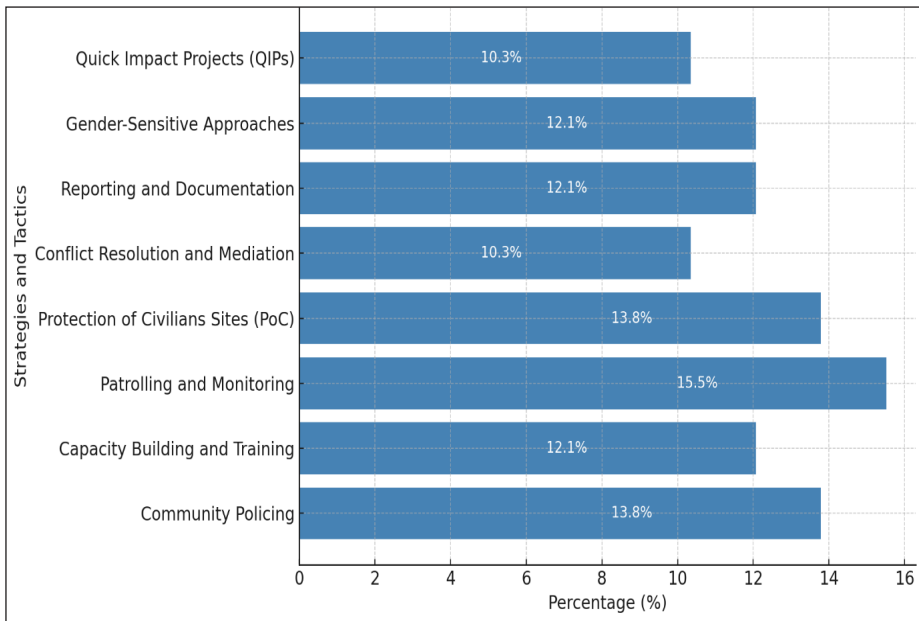
5. Conflict Resolution and Mediation: Conflict Resolution and Mediation is the other key to UNPOL's strategy. Officers are frequently called to mediate disputes between ethnic or politically affiliated groups of residents, and they seek peaceful resolution of conflicts lining up prior to violence. Such proactive conflict resolution is imperative in a setting where historical grievances and clashing interests over resources can compel violent collisions.

6. Reporting and Documentation: Reporting and documentation of incidents of violence and human rights violations is another critical area of focus for UNPOL. There must be accurate documentation, which would be the basis for onwards steps by the United Nations and other international bodies. The unique features of this action is to contribute to both understanding patterns of abuse, as well as informing policies and interventions to address the underlying drivers of violence and insecurity.

7. Gender-Sensitive Approaches: Gender-Sensitive approaches are provisioned to address specific needs of women and ensure their human rights. Women and children are mostly vulnerable due to ongoing violence and conflict. Through these initiatives, UNPOL contributes to immediate stability while also supporting the larger agenda of women and peacebuilding, as well as gender equality and women's empowerment in broader post-conflict recovery.

8. Quick Impact Projects (QIPs): Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) are small-scale initiative, which seek to enhance the living standards of local communities. These project seek to enhance goodwill and strengthen public confidence in UNPOL and the larger peacekeeping effort. These initiatives depend heavily on community engagement and feedback to ensure they are catering to the real needs of the people.

Figure-1: Percentage of strategy Intensity in UNPOL Operations



Source: Author's self-construct

The above bar chart visualizes the intensity of the strategies of the UNPOL's systemwide efforts in South Sudan. The comparison has been examined based on these identified strategies taken by the UNPOL. Among them, the highest priority has been given to patrolling, monitoring, community policing and protection of civilians' sites. The effectiveness of UNPOL in South Sudan, as outlined in various documents, can be evaluated based on their strategic implementations across different sectors which is shown below in Table-2:-

Table-2: Effectiveness of strategies in reducing violence and human rights violations

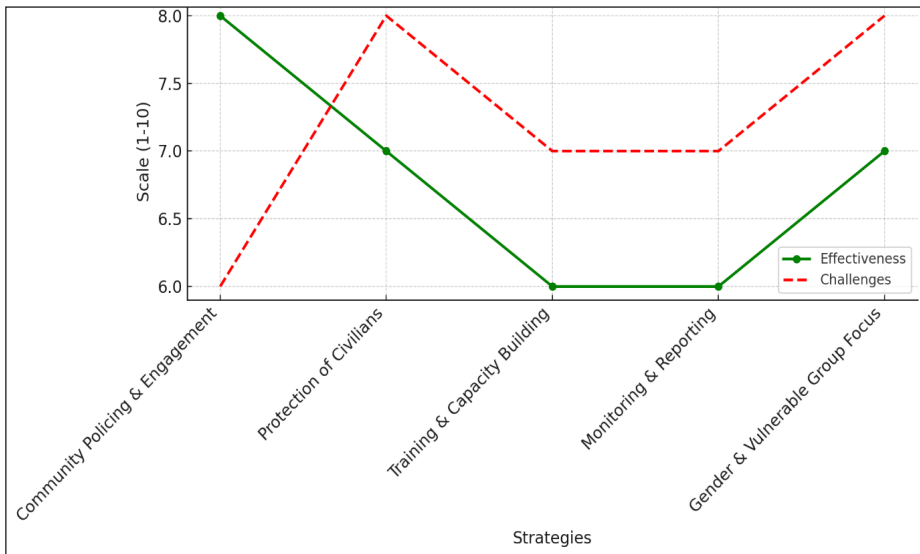
Strategy	Effectiveness	Challenges
Community Policing and Engagement	UNPOL has effectively engaged communities through grassroots mechanisms like Police Community Relations Committees (PCRC), enhancing local security and trust. Community engagement has improved crime prevention and conflict resolution.	Limited capacity and coordination with local police forces, and difficulties in maintaining continuous community trust.

Protection of Civilians (PoC)	The three-tiered approach- dialogue, physical protection and creating protective environments- has provided safety for over 200,000 civilians in PoC sites. Physical protection efforts, especially through regular patrols, have been essential.	Capacity limitations, including insufficient personnel, and political instability have undermined long-term effectiveness.
Training and Capacity Building	UNPOL has enhanced the capabilities of the South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS) by offering targeted training in human rights and law enforcement. This has helped improve law enforcement standards, especially in addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).	Political instability and inconsistent commitment from local authorities hinder the sustainability of these efforts.
Monitoring and Reporting	Regular monitoring of human rights violations and early detection of security threats has raised international awareness and accountability.	Limited resources and logistical challenges prevent comprehensive coverage across all affected areas.
Gender and Vulnerable Group Focus	UNPOL's gender-responsive policing, including specialized SGBV teams, has significantly contributed to protecting women and vulnerable groups. The deployment of female officers has improved trust and communication with local communities.	Gender-based violence remains a persistent issue, with cultural and societal barriers limiting the impact of interventions.

Source: Author's self-construct

The following Figure shows the relationship between the effectiveness and challenges of key UNPOL strategies in South Sudan. Each of these strategies is represented on the x axis, where the scale of effectiveness (green line) and challenges (red dashed line) are rated from 1 to 10. This juxtaposition provides insight on both the successes and challenges UNPOL intervention faces in the field, illuminating the balance of successful operation against challenges faced on the ground.

Figure-2: Effectiveness vs Challenges of UNPOL Strategies in South Sudan



Source: Author's self-construct

UNPOL achieves outstanding success in some areas, although other challenges such as resources, political instability and coordination of efforts adversely affect their overall performance. While important, the ability to adapt strategies amid rapidly changing circumstances leaves much to be desired and be continuously reconsidered to be effective.

In South Sudan, a country that faces numerous problems in the sphere of politics and social contexts, there are numerous challenges in the execution of UNPOL (United Nations Police) mandate.¹⁷ Since 2013, the civil conflict has marked instability and violence creating significant humanitarian crises and impeding UNPOL operations. The conflict has resulted in rampant violence that hinders UNPOL from creating a stable and protective atmosphere essential for successful peacekeeping and law enforcement¹⁸ This is compounded by the lack of trust between the local communities and the UN forces, many of whom view the UN presence with suspicion and as part of a foreign-enhanced intervention for the UN rather than a protective force. This phenomenon is shown in Table-3 below:-

Table-3: Obstacles and challenges faced by UNPOL in executing their mandate within the complex political and social landscape of South Sudan

Category	Challenges	Description
Security and Violence	Pervasive Insecurity	The civil war has led to widespread violence, making it difficult for UNPOL to establish a secure environment for peacekeeping and law enforcement.
	Lack of Trust	Local communities view the UN presence with suspicion, perceiving it as foreign intervention rather than a protective force.
Political Landscape	Ethnic and Political Power Struggles	Power struggles among ethnic groups and political factions create a fragmented environment, complicating unified law enforcement and peacekeeping efforts. ¹⁹
	Patronage and Corruption	The political economy of patronage allows local leaders to manipulate UNPOL's presence for personal gain, undermining the mission's objectives. ²⁰
Logistical Challenges	Poor Infrastructure	Underdeveloped infrastructure, including poor road conditions and limited services, hampers personnel and resource movement. ²¹
	Communication Difficulties	Lack of reliable communication systems hinders effective coordination and timely responses to violence or unrest. ²²
Humanitarian Crises	Resource Diversion	Humanitarian crises like food insecurity and displacement require attention, diverting UNPOL resources from law enforcement to assist in relief efforts.
Cultural Context	Conflict with Local Norms	Traditional conflict resolution practices often clash with UNPOL's formal legal frameworks, causing tension between mandates and local expectations. ²³
	Gender-Based Violence	Pervasive gender-based violence and entrenched societal norms make it difficult for women to access justice and protection services. ²⁴
Psychological Impacts	Trauma Among Population	Widespread trauma and distrust in the population create barriers to effective engagement with UNPOL and peacekeeping initiatives. ²⁵
	Mental Health of Personnel	Stress and trauma affect the decision-making and operational efficiency of both local populations and UN personnel. ²⁶
Resource Constraints	Limited Funding	Inconsistent international support results in funding shortages, limiting the operational capacity of UNPOL.
	Unpredictable Support	Fluctuating donor political will leads to challenges in planning and implementing long-term strategies. ²⁷
International Dynamics	Lack of Cohesive Global Strategy	The absence of a unified international approach to address the root causes of conflict undermines UNPOL's efforts to establish sustainable peace. ²⁸

Source: Author's self-construct

Nonetheless, the obstacles confronting UNPOL within South Sudan is multi-layered and has its origins in the country's intricate political, social, and humanitarian backdrop. The interplay of insecurity, political fragmentation, logistical difficulties, cultural norms, psychological impacts and competing priorities creates a significance adverse environment to provisioned peacekeeping operations. A comprehensive approach is required to address these challenges which will not be limited on setting immediate security needs but also the broad socio-political contexts as well as long-term goals of restoring peace and stability in South Sudan.

Nature and effectiveness of UNPOL's collaboration with local law enforcement and government agencies in efforts to uphold law and order and human rights

The collaboration between the United Nations Police and local law enforcement is essential in ensuring the rule of law and human rights protection, especially in post-conflict countries.²⁹ The partnerships focus on developing trust, building capacity and ensuring the sustainability of the law enforcement agencies' human rights practices. UNPOL emphasizes capacity building, enhancing the local law enforcement's training programs and ensuring human rights, as well as community policing, standards. Such an approach guarantees the sustainability of such practices.

However, political and social factors, such as lack of resources and pressure, pose a threat to such sustainability. Political governance can become a challenge when law enforcement is politicized and selective and in such cases, governance reform is prioritized by UNPOL.³⁰ One of the key features of these partnerships is mutual dependency, which allows for sharing resources and intelligence information. Nonetheless, differing priorities and reluctance to surrender authority sometimes interfere.³¹ To address the issue, UNPOL creates an environment where local law enforcement values transparency and accountability. The outcomes are measured by reduced crime rates, increased public safety and trust.³² For instance, drug-related crimes have reduced due to the UNPOL and local law enforcement's collaboration. Such partnerships also promote human rights. To be precise, human rights are integrated into law enforcement practices for results and local trust, as well as justice and equal opportunities.³³

Perceptions and experiences of local communities regarding the presence and activities of UNPOL

Concerns about the nature of the United Nations Police (UNPOL) presence and activities in the local communities in which they operate, including

their impact on individuals' safety and security as well as on the protection of human rights, have been the subject of growing scrutiny. The effectiveness of UNPOL operations go beyond simply a quantitative assessment; they also encompass the feeling of local communities, and their perceptions and experiences. The relationship between UNPOL and local communities is complex and multifaceted, as evidenced by perceptions and experiences of those communities with the presence and activities of UNPOL. The key points are focused below:-

1. Local Ownership and Trust: To establish trust on the UN police (UNPOL), it is imperative to have the participation of local communities in peace-building strategies. Finally, local communities can determine UNPOL's effectiveness based on perceptions of engagement and level of inclusivity into peace processes that solves community-level conflicts.

2. Cultural Sensitivity: How well UNPOL adapts cultural sensitivity in real operations is key to how locals perceive them. Communities in conflict zones (including South Sudan) highlight the need for engagement with local populations to address their customs, traditions and power structures. UNPOL's work in involving marginalized communities such as women, youth and elders improves their image and recognition by the community.

3. Security Issues: The communities see UNPOL as having a stabilizing entity within their community especially for the Security Sector Reform (SSR) programs. Such joint patrols and subsequent initiatives to disarm local police further emphasize that UNPOL has a stake in improving local security. But local communities are concerned that the reform initiatives, which are often reactionary to the changing security dynamics, will not be sustainable.

4. Economic and Social Engagement: UNPOL not only handles policing, but also engages in economic empowerment and social cohesion programs. In many cases, this engagements implies positive appearance to local communities, especially when UNPOL promotes dialogue between conflicting parties and engages in vocational training and reintegration programs for former combatants.

5. Coordination and Effectiveness Challenges: Local communities are aware of the coordination efforts of UNPOL with national and local actors. Insufficient resources, unclear engagement between different stakeholders can demotivate the trust in UNPOL's presence and long-term benefits.

6. Human Rights and Accountability: Supporting the promotion of the rule of law and human rights is a cornerstone part of UNPOL's contributions, which communities greatly appreciate. Through human rights monitoring, judicial reforms and establishing mobile courts, UNPOL has supported a justice system that speaks to local population's thirst for accountability particularly on conflict-related crimes such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

7. Gender Inclusion and Protection: UNPOL's involvement in gender-sensitive reforms has been highlighted by local communities, particularly in relation to the protection of women and children from violence and their inclusion in peacekeeping. This has strengthened the perception of UNPOL as protector of vulnerable populations.

The difficulties faced by UNPOL in building a good relationship with local communities are numerous. Misconceptions arising from cultural differences, language barriers and varied expectations can make communication and collaboration difficult. UNPOL must equip itself with culture sensitive training and community outreach methods which will enhance understanding and tolerance.³⁴ Such a level of investment can play a pathfinder role, connecting UNPOL with local populations for more effective policing outcomes.

Lessons learnt from UNPOL's engagement in South Sudan to make aware future UN peacekeeping missions in similar contexts

Key Lessons Learnt:

1. Protection of Civilians (PoC) and Responses to Security Threats: UNPOL priority to protect civilians and maintaining law and order in PoC sites has been an effective response. Security incidents in PoC sites have decreased dramatically thanks to intensive patrols, access control and static duties. In Juba and Malakal, for instance, the mobile and foot patrols played a significant role in the reduction of security incidents. The UNPOL's success story in crime rate reduction and community safety improvements is an example of how early warning systems, timely response to security incidents, and enforcement of patrols within Weapons Free Zones (WFZ) all play a part in keeping peace.

2. Community-Oriented Policing and Crime Prevention: The establishment of Community Watch Groups (CWGs), and Police Community Relation Committees (PCRC) fostered in building trust to local ownership of security and safety plans. Training initiatives initiated

and taken by these group and ongoing engagement with internally displaced persons (IDPs) have also helped build trust between the police and communities. Such preventive and community-oriented model of policing can be applied in coming missions to manage ground-level concerns around security as well as perceptions of local order and police institutions in a positive manner.

3. Coordination and Local Capacity Building Challenges: A major challenge for UNPOL in South Sudan was the endorsement with the South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS) and local authorities. This included training, advisory, secondment, and co-location with the SSNPS, but these interventions were constrained to be sustainable, long-term and effective due to inadequate capacity of the local police, the lack of resources and political instability. Peacekeeping missions that are sent in the future must emphasize on the need to develop sustainable local capacity through improved technical assistance and mentoring and provision of resources to local police forces.

4. Gender and Protection Issues: UNPOL plays an important role in protecting vulnerable groups - particularly women and children - against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as well as conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). UNPOL has enhanced the local police's ability to respond to SGBV cases through daily co-location, specialised police teams and community workshops. The ongoing inclusion of gender-sensitive training, especially in conflict-affected environments, should continue to underpin future missions.

5. Integration with Human Rights Monitoring: UNPOL's mandate included monitoring and investigating human rights violations, including those against women and children. The daily visits to the police stations and detention centres also enabled the identification of prolonged or arbitrary detentions and human rights abuses. It helps to hold those involved in peacekeeping missions accountable in terms of committing no breaches of international law including impunity.

6. Lessons from PoC Transitions: UNPOL faced humanitarian and security concerns when deploying to newly constituted IDP camps and places in South Sudan. Collaboration with local authorities was necessary to ensure continuous protection after the transition. The steady decline of UNPOL presence at PoC sites, depending on security assessments, served as a precedent for future transitions in which local authorities take responsibility for IDP safety. To improve future missions,

it's crucial to train and equip national police forces before transitioning.

Recommendations for Future Missions

Enhance Local Policing Capacities: Future missions should focus building the capacity of local police services at the outset of the mission, so that they can ultimately assume complete responsibility for security, particularly in IDP camps and post-conflict transitions.

Develop Gender-Sensitive Programming: The challenge will be to incorporate targeted programming related to gender into broader peacekeeping initiatives in order to address the unique vulnerabilities women and children face in post-conflict societies.

Sustain Community-Oriented Policing Models: UNPOL's engagement with local communities and formulation of CWGs and PCRCs should be replicated because they promote long-term trust in local security.

Holistic Integration of local with National Phases: The UN can do better in integrating local, national and international relevant actors to ensure that peacekeeping gains are sustainable.

UNPOL's participation in South Sudan will enhance our understanding of effective UN peacekeeping despite challenging mandates. Incorporating these lessons in future deployments will better prepare the UN to deal with the complexity of peacekeeping in fragile and conflict-affected situations, contributing to redefining durable peace and stability.

Conclusion

UNPOL prioritizes civilian protection and human rights in South Sudan's hazardous environment. Their strategy of community policing, capacity building and Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites has effectively ensured security and prevented violence. Community policing efforts and training programs for local law enforcement have increased trust and prepared them to uphold human rights norms. Although UNPOL has achieved significant success, it has faced political, logistical and cultural problems.

Collaborating with UNPOL on community-focused approaches, gender-sensitive reforms and local capacity building was crucial for establishing a successful national police system. Collaboration with local law enforcement is not always effective due to a lack of coordination and sustainable resource allocation. Future policing requires seamless integration of human rights monitoring and strategic preparation to meet operational needs. To improve

its impact, UNPOL should collaborate with local authorities, build community trust, and prioritise gender-responsive policing. Lessons from South Sudan can guide future complicated interventions to provide both immediate security and long-term stability.

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Brief Biography



Al-Beli Afifa, Superintendent of Police has eighteen years of experience at Bangladesh Police. She worked in different capacities at home and abroad. She worked in the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Secretariat in New York, USA. While at the UN Secretariat, she was Mission Manager for UNMISS, UNSOM, UNIFIL and UNMHA. Al-Beli has a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and a Master of Science in Applied Mathematics from the University of Dhaka. She also attended the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program and studied human rights at the University of Minnesota, USA. Al-Beli is a life member of International Association of Women Police. All these experiences at home and abroad have deepened her insight, enriched her skills and helped her to develop positive attitudes in daily policing activities. She is presently serving at Range DIG office, Rajshahi.

Political Challenges of Multilateralism in UN Peacekeeping

Walid Mohammad

Introduction

UN peacekeeping has long been viewed as a flagship enterprise of multilateralism, with troops, police and civilian personnel from many nations working under a UN mandate to stabilize conflict zones. Over 75 years, peacekeeping operations have evolved in scope and complexity, reflecting shifts in international politics and security challenges. Today, however, observers warn of a “crisis of multilateralism” that threatens the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping.¹ Geopolitical tensions among major powers are rising, consensus in the UN Security Council is often elusive and many conflicts are characterized by transnational threats that strain the traditional peacekeeping model. These developments raise critical questions: How well can multilateral institutions like the UN adapt to contemporary security challenges? In what ways are current peacekeeping missions hindered or helped by the multilateral nature of their mandates and coalitions? Addressing these questions requires exploring different theoretical perspectives on international cooperation, analyzing real-world cases and examining data on peacekeeping trends. This article maintains an academic perspective in assessing the challenges to multilateralism in UN peacekeeping, ensuring that all theoretical viewpoints, empirical examples and evidence are accurately presented. It concludes with actionable recommendations aimed at revitalizing multilateral peacekeeping for the future.

Theoretical Perspectives on Multilateral Peacekeeping

Realist Perspectives: Realist international relations theory emphasizes that states act primarily in their national self-interest and that power politics heavily influence multilateral endeavours. From a realist viewpoint, UN peacekeeping will be effective only insofar as the great powers allow it and find it useful.² Challenges arise because member states contribute troops and resources in line with their own strategic interests, which can undermine collective action. For example, powerful states may be reluctant to commit forces to UN missions where they have no direct stakes, leading to what some have called a “commitment gap” between the Global North and Global South.³ Realists also point out that veto-wielding members of the Security Council can block or shape missions to suit their geopolitical agendas, sometimes at the expense of local needs. The wariness of these major powers to empower

UN operations beyond their control exemplifies a structural challenge of multilateralism in peacekeeping: the UN's dependence on its most powerful members' political will. According to this perspective, when the interests of key states diverge-as seen in conflicts like Syria or Ukraine-multilateral peacekeeping initiatives either fail to materialize or operate with constrained mandates.⁴ Thus, realism highlights the enduring issue of power politics: UN peacekeeping missions are often fragile coalitions, vulnerable to the shifting interests and rivalries of states that comprise them.

Liberal Institutionalism: Liberal theorists are more optimistic about the prospects for multilateral cooperation. They argue that international institutions like the UN can mitigate anarchy and encourage states to work together for mutual gains.⁵ From a liberal institutionalist perspective, UN peacekeeping demonstrates the benefits of burden-sharing and collective security. Even states with no direct stake in a conflict contribute troops or funds because they value global stability and the norm of cooperation.⁶ This perspective highlights successes where broad coalitions came together to end conflicts-such as the UNTAG mission in Namibia (1989–1990) or UNMIL in Liberia (2003-2018)-as evidence that multilateralism can work. However, liberals also acknowledge challenges. Effective multilateral peacekeeping requires trust in the institution, credible commitment from all partners and clear mandates.⁷ When missions suffer from ambiguous goals or insufficient resources, it is often because member states could not fully agree, resulting in a compromise mandate that satisfies minimal consensus rather than strategic clarity. Furthermore, liberal scholars note that peacekeeping needs strong support from regional organizations and local actors to succeed, aligning with the concept of “networked multilateralism” where global and regional institutions partner on peace operations.⁸ To be precise, liberal institutionalism sees UN peacekeeping's multilateral character as a strength, but one contingent on cooperation, adequate investment and the upholding of international norms. The challenge is not multilateralism per se, but the inconsistency of states in embracing it-nations must collectively recommit to the principles of the UN Charter for peacekeeping to thrive.⁹

Constructivist and Critical Perspectives: Constructivist scholars focus on how ideas, identities and norms shape multilateral peacekeeping. They argue that the legitimacy of UN peacekeeping stems from shared norms about conflict resolution, human rights and international solidarity.¹⁰ From this angle, one challenge of multilateralism is differing perceptions: states and local populations interpret the UN's role through their own cultural and political lenses. For instance, some host governments view UN missions with suspicion-as infringements on sovereignty or as Western-dominated

enterprises-while troop-contributing countries from the Global South expect greater respect and equitable influence in mission decisions.¹¹ This tension can erode trust within a mission. Critical theorists also point out power imbalances within multilateral operations. They note that while countries like Bangladesh, India, or Rwanda provide large numbers of peacekeepers, decision-making and senior leadership roles often remain with wealthier nations or permanent Security Council members.¹² Such disparities can breed resentment and affect operational cohesion. Additionally, challenges such as peacekeeper misconduct or culturally insensitive approaches have undermined the normative legitimacy of UN missions in the eyes of local communities.¹³ Constructivists stress that sustaining a truly multilateral effort requires cultivating a shared sense of purpose and mutual understanding among all stakeholders-peacekeepers, contributing nations, host states and local civilians. When that shared understanding breaks down, missions may face local resistance or lack of enthusiasm from contributing countries. Therefore, this perspective highlights that beyond material factors, the ideas and narratives around UN peacekeeping-its perceived legitimacy, fairness and alignment with local values-are critical to its success or failure as a multilateral endeavour.

Case Studies: Multilateralism in Practice

Real-world peacekeeping missions illustrate how the dynamics of multilateralism play out, often under challenging conditions. This section examines two case studies that shed light on the obstacles and opportunities inherent in multilateral UN operations: the Rwandan crisis of 1994 and the recent UN mission in Mali.

Rwanda 1994 – The Perils of Great-Power Disunity: The Rwandan genocide stands as a stark failure of the international community to act, and it underscores how fractures among UN member states can cripple a peacekeeping mission. The UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was deployed to help implement a peace agreement, but it had a limited mandate and scant resources.¹⁴ When mass violence against the Tutsi population erupted, UNAMIR's multinational force was constrained by rules of engagement and a lack of reinforcements. Several Security Council members, scarred by a recent debacle in Somalia and guided by domestic pressures, were unwilling to support a robust response.¹⁵ As a result, the mission's contingent was drastically cut just as the genocide escalated. This tragedy revealed the dark side of multilateralism: if key states withdraw their support or block decisive action, the UN as a whole appears paralyzed. General Roméo Dallaire, UNAMIR's Force Commander, famously lamented the world's indifference as his pleas for

aid went unanswered.¹⁶ The Rwandan case demonstrates that without genuine consensus and commitment-especially from powerful countries-multilateral peacekeeping missions may falter at critical moments. It also led to soul-searching and reforms; in the aftermath, UN reports acknowledged the need for clearer mandates and the political will to prevent such failures. Rwanda's lesson is that multilateralism's effectiveness in peacekeeping hinges on unity of purpose: when member states fail to unite against mass atrocities, the consequences are catastrophic.¹⁷

Mali (MINUSMA)–Peacekeeping amid Geopolitical Crossfire:

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), established in 2013, became one of the UN's most challenging contemporary operations, highlighting the complexities of multilateral peacekeeping in a changing geopolitical context. Initially, MINUSMA had broad international backing to support Mali's peace process after a coup and insurgency, reflecting a moment of consensus. Over time, however, the mission was caught in the crossfire of shifting interests. Mali's government accused the mission of failing to neutralize insurgents and, in a surprising move in 2023, demanded MINUSMA's immediate withdrawal.¹⁸ This occurred against the backdrop of increasing influence of new external actors in Mali, such as private military contractors not accountable to the UN and a deteriorating relationship between Western powers and Mali's leaders. Russia and China, permanent Council members with growing ties in Africa, often had different views on MINUSMA's mandates compared to Western members, reflecting wider great-power tensions.¹⁹ The mission also suffered significant casualties; over its tenure, MINUSMA became one of the deadliest UN missions, with peacekeepers targeted by extremist groups in a conflict that evolved into a counterterrorism struggle. The Mali case underscores how multilateral peacekeeping can be undermined by external geopolitical rivalries and host nation politics: even though more than 60 nations contributed to MINUSMA, a breakdown in the political consensus-both within Mali and internationally-led to mission termination. It highlights the need for realistic mandates (MINUSMA was tasked with an ambitious stabilization agenda amid active conflict), robust support (its peacekeepers lacked the advanced capabilities of parallel French forces that later departed) and above all, a unified international front. When multilateral unity frays, as it did with Mali, peacekeeping missions become vulnerable to failure. The end of MINUSMA has raised concerns that other long-running missions may face similar pressures, heralding an era in which multilateral peacekeeping is increasingly constrained by geopolitical fragmentation.²⁰

Other Illustrative Examples: Beyond these two cases, numerous other missions reveal multilateral challenges. In Bosnia in the early 1990s, the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) struggled to protect civilians in the midst of war until a stronger NATO-led coalition intervened, reflecting how a lack of consensus on using force hampered the UN mission.²¹ By contrast, in East Timor (1999), a robust multinational force under UN auspices succeeded in restoring order after violence, largely because of a unified Security Council mandate and regional cooperation led by Australia.²² Each case study, success or failure, reiterates a common theme: the degree of alignment among international stakeholders and their collective resolve often determines the outcome of peacekeeping endeavors. Multilateralism brings legitimacy and shared burden, but it also requires navigating different political wills and operational cultures within a single mission. The lessons drawn from these examples feed into ongoing reform discussions, such as the Brahimi Report, United Nations, 2000 and the High-Level Panel on Peace Operations, United Nations, 2015, which have called for improved mission planning, better-equipped forces and more cohesive political support as ways to overcome multilateral coordination problems on the ground.

Data and Trends in UN Peacekeeping

Empirical data on UN peacekeeping operations provides important context for understanding the scope of multilateralism's challenges. Several key data points illustrate the strain on the current peacekeeping system and the multilateral efforts to support it which are briefly highlighted below:-

a. **Scope of Operations:** As of 2023, the UN is managing 12 peacekeeping missions with approximately 87,000 uniformed personnel (military and police) deployed from over 120 countries.²³ This scale makes UN peacekeeping one of the largest multilateral military undertakings in the world. The number of missions and peacekeepers peaked in the mid-2010s (around 16 missions and over 100,000 personnel) and has slightly decreased, reflecting both mission closures and a cautious approach to new deployments. The reduction in numbers might suggest a contraction of multilateral peacekeeping, even as conflicts persist, indicating that the international community is presently less inclined or able to launch new large missions.

b. **Contributors—A Divide:** The contributions to UN peacekeeping are markedly imbalanced, revealing a challenge in burden-sharing. Developing countries contribute the vast majority of troops and police. For example, Bangladesh, Nepal, Rwanda, India and Pakistan are

consistently among the top contributors of uniformed personnel.²⁴ In contrast, wealthier nations contribute far fewer troops, though they often provide critical funding. The United States, China, Japan, Germany, and other high-income countries finance a significant portion of the peacekeeping budget (with the US historically assessed about 27% of the budget, now slightly reduced) but deploy minimal personnel on the ground. This division-Global South providing manpower, Global North providing money-sometimes fuels tensions in mission management and priorities. Troop-contributing countries (TCCs) seek greater say in mandate formation and rules of engagement, while financial contributors demand cost-effectiveness and have occasionally pushed for budget cuts.²⁵ The financial strain has been evident: at times, unpaid dues by member states have led to cash shortages for missions, delaying reimbursements to TCCs and undermining mission readiness.²⁶ Thus, the data paints a picture of a multilateral enterprise under financial and political pressure, with unequal contributions challenging the notion of shared responsibility.

c. Mandate Creep and Complexity: Modern peacekeeping missions have mandates that go beyond traditional ceasefire monitoring, often including protection of civilians, support to political processes, disarmament of combatants, election assistance, and even state-building tasks. For instance, the mandate of the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) includes offensive operations against armed groups and extensive civilian protection duties.²⁷ Quantitatively, the length of Security Council resolutions authorizing missions has grown, indicating more complex and multidimensional mandates.²⁸ While comprehensive mandates reflect ambitious multilateral consensus on addressing root causes of conflict, they also create implementation challenges. Peacekeepers are asked to do more with roughly the same resources, stretching capacities thin and sometimes leading to gaps between expectations and reality. Data on civilian casualties in conflict zones and reports of continued insecurity in mission areas (e.g., ongoing violence in parts of Mali or the Central African Republic despite UN presence) highlight how difficult it is for multilateral missions to fulfill broad mandates in volatile environments.²⁹

d. Peacekeeper Safety and Performance: Another critical data point is peacekeeper fatalities and incidents. In the last decade, UN peacekeepers have faced increasing threats from asymmetric warfare tactics. According to UN statistics, more than 4000 peacekeepers

have lost their lives in the line of duty since 1948, with a noticeable surge since 2013 due to attacks by extremist groups using improvised explosive devices.³⁰ Missions like MINUSMA in Mali and MINUSCA in the Central African Republic have each suffered dozens of fatalities from hostile acts. These figures underscore the cost that troop-contributing countries bear and can impact their willingness to continue participating. Additionally, there have been data on peacekeeper misconduct (e.g., allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse). While the UN has taken steps to address these through training and accountability measures, each incident harms the credibility of multilateral efforts and requires concerted multilateral discipline and oversight to prevent recurrence.³¹ Performance data, such as the number of civilians protected or areas stabilized, is harder to quantify, but the UN has started developing frameworks to evaluate mission impact more rigorously. The drive for data-driven assessments is itself a multilateral effort, as member states demand accountability and results from the missions they collectively authorize and fund.

In sum, the quantitative and qualitative data reveal a peacekeeping system under strain. There is a clear need for reforms to how multilateral peace operations are resourced and managed, which is why initiatives like the 2018 Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) have emerged to secure renewed commitments. The statistics and trends highlight why strengthening multilateralism in peacekeeping is so important: without broad and fair participation, adequate resources and realistic mandates, UN missions will continue to face an uphill battle in delivering on their promises.

Recommendations for Strengthening Multilateral Peacekeeping

Given the challenges outlined, several recommendations emerge to enhance the effectiveness of multilateralism in UN peacekeeping. These recommendations briefly discussed in subsequent paragraphs:- aim to address the gaps in political consensus, resources and strategy that currently impede missions:

a. Reaffirm and Renew Political Commitment: Member states must rebuild consensus around the value of UN peacekeeping. This includes major powers refraining from using their veto in the Security Council in situations of mass atrocities, as advocated by the ACT Code of Conduct and French-Mexican initiative on veto restraint.³² A unified Security Council sends a powerful signal of support to a mission. Additionally, emerging powers and regional players should be included in consultative

processes so that mandates reflect a broad range of perspectives and have wider buy-in. Regular high-level meetings on peacekeeping (such as the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial conferences) should be used to secure pledges not just of assets, but of political backing for difficult decisions that missions may need to take to protect civilians and ensure peace. In essence, the UN needs a reconfirmation that peacekeeping is a shared project of the international community, not a tool of select nations.

b. Improve Burden-Sharing and Resources: To truly embody multilateralism, peacekeeping should not fall disproportionately on certain groups of countries. Wealthier nations should consider increasing their contributions of personnel, especially in specialized units (engineering, medical, air support, etc.), to share the risks and experiences of peacekeeping more equitably.³³ At the same time, financial contributors need to pay assessments in full and on time to avoid budget crises. Exploring innovative funding mechanisms (such as assessed contributions for African Union-led missions or a reserve peacekeeping fund) could ensure missions have the resources to fulfill their mandates. Fair reimbursement rates for troop-contributors and support for training and equipping troops from lower-income countries will also improve the quality and sustainability of forces in the field. By balancing contributions, the UN can mitigate North-South tensions and demonstrate that peacekeeping is a truly collective endeavour.

c. Strengthen Partnerships with Regional Organizations: Many conflicts today have regional dimensions and regional organizations like the African Union (AU), European Union (EU), or sub-regional bodies (e.g., ECOWAS in West Africa) are increasingly active in peace operations. The UN should build on Chapter VIII of its Charter (which envisages cooperation with regional arrangements) to create more hybrid missions or parallel deployments that leverage the strengths of each actor.³⁴ Joint planning, funding and training exercises between the UN and regional forces can improve interoperability and trust. Clear division of labour is key: for instance, regional forces might handle initial stabilization or enforcement tasks with a robust mandate, while the UN follows with longer-term peacebuilding and governance support. The experience of the hybrid UN-AU mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the AU's missions in Somalia (AMISOM, now ATMIS) provide lessons on what cooperative models work and where they falter. Incorporating those lessons, the UN can propose formal frameworks for partnership

missions, ensuring that multilateral peacekeeping is not limited to the UN alone but is a network of global and regional efforts working in concert.

d. Enhance Mandate Clarity and Realism: Multilateral negotiations often lead to expansive mandates as a way to satisfy various concerns at the Security Council. However, to avoid “mission creep,” mandates should be crafted with clear priorities and matched with requisite means.³⁵ The Security Council, advised by the UN Secretariat, should set few, achievable objectives for each mission and be willing to adjust them as conditions change. If a mission is tasked with protecting civilians, for example, that core priority should not be diluted with numerous unrelated tasks. Clarity will help troop contributors understand what is expected and help mission leadership direct resources appropriately. Regular strategic reviews (as recommended by the HIPPO report) can help align expectations with reality. When mandates become unrealistic wishlists, they set the stage for perceived failure and disillusionment with multilateral efforts. Thus, keeping mandates focused and credible is a pragmatic reform that the Council's multilateral decision-making process must embrace.

e. Focus on the Primacy of Politics and Peacebuilding: A common adage in peacekeeping is that “there is no military solution” to the conflicts where blue helmets deploy. UN missions are meant to support a political process. The concept of the “primacy of politics” should be operationalized in each mission by ensuring that there are robust mediation efforts, inclusive dialogues, and support to governance and development initiatives alongside security tasks.³⁶ Member states need to invest in diplomatic capital and personnel (such as skilled envoys and civilian experts) to complement the military component. Multilateralism in peacekeeping must extend beyond deploying troops—it requires concerted diplomatic action by groups of states to push conflict parties toward compromise. For example, the success of UN peacekeeping in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was aided by strong political engagement from regional leaders and the UN, which helped implement a peace agreement. By prioritizing political solutions and conflict prevention measures, UN missions can create an environment where lasting peace is possible, allowing for an exit strategy. This recommendation urges that multilateral efforts devote as much attention to peacebuilding programs, national reconciliation and institution-building as they do to force deployment.

f. Accountability and Performance Improvement: To maintain the credibility of multilateral peacekeeping, UN missions must continually improve their performance and address failures transparently. Member states have endorsed a range of reform initiatives (such as the A4P commitments) that call for better training, equipment, leadership, and conduct of peacekeepers.³⁷ These commitments need to be implemented through collective action: for instance, states could agree on standardized training modules for troops before deployment, supported by UN funds. There should also be consequences for under-performance-units that consistently fail to patrol or protect civilians could be repatriated, and countries that contribute well-trained troops could be incentivized with more leadership positions in missions. Equally, strict measures to prevent and punish any misconduct (like exploitation or abuse) should be universally applied, with contributing countries and the UN working together on investigations and justice. By holding each other accountable, member states reinforce that peacekeeping is a serious multilateral responsibility. Regular reporting on performance indicators (e.g., civilian casualties averted, disarmament targets met) can help maintain an honest dialogue among stakeholders and the public about what missions are achieving and where they need to adjust. In a multilateral system, this kind of mutual accountability is vital to sustain trust.

These recommendations are interrelated and require good-faith collaboration among UN member states. None of these reforms can be implemented by the UN Secretariat alone; they demand that countries approach peacekeeping not as one tool among many for pursuing narrow interests, but as a shared global public good worth investing in and improving collectively. If acted upon, the above measures would help ensure that UN peacekeeping-a unique experiment in multilateral security cooperation-endures and adapts to the challenges of the 21st century.

Conclusion

UN peacekeeping remains a cornerstone of the international community's approach to conflict management, but it stands at a crossroads as multilateralism faces headwinds. This article has detailed how theoretical perspectives interpret the challenges to collective action, how case studies like Rwanda and Mali reveal the consequences of multilateral successes and failures, and what the latest data indicates about trends in peace operations. The evidence paints a mixed picture: on one hand, no single nation can substitute what tens of thousands of UN peacekeepers from dozens of countries can do

together – whether monitoring a ceasefire or protecting civilians in a distant war. On the other hand, without unity, adequate support, and adaptability, even the broadest coalition of nations can stumble in the face of determined spoilers and complex conflicts. In essence, multilateralism in peacekeeping is both indispensable and in need of urgent renewal.

To preserve the integrity and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, member states must reinvigorate their commitment to working through the UN despite geopolitical frictions. The recommendations provided – from sharing burdens more equitably to focusing on political solutions – offer a blueprint for strengthening this multilateral instrument. Implementing these changes will not be easy; it requires leadership, diplomacy, and persistence in the face of setbacks. Yet, the cost of inaction is high. A retreat from multilateral peacekeeping would likely mean more unilateral or ad-hoc interventions, which historically have proven inconsistent and sometimes counterproductive, or worse, no intervention at all in crises that desperately need outside help.

Ultimately, the challenges of multilateralism in UN peacekeeping can be overcome by reasserting the principles that gave rise to peacekeeping in the first place: collective responsibility, international solidarity and the pursuit of peace as a common goal. In a world where conflicts often transcend borders and no country is immune to the ripple effects of instability, reinforcing multilateral peacekeeping is not just about the UN doing its job better – it is about safeguarding a mechanism that allows the world to come together to address threats to peace. Renewed multilateralism in peacekeeping will signal those nations, despite their differences, choose cooperation over chaos and partnership over polarization. That choice will determine whether UN peacekeeping adapts and continues to save lives and build peace for the next generations. The challenges are great, but with collective will and wisdom, they are not insurmountable.

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Brief Biography



Walid Mohammad is a Bangladeshi career diplomat. He works as a Senior Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has served in the Administration Wing and the UN Wing of the Ministry.

He holds a BSc in Computer Science and Engineering from BUET and a Master's in Public Policy in Global Affairs from Yale University, where he graduated second in the entire graduating class. At Yale, he was the first Senator of Bangladeshi origin at the Yale Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) and served as an Editor of the *Yale Journal of International Affairs*. His areas of concentration are human rights, climate change and international security.

He received the Syed Muazzem Ali Memorial Award for graduating top of his batch during the core diplomatic training of the Bangladesh Foreign Service.

Navigating Modern Challenges in UN Peacekeeping: Technological Impact and Enhancing Bangladeshi Peacekeepers' Readiness

Colonel Mohammad Tarikul Islam, afwc, psc

Introduction

In the early 20th century, global conflicts were characterized by colonial powers striving to assert their dominance, culminating in two catastrophic world wars. Since 1945, while the world has avoided global-scale wars, nation-states have continued to pursue their ambitions through different means. Instead of territorial invasions to establish colonies, global powers have focused on enhancing their economic influence, often using harsh measures. Consequently, civil wars, proxy wars, hybrid wars and cyber warfare have largely replaced conventional large-scale conflicts. With the emergence of these new types of warfare, peacekeeping and the protection of innocent civilians have become increasingly important.

Peacekeeping faces significant challenges, primarily due to the need to negotiate with warring factions. This complexity is further exacerbated by the strict rules and regulations that peacekeepers must follow, which are often disregarded by the conflicting parties. As a result, even though peacekeepers are armed, their ability to use their weapons is frequently restricted. Conversely, the peacekeeping force remains vulnerable to the anguish and negative mindset of the local people and warring factions of the host country. Even the host government at times creates undue pressure on the mission concerned by tacitly supporting hostility towards the peacekeepers.

The hostile environment for peacekeepers is further exacerbated by the advent of new technology. At times, modern technology has enabled small-scale operations by groups, sometimes even without human involvement, resulting in massive casualties. This puts peacekeepers at risk of targeted instigation, potentially discrediting the peacekeeping mission itself. These factors collectively make peacekeeping even more challenging in today's world.

Given these existing challenges, the United Nations continually seeks to incorporate the latest technology to enhance the capabilities of peacekeepers. However, these efforts appear inadequate and the prolonged bureaucratic process of the UN to integrate new equipment or technology for peacekeepers has made them more vulnerable. Against this backdrop, this paper will analyze the existing challenges to peacekeeping missions, how they affect

peacekeepers, the impacts of the possible misuse of modern technology and the way forward. As one of the largest contributors to peacekeeping efforts, Bangladesh must also advocate for equipping its soldiers with the best possible gear and equipment. Thus, this paper will finally recommend the possible steps the Bangladesh Armed Forces need to take to ensure a safe and secure environment for their troops to operate.

Present Day Challenges to Peacekeeping

In today's complex world, peacekeeping faces evolving challenges. These challenges range from internal armed conflicts to complicated mandates and environmental issues. Some key challenges are discussed below:-

a. Nature of Conflicts: Instead of interstate conflicts, most contemporary conflicts occur within states, often referred to as intra-state conflicts. However, major UN peacekeeping missions, such as those in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan and Abyei, Sudan, are conducted due to political strife among warring parties. In most cases, these conflicts involve one or more non-state actors. This complicates the peacekeepers' job, as these non-state actors do not tend to follow the rules of engagement or respect previously signed agreements or consensus.

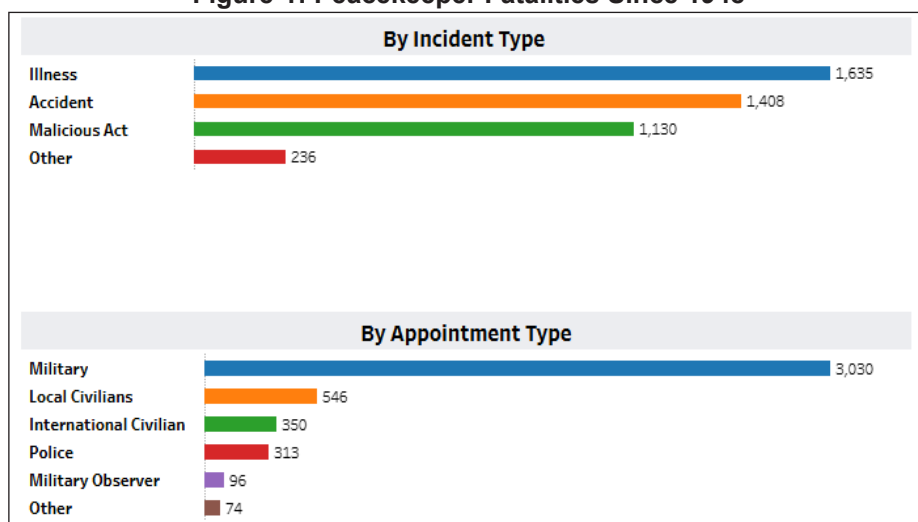
b. Elusive Political Solutions: The success or failure of a UN peacekeeping mission is often measured by its ability to achieve a political solution. The current stable political situations in Ivory Coast and Liberia are indicative of successful peacekeeping missions. However, ongoing peacekeeping missions are increasingly facing challenges in reaching successful conclusions. With the closure of UNOCI (United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire) and UNMIL (United Nations Mission in Liberia), several missions are now operating amid weak political agreements, diminished consent and stalled peace processes, often with vague exit strategies.¹ Additionally, the proliferation of non-state actors who are not parties to agreements complicates the situation further, making it more challenging to resolve.

c. Multifaceted Mandate: Recent peacekeeping missions are tasked with fulfilling complex mandates. Beyond the primary role of protecting innocent civilians, these missions are expected to achieve political solutions to conflicts, maintain working relations with all warring parties and guide the host government in implementing reforms to its framework. Conversely, the host government expects missions to avoid

interfering with its strategic decision-making. As for an example, in Mali, tension heightened due to the perceived criticism of MINUSMA on local government's governance issue.² Meanwhile, the local population expects mission authorities to enhance their quality of life by ensuring security, developing infrastructure and providing food. As for an example, in Haiti, United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) faced criticism due to the failure to ensure social and economic needs of the common people despite major humanitarian intervention.³ These multifaceted expectations make the job of peacekeepers challenging and intricate.

d. Security Hazard to Peacekeepers: Peacekeepers are increasingly facing challenges regarding their individual safety and security. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs), remotely operated drones and roadside mines are becoming more prevalent. While the number of casualties appears to have decreased compared to previous years, new tactics of attacking peacekeepers have emerged. Remotely operated drones pose a new threat, as it is difficult to identify the perpetrators behind the scenes. Additionally, suicide attacks, insider attacks, sniper fire, physical attacks, ambushes, blockades and resource denials have been observed.

Figure-1: Peacekeeper Fatalities Since 1948



Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/fatalities>

e. Functionality Issues: Peacekeeping is always a multinational effort. The more countries involved in a peacekeeping mission, the better its credibility. However, alongside this widespread acceptance due to the

diversity of forces, comes the challenge of varying performance levels among contributing countries. It is evident that the performance of troops and police from different countries is not uniform. Nonetheless, to ensure global participation, the UN is obligated to include troops and police from countries where performance may not meet the highest standards or where discipline may be lacking. Moreover, peacekeeping training needs to be robust and continually updated to address evolving challenges. However, the training infrastructure in some contributing countries may not be able to deliver the best results. This highlights key issues in UN peacekeeping operations, particularly the trade-offs between inclusivity, operational efficiency and credibility.

f. **Political Support:** Every peacekeeping mission requires endorsement not only from the host government and warring factions but also from the members of the Security Council and regional powerhouses where the mission is being conducted. At times, Security Council members and regional players hold varied views based on their respective interests and domestic compulsions. This divergence of views impact the mission as a whole, as peacekeeping operations require support from all parties involved. A lack of political support affects the mission financially and undermines its credibility, as peacekeeping efforts largely depend on public perception. As such, there exists large interdependence of political support, financial stability, and public perception in the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions.

g. **Technological Advancement:** In a rapidly advancing world of technology, keeping pace is always challenging. Within the heterogeneous composition of peacekeeping forces, it becomes even more difficult to stay up to date. While the UN has made efforts to equip its peacekeeping forces with the latest technology, navigating the complicated bureaucratic process can be challenging. Obtaining the consent of troop- and police-contributing countries is another major hurdle, as it involves these countries' ability to provide the necessary equipment, which requires considerable time. Conversely, adversarial factions within the host country can acquire modern military gadgets quickly. This leaves UN peacekeepers, who are not yet fully prepared to counter the latest weaponry, vulnerable. As example, MINUSMA peacekeepers in Mali have suffered significant casualties due to IEDs and other advanced weaponry that their current equipment cannot effectively counter.⁴

Outcome of Challenges

The peacekeeping effort faces numerous challenges, including the varied nature of conflicts, complex political solutions, stringent mandates, questionable effectiveness of multinational forces, political backing from global and regional players vis-a-vis continuous technological advancements. Non-state actors often seek to attract global attention by targeting peacekeepers. Sometimes, political or insurgent groups involved in peace treaties disguise themselves as warring factions or non-state actors to attack peacekeepers. Their objective is to discredit the opposition, prompting the international community to impose sanctions on their counterparts, even if those counterparts did not actually perpetrate the attacks on the peacekeepers.

The varied nature of conflicts presents significant challenges for peacekeeping forces, who are primarily soldiers trained in conventional warfare. Engaging with non-state actors or insurgent groups often leads them into uncharted territory, unfamiliar to their usual training. It's generally easier for conventional forces to combat other conventional forces, whose actions are more predictable and expected to adhere to established rules and conventions of conflict. However, in peacekeeping missions, the unpredictability of warfare remains a major challenge, which enhances the vulnerability of the peacekeepers.

Peacekeeping missions require not only combat readiness but also the ability to facilitate political solutions to complex issues. However, this is easier said than done, as it demands cultural understanding, negotiation and conflict mediation skills. New challenges can emerge at any moment, whether through the withdrawal of one or more signatories from the peace treaty or the appearance of new non-state actors, insurgents, or tribal groups that oppose the treaty's objectives. Additionally, ongoing relations among the government, opposition and various ethnic, religious, or political parties can become hostile at any time, further complicating the peacekeeping efforts and rising the level of vulnerability of forces employed for peacekeeping.

Ongoing peacekeeping missions often have complex and extensive mandates. These mandates typically begin with the protection of civilians and extend to supporting revitalized agreements or peace processes. However, implementing such mandates can be challenging, especially when the host government, opposition and non-signatories are not aligned on the peace agreement's implementation. As example, United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) faced opposition both from Sudanese government and warring factions hindering its mandate implementation. UN

missions also lack sufficient tools to different parties into reaching a consensus or taking action against those who violate the peace process. United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has faced protests due to perceptions of ineffectiveness in protecting civilians, leading to violent demonstrations in July 2022.⁵ As a result, general populations and various factions may turn against the peacekeepers, who are vulnerable to hostilities from local people, non-state actors, or militants acting with the tacit support of the host government or opposition.

The varying effectiveness of different contingents within the same peacekeeping mission poses a significant concern. These inconsistencies can severely undermine the credibility of the peacekeepers, leading to a loss of confidence among various stakeholders and the general population of the host country. Consequently, even those contingents that strictly adhere to regulations, fulfill their mandates and ensure the safety and security of innocent civilians often become the targets of public discontent.

Inconsistent political support poses a major concern, significantly impacting the performance of UN missions. Major powers often hold differing stances on various peacekeeping mission and these positions shift as situations evolve. A notable instance is found in the case of MINUSMA, where deteriorating relations between Mali's government and certain member states have led to challenges. Consequently, UN missions, which rely heavily on the UN Security Council for performance evaluations and future directives, struggle to implement their mandated tasks without sufficient political backing. This lack of support ultimately hinders the effectiveness of peacekeepers on the ground.

Modern technology has significantly narrowed the gap between conventional forces and non-state actors by enabling the acquisition of commercially available tools without requiring substantial investment in human capital, intelligence, or expertise. On the other hand, the diverse composition of peacekeeping forces makes it challenging for them to keep pace with technological advancements. Consequently, peacekeeping forces are becoming increasingly vulnerable to non-state actors or warring factions that oppose the mission. The availability of technologies driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) exacerbates this vulnerability even further.

Modern peacekeeping faces numerous challenges that complicate the fulfillment of its mission. Public discontent within host nations often makes peacekeepers vulnerable, as frustrations with the slow pace of progress or

perceived mission failures are directed towards them. Non-state actors and warring factions exploit this anger, using it as a pretext to launch attacks on peacekeepers.

Additionally, political groups ostensibly committed to the peace process may covertly support efforts to undermine the mission's credibility. This can include tacit backing of disruptive actors or inaction against those violating the peace agreement. The growing prevalence of modern technology, such as social media platforms, further complicates matters by enabling misinformation campaigns that discredit peacekeepers and inflame public hostility. The availability of commercially accessible kinetic technology, like Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and 3D printing, adds further challenges for the peacekeepers. As a result, peacekeepers on the ground face an increasingly complex and hostile operational environment.

Impact of Technological Advancements on Peacekeeping Vulnerabilities

Technological advancements have undeniably enriched our lives and simplified many aspects of daily living. However, as with all advancements, there is a downside. Non-state actors, warring factions, or those not committed to the peace process, who oppose the UN Mission, increasingly exploit technological progress to their advantage, posing a significant threat to peacekeepers.

a. Misinformation, Disinformation and Malinformation Campaign:

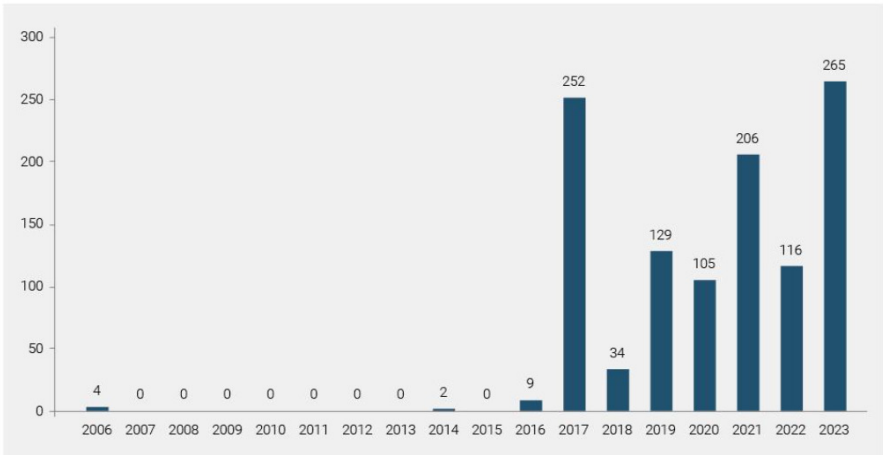
Social media is now pervasive and holds significant sway over public perception. Through campaigns of misinformation and disinformation, public anger can be redirected towards peacekeepers. This is especially true in countries where literacy rates are not yet satisfactory, but social media access is widespread. The United Nations has recognized that information pollution-such as hate speech, misinformation, disinformation, and mal information-is an increasing threat to peacekeeping missions.⁶ By exploiting this technological tool, vested interests can create scenarios where peacekeepers risk becoming targets of public discontent.

b. Recruitment of Activists through Social Media Platforms:

Non-state actors opposing peacekeeping missions leverage social media to recruit new activists. They amplify misinformation and disinformation campaigns to discredit the UN mission, swaying public perception in their favor. The widespread and uncontrolled access to social media, especially in countries hosting UN missions, exacerbates discontent against the UN. Consequently, an increasing number of young people

are being influenced to support groups opposing peacekeeping missions. This strategy has been observed in countries like the Central African Republic (CAR), Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where anti-UN falsehoods originate online and rapidly spread through social media networks and messaging applications.⁷

Figure-2: Number of Attacks by Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or Drones by Violent Non- State Actors



Source: H. Haugstvedt, 'Still Aiming at the Harder Targets: An Update on Violent Non-State Actors' Use of Armed UAVs,' *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Volume XVIII, Issue 1, 2024, p. 134

c. **Use of Unmanned Aerial System:** Commercially available Unmanned Aerial Systems (UASs) are relatively affordable and easy to acquire. Currently, over 65 non-state actors are known to possess drones, and the unregulated nature of drone usage suggests that this number will continue to rise unchecked.⁸ Due to miniaturization, vertical take-off and landing, and autonomous flight features, drones require limited infrastructure and can be used by smaller, tactical groups which increases flexibility.⁹ Driven by high demand, this technology is advancing rapidly. Shield AI's recent valuation nearly doubled to \$5 billion, reflecting significant investments from major defense contractors and venture capitalists.¹⁰ Non-state actors, warring factions, or vested groups can obtain these systems with minimal or no oversight. They can use UASs to launch attacks on peacekeepers, causing casualties. Fully autonomous UASs, which can make independent decisions, are also being developed. Although this advanced technology may not be accessible to non-state actors at this moment, the potential for future use remains a concern.

d. Use of Additive Manufacturing (AM): Additive Manufacturing (AM), commonly known as 3D printing, poses significant concerns due to its potential use in producing Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Unmanned Aerial Systems (UASs), firearms and other dangerous items. While owning a 3D printer is legal and the technology has numerous legitimate applications-such as replicating small objects like paper clips, coat hangers and broken refrigerator door handles-it can also be exploited by non-state actors to evade law enforcement. By minimizing identifiable actions during the acquisition phase of components needed for their tactical operations, AM can reduce the production costs of various weapons used in attacks.¹¹ Though its misuse has not yet been widely observed in peacekeeping areas, additive manufacturing has the potential to be exploited by vested groups or warring factions against peacekeepers.

e. Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and Mines: IEDs and Mines are one of the major causes of casualties to the peacekeepers as experienced in different peacekeeping missions. For instance, in Mali, since the deployment in 2013 of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), 93 peacekeepers have lost their lives to IEDs, with an additional 596 peacekeepers injured.¹² Due to the ever-evolving technologies, the menace of IEDs have increased in many folds and non-state actors and warring factions are acquiring them without much effort. IEDs now can be operated remotely or on a timed program. It can also be self-actuated or activated on contact. With the evolving technology and additive manufacturing, it is quite difficult to differentiate IEDs, which can now take many forms and shapes.

Ways Forward

Identifying challenges is only half the battle; finding solutions is equally critical. Peacekeeping differs from conventional warfare, where belligerents can respond to each other's actions. In peacekeeping, peacekeepers must adhere to standard operating procedures, even when adversaries do not follow any rules or regulations. These procedures encompass rules of engagement, conduct and operational protocols. Even when adversaries do not adhere to any rules or regulations, peacekeepers must maintain their commitment to these standards to uphold the mission's integrity and the UN's credibility.¹³ Therefore, countermeasures must be carefully considered and implemented in accordance with established rules and regulations.

a. Countering Misinformation and Disinformation Campaign: Given the pervasive presence of social media, maintaining the credibility of a peacekeeping mission has become increasingly challenging. Addressing this issue requires timely and appropriate actions by the mission authority to counter propaganda. Establishing and maintaining verified social media platforms can be beneficial, particularly if dedicated personnel are assigned to provide regular updates. Accurate and fact-based media releases are crucial, especially during critical situations when the public seeks reliable information. To combat disinformation campaigns fueled by AI-generated rumors or deep fakes, notifying the authorities of social media platforms (such as YouTube, X, WhatsApp, etc.) to remove false content can be effective if the information is entirely fabricated.

b. Countering Recruitment Using Social Media Platform: To counter recruitment efforts employing rhetoric against the UN and peacekeeping forces, missions must adopt a more interactive and transparent approach with the media and the public. For instance, in 2017, MINUSMA launched the “MINUSMA in Action” program, a social media campaign designed to enhance the mission’s image by highlighting its positive impact on local populations, development projects and humanitarian assistance.¹⁴ UN activities should be people-oriented, with regular dissemination of these activities being essential. An example of this is the United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), which implemented a community outreach program to engage with the people of Darfur, Sudan, building trust and reducing misinformation, especially crucial in conflict zones.¹⁵ However, both in Mali and Darfur, Sudan, UN missions failed to deliver the expected outcomes, as both missions were terminated prematurely.¹⁶ These indicate a weakness in winning the hearts and minds of the people. Additionally, UN Missions should focus on training the younger generation, creating job opportunities, and fostering a life where peace and harmony prevail. More effort can be placed on vocational training that will create job opportunities for the people or allow them to be self-employed through agriculture, small-scale business, etc. Provisioning small business capital through social marketing can also be a plausible option, where the people will return money, they have lent in phases.

c. Countering the Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Against the Peacekeeping Force: The nature of threat from UAS is dynamic and requires adaptable solutions. The easy availability of commercially accessible UAS makes it convenient for non-state actors, warring

factions, or factions opposing the peacekeeping forces to acquire them. To counter this threat, peacekeeping forces can adopt both non-kinetic and kinetic measures:

(1) **Non-Kinetic Means:** This includes electronic counter measures to disable the adversary's drones/UAS such as jamming signals or GPS spoofing. Such capabilities should be installed within a certain radius of UN installations, ensuring that any unauthorized drone movement is addressed. However, it is crucial to maintain close coordination with the host government, as this technology may interfere with civil aviation and communication. Such interference could potentially strain relations between the mission and the host government unnecessarily. Non-kinetic measures should also be available to peacekeeping force patrols and convoys, as these units are more vulnerable when on the move. Coordination with the host government or rebel parties controlling the area where the UN convoy or patrol is moving remains essential. Non-kinetic means are preferred as they do not destroy the intruding UAS but rather disable it temporarily.

(2) **Kinetic Means:** Kinetic measures ensure the destruction of unauthorized or unexpected intruding UAS or drones. However, use of this capability can provoke backlash and complicate diplomatic relation. While this capability may strain relationships, it is essential to augment it within the peacekeeping force. This not only ensures the safety and security of the peacekeeping force but also acts as a deterrent to groups or organizations attempting to harm peace enablers. Considering the rapid global development of UAS, the UN must be flexible regarding the organization and equipment of the contingent concerned. Troop-contributing countries might be granted more flexibility to choose appropriate counter-UAS measures available to them and the bureaucratic approval process from the UN should be shortened. Ensuring appropriate reimbursement for troop-contributing countries will encourage them to provide their troops with adequate protection systems.

d. **Countering the Threat of Additive Manufacturing:** As previously mentioned, the use of additive manufacturing has not been widely observed in areas where peacekeeping missions are being conducted. However, necessary precautions must be taken to prevent the misuse of this technology, particularly in the smuggling of firearms and explosives in conflict areas. To address this, the mission concerned must work

closely with the host government to screen various access points of the country (e.g., airports, land ports) and monitor border areas. UN missions can also assist the host country by providing screening facilities at access points and training the relevant individuals of the host nation. It is important to note that additive manufacturing is not a prohibited technology. However, its misuse should be prevented as much as possible through coordination with the host nation.

e. Countering the Menace of IEDs and Mines: IEDs and mines are frequently used against peacekeepers in various conflict zones. Due to their easy availability and “Actuation on Contact,” these devices have become preferred options for parties or insurgents working against peacekeepers. Various measures have been undertaken by the UN and troop-contributing countries to minimize the effects of IEDs and roadside bombs. The peacekeepers of MINUSMA have been among the highest victims of this menace. With the advent of AI and modern robotic technology, this threat can now be managed to a greater extent for the following purposes:-

- (1) Locating IEDs prior to moving into an area.
- (2) Using Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) to confirm the location.
- (3) Utilizing robotic technology to neutralize the explosives.
- (4) Integrating Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) units with all patrols. These units would be equipped with all necessary gear for bomb disposal and would confirm the destruction of possible mines and explosives, even those neutralized by robotic means.
- (5) United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) training can be made compulsory of all contingents as part of pre-deployment training.
- (6) Historical mapping by the Search and Detect (S&D) teams for incidents related to mines.

Equipping Bangladeshi Peacekeepers

Bangladesh has consistently been one of the largest contributors of troops to peacekeeping missions. The discipline, dedication and professionalism demonstrated by both past and present peacekeepers have been instrumental in securing Bangladesh's prestigious position on the world stage. This reputation has earned Bangladesh the title of “The cream of UN

peacekeepers.”¹⁷ However, while performing their duties, 168 Bangladeshi peacekeepers have sacrificed their lives for the cause of world peace.

To ensure that Bangladeshi peacekeepers can maintain the high standards set by their predecessors and ensure their own safety, it is essential to integrate advanced equipment. Given the ever-evolving nature of technology, a flexible approach is crucial. The following equipment should be prioritized for different contingents:

- (1) **UAS for Reconnaissance:** Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) capable of providing reconnaissance to serve as an advance guard for patrols or convoys.
- (2) **Non-Kinetic UAS:** These would provide security to bases and convoys without causing physical harm.
- (3) **Kinetic UAS:** If approved by UN HQ and the mission concerned, these systems can be used for more active defense measures.
- (4) **AI-Enabled Movement Detection Cameras:** These cameras would provide early warnings for intruders to the UN compound. In turn this would provide an additional layer of security to the base.
- (5) **AI-Enabled Access Control Systems:** Although missions are typically responsible for access control, Bangladesh may negotiate with the appropriate authorities to incorporate additional AI-enabled layers to enhance security for Bangladeshi contingent premises.
- (6) **Satellite Imagery Acquisition Systems:** These systems would monitor the movement of patrols and convoys from the concerned base or contingent HQ.
- (7) **Advanced Radio Communication Linked with Satellites:** This system would serve as a reliable alternative communication method if other means fail.
- (8) **Unmanned AI Robots for IED Detection and Neutralization:** These robots would aid in safely detecting and neutralizing IED.
- (9) **Audio Surveillance Systems:** These systems are crucial for complex operational environments.
- (10) **Tactical Weather Monitoring Systems:** These systems would provide weather forecasts for effective preparation for impending operations.

Conclusion

Over the past forty years, peacekeeping has emerged as one of the United Nations' most crucial endeavours, not only preserving peace in conflict zones but also saving countless innocent lives. The first decade of the 21st century witnessed the successful completion of several peace missions, such as those in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, peacekeeping missions have faced numerous challenges as the nature of conflicts has evolved. Conflicts have shifted from conventional warfare to civil wars, proxy wars, hybrid wars and cyber warfare. Consequently, troops trained for conventional warfare now confront the complexities of multi-dimensional warfare, which often involves various non-state actors and complicates the peacekeepers' tasks.

The absence of political solutions and the multifaceted nature of peacekeeping mandates present additional challenges, as mission success is often measured by the conclusion of peace treaties and sustained peace in conflict zones. Technological advancements have introduced new security threats, and the functionality of peacekeeping operations can be compromised by the failure of a single contingent. Political support for peace missions can be inconsistent, influenced by the interests of major global and regional powers, affecting the image and operational capabilities of peacekeepers.

On the ground, peacekeepers bear the brunt of public distrust and anger. Local communities' accumulated frustrations can impact peacekeepers' performance and vested interests seeking to undermine peacekeeping efforts exploit these frustrations, further endangering peacekeepers. Technological advancements have also been misused, exacerbating challenges for peacekeepers.

Social media's rampant use has sometimes fueled misinformation, disinformation, and mal information campaigns against peacekeepers. These platforms are also exploited by non-state actors or warring parties to recruit new members and spread anti-UN rhetoric. The use of UAS and Additive Manufacturing (AM) presents significant threats to UN forces. Commercially available UAS and 4D printers can be misused by non-state actors to cause significant harm and produce or smuggle weapons and explosives into conflict zones.

To address these challenges, peacekeeping missions must strengthen social media campaigns in their favour and engage with media outlets regularly. Both kinetic and non-kinetic counter-UAS measures should be made available

to peacekeeping forces, who should also be equipped with UAS systems to enhance operational efficiency. Extreme caution should be exercised when using kinetic means to neutralize threat UAS and additive manufacturing must be closely monitored to minimize misuse. To counter the threat of IEDs and mines, a combination of robotic technology, UAS and well-equipped Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams should be considered.

Bangladesh, one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions, must take steps to modernize its peacekeeping force. This includes integrating UAS, kinetic and non-kinetic counter-UAS measures, AI-enabled access control systems for compounds, satellite imagery acquisition systems for communication with patrols and convoys, advanced AI robots for IED negotiations and tactical weather monitoring systems.

While modern technology poses real challenges to peacekeeping efforts, appropriate measures can significantly mitigate these threats. In the ever-evolving technological landscape, remaining open to new advancements and embracing them is essential for progress.

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Brief Biography



Colonel Mohammad Tarikul Islam, afwc, psc joined the Bangladesh Army on July 2, 1996, and graduated from the Bangladesh Military Academy with the 38th BMA Long Course on 11 June, 1998. He was commissioned into the Corps of Armour, known for its prestigious and traditional heritage.

Throughout his career, Colonel Tarik has held a variety of command, staff and instructional roles. He commanded an Armoured Regiment as the Commanding Officer and served as the Second in Command of another Armoured Regiment. As a Captain, he was the GSO-3 (Operations) at the headquarters of a paramilitary force. As a Lieutenant Colonel, he served as GSO-1 at both the Military Operations Directorate at Army Headquarters and the headquarters of an Infantry Division. In his instructional capacity, he served twice at the Armour School, first as a Captain in the Technical Wing and later as a Major in the Tactical Wing.

Colonel Tarik has extensive experience in United Nations Peacekeeping Missions, having served three times under the 'Blue Helmet.' He was a contingent member in Liberia (UNMIL), an UNMO in Darfur, Sudan (UNAMID), and a Deputy Sector Commander in South Sudan (UNMISS). In addition to completing all mandatory courses, he attended a specialized course in China. He is a graduate of the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, and the Armed Forces War Course at the National Defence College, Mirpur. He is the incumbent Colonel Staff at the Operations and Plan Directorate of the Armed Forces Division. He has authored several publications in the GSTP.

United Nations Peacebuilding In Maritime Domain: It's Imperativeness for Global Peace

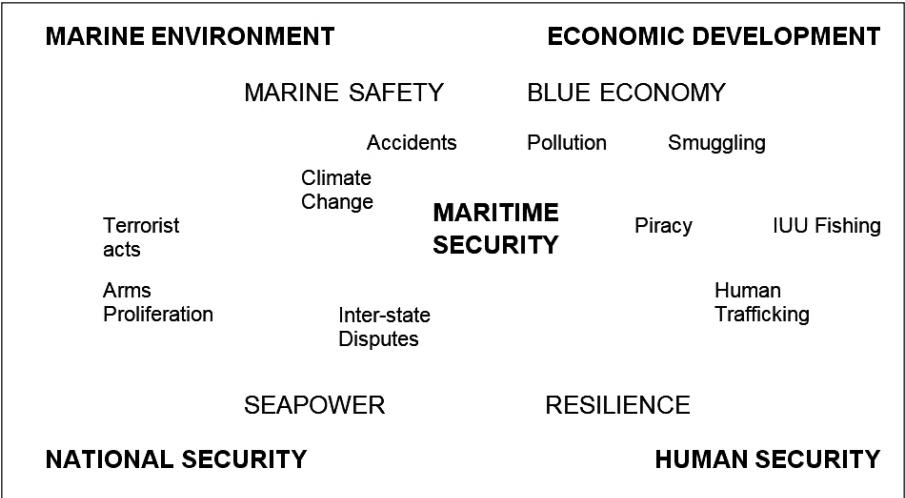
Captain M Masudur Rahman Zahid, (N), BCGMS, afwc, psc, BN

Introduction

Building peace in a conflict-ridden area is a huge, complex undertaking involving countless players and many stakeholders. In Peacebuilding, the UN assists countries in strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and lays the foundations for sustainable peace. It also involves measures to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict. Peacekeeping Operation (PKO) is another essential tools of the United Nations (UN) in preserving world peace and security as well as addressing evolving threats. UN employs diverse mechanisms and tools like mediation, diplomacy, justice and the rule of law to prevent conflict disarmament, foster people-centred peaceful resolutions and peacekeeping and build sustainable peace.¹ To date, the UN has completed numerous missions in various places around the world and presently, 11 missions are ongoing.² All these missions operate in areas from which only a few countries enjoy benefits, but there are none for the global cause. Though it is not always the land, non-state actors' activities at sea may also threaten global peace and security, but the UN's presence for all nation-states, in general, at sea is slim. Furthermore, criminal acts occurring anywhere on the high seas may quickly affect different regions and become a global concern. Thus, international actions at sea are often essential to ensure maritime security.

Maritime Security is all about safeguarding maritime activities, including the marine environment from security threats such as terrorism, piracy and illicit activities. The concept of maritime security is complex because of its multifaceted and constantly evolving nature. Generally, maritime security includes the protection of the country's maritime interests, including preventing any threats to ships, ports and coastline against any unlawful activities. Therefore, maritime safety and security are prerequisites for stability and sustained growth worldwide. Various legal instruments and treaties like the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS), the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and most importantly, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982 are promulgated already focusing on the maritime security. Again, to ensure the safe use of the sea, the European Union, the United Kingdom, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the African Union (AU) have launched their own maritime security strategy.

Figure-1: Maritime Security Matrix



Source: C. Bueger, *What is maritime security?* Amsterdam, Elsevier, 2015, p.161

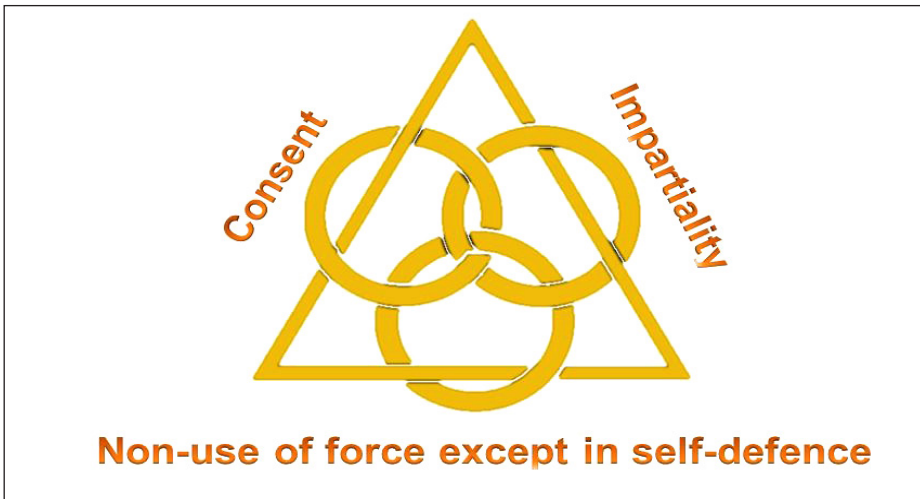
Some threats at sea in various parts of the world today have become a global concern, which also demands international intervention to ensure maritime security and maintain global trade. Though few actions have been undertaken globally by various stakeholders, certain maritime areas still need to be regarded as particularly worrying regarding maritime security. In this article there is an endeavour to examine the feasibility of maritime Peacebuilding Activities and employing the UN to maintain maritime security vis-a-vis delve into the UN's role and various initiatives taken worldwide in maintaining peace and security in the maritime domain and finally put forth viable solutions to address global maritime security issues.

UN and Global Peace

After the UN Charter was signed on 26 June 1945, the UN began its journey as a new intergovernmental instrument for ensuring global peace following the Second World War's (1939-45) devastation. Since then, the UN has been accomplishing its primary mission, i.e. "to maintain global peace and security, by working at different levels to prevent conflict, helping parties in dispute, make peace, hold and flourish."³ The function of the UN is based on three pillars, i.e. sustainable development, human rights & humanitarian issues and peace & security;⁴ and it adopts preventive Diplomacy and mediation, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding, Countering terrorism and Disarmament efforts for global peace and stability. However, despite several proposals to establish the standing forces under the UN, these initiatives remained the same. As a result, presently, the UN functions by deploying multinational forces where

necessary and following other measures. According to Article 1 of the UN Charter, “to maintain international peace and security and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace and to bring about by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.”⁵ As such, the UN can operate anywhere to maintain international peace and security following the ‘Holy Trinity.’⁶

Figure-2: Holy Trinity of the UN Operation



Source: Author's self-construct

On the other hand, the UN has also adopted UNCLOS-III, 1982, to regulate issues related to the sea. As of October 2024, 169 countries have already ratified the UNCLOS and another 14 countries have signed,⁷ it has almost reached global acceptance. The UNCLOS spells out the legal framework for maritime governance and the UN's intended role in implementing and enforcing laws while acknowledging the sovereignty of coastal states. Article 93 of UNCLOS also authorises the UN to employ ships flying UN flags anywhere in the maritime dimension.

Furthermore, the UN's 'Agenda for Peace' and its supplement also promote the resolution of global issues to ensure continuous development and security, where preventive Diplomacy, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and other approaches are mentioned as tools. Accordingly, to address any maritime crisis and provide maritime security, the UN can also deploy a Peacekeeping Force at sea or adopt measures for sustainable peace, i.e. Peacebuilding.

Challenges and Tensions at Sea: Necessity of UN Presence in Maritime Domain

Mankind, since ancient civilisation, has always been dependent on the ocean. Like in the past, the sea is now considered an essential strategic domain because of its political, security, defence and economic implications. With enhanced global financial activities, the use of the seas and oceans has also increased in many ways. It has caused a rapid increase in the demand for marine resources and overcrowded sea lanes. Therefore, the sea has become a source of numerous challenges, from geopolitical competition, piracy and transnational organised crime to vulnerabilities for international trade and critical maritime infrastructures. The rampant piracy, armed robbery and oil-related crimes in the Gulf of Guinea; terrorist attacks of the Yemeni group in the Red Sea; piracy, hijacking, terrorism and coercion in the Indo-Pacific; maritime disputes in the South China Seas; risk of shipping through the critical energy chokepoint of Hormuz strait because of risk of direct military confrontation; threats of unauthorised boarding, theft of cargo and ships including violence against seafarers at Malacca Strait; risk of attack on shipping at the Black Sea, piracy near Somali coast, arms and human trafficking, drug trafficking and funding criminal network to fuel violence in coastal and transit countries, terrorist attacks and organised crimes etc. are some of the critical concerns in global maritime area. Again, maritime nations like India and China, aspiring to become blue water navies, are investing significantly in increasing their naval power, which has increased tensions in the Indo-Pacific regions. The prevailing scenario of the most dangerous maritime zones depicting maritime unrest is shown in Table-1 below:-

Table 1: Most Dangerous Maritime Zones of the World

Ser	Countries/ Regions	Risk Level	Risk Scale
1.	Ukraine territorial waters, Black Sea, Sea of Azov	Extreme	6.6
2.	Yemen territorial waters	Severe	6.0
3.	Libya	Severe	4.8
4.	Syria	Severe	4.7
5.	Palestine	Severe	4.5
6.	Iraq	Very High	4.0
7.	Somalia	Very High	3.8
8.	Ethiopia	Very High	3.7
9.	Lebanon	Very High	3.6
10.	Arabian Gulf and adjacent waters, Gulf of Oman	Very High	3.5
11.	Nigeria	Very High	3.3
12.	Russian territorial waters	Very High	3.2
13.	Saudi Arabia	Very High	3.2
14.	Iran	High	2.9
15.	Sudan	High	2.8
16.	Cameroon, Mexico, Mozambique	High	2.7
17.	Colombia, UAE	High	2.6
18.	Kenya, Pakistan	High	2.5
19.	Qatar	High	2.4

Source: <https://www.atlas-mag.net/en/article/war-risks-the-most-dangerous-maritime-zones-in-the-world>

Though the UN has not deployed any naval ships directly under its flag and mandate except in Lebanon because of many limitations, it has often outsourced its legitimate function to undertake missions at sea on many occasions like NATO military intervention in Libya, EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR), Combined Task Force 151 including individual country's (Russia, Japan, China and India) naval ships operations off the Somali Coast against piracy/ ship hijacking are a few examples of such UN authorised operations at sea to maintain maritime security. After the authorisation of UNSC Resolution 1701 on 11 August 2006, the first-ever Maritime Task Force (MTF) started operating as a Peacekeeping Force on territories of the member states, not on the high seas. Though many argue that the UN is gradually becoming ineffective as wars, humanitarian crises and other global problems are increasing,⁸ with the

documented successes of the UNIFIL MTF, the UN may consider expanding its maritime PKO to other risk/ troubled maritime areas. It is always better to deploy an MTF under the UN to manage maritime security concerns rather than multinational organisations, especially when a targeted region becomes too tense.⁹ As the UN, so far, has conducted operations in Kosovo,¹⁰ Palestine¹¹ and Antarctica¹², i.e. in non-member states and in a sea area where there is no internationally accepted sovereignty, the UN would also increase activities at sea without much resistance from international society. Following are the few aspects which may be considered for introducing maritime task forces under the UN:-

- a. Maintaining international peace and security anywhere on the globe, including the maritime domain, is the primary goal of the UN.
- b. Globally, maritime security threats are rising, affecting international shipping, freight costs and the global community.
- c. UNCLOS, almost accepted by all, provides the scope of the UN's direct action on high seas.
- d. The UN's operational instrument PKO or other measures may be introduced for greater interest to reduce threats in the maritime domain.

UN's Involvement in Maritime Domain: An Option for Maritime Security

Maritime security is globally considered an integral part of stable and sustainable development and for ensuring the safe use of the sea. Consequently, to enhance maritime security on a global scale, UN maritime PKOs or Peacebuilding measures involving multinational forces can be a viable option. A few critical considerations of such efforts of the UN are as follows:

- a. To prevent escalating situations into conflict or to prevent conflict recurrence, or to reduce tensions in maritime areas by helping to mediate disputes between nations or groups over maritime boundaries, resources or other issues, promoting peaceful resolutions, de-escalating tensions and fostering dialogue among nations.
- b. To provide humanitarian assistance directly to communities in need in areas affected by conflict, where the sea is the most accessible medium to transfer aid, ensuring a timely response.
- c. To improve maritime governance and collaborative security efforts by fostering cooperation among nations and helping countries navigate conflict to peace following a peaceful process. With the consent of the

state parties, the deployment of UN Peacekeeping Forces in maritime zones of dispute assists in averting conflicts between countries over territorial claims, natural resources, fishing rights, etc. Such operations allow neutral supervision over countries in conflict and lower the risk of military capabilities in disputes that would otherwise involve regional participants. UN may also go for diplomatic measures and sanctions and promote dialogue and cooperation which are essential in conflict/ tense situations like the South China Sea or the Eastern Mediterranean.

d. To enforce regulations and monitor unauthorised dumping of Nuclear and Chemical Waste Disposal at sea, which may result in unacceptable hazards to man.

e. Presently, about 90% of the world's trade is carried by maritime routes and ensuring the security of shipping is crucial for stable trade. To ensure safe maritime routes, counter threats like piracy or organised crimes, ensure the uninterrupted flow of vital essentials globally through conflict/ troubled areas involving multinational naval forces and promote regional stability.

f. Piracy, insurgency, terrorism, arms, or human trafficking have no geographical borders. To thwart forces that fund or incite transnational crimes like armed conflict, terrorism and insurgencies, preventing piracy and intercepting human or arms trafficking by enforcing laws at sea, thereby containing and mitigating the risk in a particular area and even containing the risks to entire regions, protecting civilians and allowing safe shipping.

g. To control influence and shape the operational environment, access the operating areas by overcoming the geographic challenges and for the power projection ashore, if necessary.

h. To help counter terrorist threats that exploit maritime routes and stop the hijacking of ships by employing naval forces, ensuring a safer ocean for all.

UN Peacekeeping versus Peacebuilding in Maritime Domain

In the maritime domain, the UN's Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding efforts can serve critical but distinct roles in maintaining global peace and security by adopting unique approaches in dealing with the complexities of maritime conflicts, governance and the global nature of oceans.

Table-2: Comparison between UN Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in the Maritime Domain

S. No.	Description	Peacekeeping	Peacebuilding
1.	What does it mean?	Deployment of forces to conflict zones to maintain peace and security after the ceasefire or peace agreement	A broader and longer-term process aimed to address the root causes of conflict and establish sustainable peace
2.	Time frame	Short-term and reactive	Long-term and proactive
3.	Mandate	Limited to security and monitoring	Broad, includes development and governance
4.	Role	<p>Naval Patrol: To monitor the ceasefire, prevent the escalation of maritime disputes or deter threats in the maritime domain.</p> <p>Surveillance and Enforcement: Monitor compliance with embargoes, sanctions, or international treaties to stop or curtail illegal activities such as smuggling, trafficking and other transnational crimes.</p> <p>Support to Coastal States: Assist weaker states in maintaining maritime sovereignty and ensuring maritime security.</p>	<p>Capacity Building: Provide training and equipment to the states to manage maritime resources and ensure maritime security.</p> <p>Conflict Resolution: Facilitate dialogues and negotiations between states to resolve maritime disputes and settle claims over maritime zones and resources.</p> <p>Institutional Development: Promote and strengthen legal systems, maritime governance frameworks and regional organisations.</p> <p>Sustainable Development: Promote 'Blue Economy' and control IUU fishing, marine pollution and resource exploitation.</p>
5.	Focused Area	Immediate stabilisation and conflict management	Long-term resolution to root causes of conflict
6.	Challenges	<p>Complex jurisdictional issues over international waters.</p> <p>Limited mandates because of the UNCLOS framework and states' sovereignty.</p> <p>Depends on the UN Security Council's consent, the support of the member states, acceptance by state parties and funding.</p> <p>Effective coordination among multiple nations' navies.</p>	<p>Long timelines to achieve the goal.</p> <p>Dependence on political will and funding.</p> <p>Coordination among national, regional and international stakeholders.</p>

Source: Author's self-construct

Maritime Peacebuilding presents a strategic opportunity to transform maritime zones from conflict into zones of cooperation, prosperity and sustainability by addressing environmental, legal and economic aspects while fostering collaboration and contributing to a holistic and enduring peace in the maritime domain. On the other hand, the UN maritime Peacekeeping provides

the immediate security needed to stop conflicts. As maritime Peacebuilding offers significant opportunities to address the underlying causes of maritime conflicts, foster regional cooperation and ensure sustainable development, the UN and all the member states may resort to maritime Peacebuilding for the greater cause.

Ways Forward

A multifaceted and collaborative approach is essential to address all the challenges and enhance the effectiveness of the UN maritime Peacebuilding efforts. Hence, the UN may consider the following:-

- a. All member states may be encouraged to ratify the UNCLOS as the cornerstone of maritime governance.
- b. Strengthen mechanisms like the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea to mediate and resolve maritime disputes efficiently.
- c. Encourage states to utilise peaceful mechanisms to settle disputes following UNCLOS and avoid unilateral actions.
- d. Enhancing regional and multilateral cooperation to address local maritime issues collaboratively and promote joint maritime patrols to combat piracy, IUU fishing, trafficking, smuggling and other transnational crimes.
- e. Encourage multilateral agreements on shared issues like pollution control, search and rescue operations and fisheries management.
- f. Building institutional capabilities to provide technical support to coastal states to develop robust maritime governance and arrange training for law enforcement and judiciary personnel to manage disputes.
- g. Develop regional centres of excellence to facilitate knowledge sharing and best practices in maritime management.
- h. Advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SGD) by supporting climate change adaptation measures, encouraging investment in sustainable industries and enhancing marine conservation efforts.
- j. Addressing root causes of maritime conflict, tackling socio-economic inequities and promoting inclusive governance.
- k. Expand Peacebuilding mandates to explicitly address maritime challenges, including resource disputes, piracy and climate-related

migration, by promoting interagency collaboration among UN agencies like the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

l. Increase funding for maritime Peacebuilding by encouraging contributions from member states and private sector partnerships and engaging NGOs, academic institutions and local communities to implement grassroots Peacebuilding projects in the maritime domain.

m. Establish clear indicators to assess the impact of maritime Peacebuilding efforts, regularly evaluate maritime Peacebuilding projects and adopt strategies based on lessons learned.

Conclusion

The importance of the seas and oceans has increased many folds with the increased global economic activities. At the same time, the dependency of mankind on the sea has also multiplied because of the sudden increase of marine resources and trade & commerce. As the sea has become a source of numerous challenges, from geopolitical competition, piracy and transnational organised crime to vulnerabilities for international trade and critical maritime infrastructures, the security concerns at sea are also on the rise. With their enhanced activities at sea, naval forces of coastal states and multinational forces are trying to ensure the increased and safe use of the sea at local and global scales. Though the UN, under its mandate, operates at sea presently on a limited scale, there are scopes to expand further at high sea as the 'UNCLOS-III' and the 'Agenda for Peace' with its supplements also promote the UN's operation at maritime domain.

The UN is a unique and vital global organisation responsible for maintaining international peace and security on land and at sea. Still, since its inception, its presence at sea has been limited because of many challenges. Though the seas cover 71% of the world with 97% of the world's water¹³ and several troubled areas at seas have become a global concern, the number of land-based UN Peacekeeping operations is still higher than that at sea. Furthermore, even though the success and achievements of the UN have been invaluable and acknowledged by many nations, PKOs by the UN have yet to be able to expand worldwide as expected due to many limitations. Failure of the UN to conduct PKOs at sea, therefore, let many Western countries start their operations at sea to uphold their own and collective interests. Again, the geopolitical and strategic interests of some of the world's most powerful nations

and competition for international standing affecting the decision-making at strategic levels of the UN and with many limitations, the UN is unable to expand its maritime PKOs at high seas, which is also creating a conflict of interest globally. So, considering the opportunities of the UN maritime Peacebuilding efforts as well as the challenges of introducing new maritime PKOs under the UN, the UN may adopt suitable strategies to expand its maritime Peacebuilding efforts to uphold the global interest at sea.¹⁴

The maritime Peacebuilding activities of the UN thus may become an instrument to avoid conflict, secure order and support lawfulness at sea. These activities of the UN will undoubtedly enhance the safety of the worldwide maritime space, making it less likely that hostilities will break out, which could jeopardise peace in several areas and endanger international security. In a nutshell, UN maritime Peacebuilding efforts are needed not only for the security of a region but also for the sustainable development of states and to ensure the environmental protection of the entire world by strengthening partnerships, investing in sustainable development and addressing root causes of conflict and lay the foundation for long-lasting peace in the maritime domain. Such efforts of the UN are likely to facilitate the establishment of a controlled and more secure maritime realm for the world, which is very important for international peace and security.

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Brief Biography



Captain Mohammed Masudur Rahman Zahid, (N), BCGMS, afwc, psc, BN was commissioned in the Executive Branch of Bangladesh Navy on 01 January 1998. During the last 27 years of his naval career, he served on board various ships of Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Coast Guard ranging from missile boats to missile frigate in different capacities. The officer commanded two frigates namely BNS ABU BAKR and BNS SAMUDRA JOY. He also served as Staff Officer (Operations) at Fleet Headquarters and Naval Headquarters. He was also appointed as Chief Staff Officer to Commander BN Fleet. The officer completed his UN mission in DR Congo as military observer. He successfully completed professional courses both at home and abroad. He is a graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College and National Defence College, Mirpur. The officer is alumnus of NAVSCIATTS, Mississippi, USA. Due to significant achievement and extraordinary service in Bangladesh Coast Guard, he was awarded Bangladesh Coast Guard Medal Sheba (BCGMS). Presently he is serving in BNS MONGLA as the Commanding Officer.

Cyber Security in UN Peacekeeping Operations

Squadron Leader Md Mahmudul Islam

Introduction

Cybercrime, cyberattacks, and digital surveillance are now topics of discussions about peace and safety around the world. Measures taken by UN to solve these problems seems to be controversial. There is a lot of disagreement about how international law should be used in cyberspace and how well the UN can handle cyber wars. More and more analysts agree that “digital blue helmets” should be used to look into, watch over, or even stop cyber risks. Cybersecurity patterns, on the other hand, haven’t been looked at as much in terms of how they affect the UN’s main peace and security work, especially its peace operations. In the last 20 years, public events have shown that the UN is seriously flawed in key ways. However, not many people have looked into how these flaws affect work in the field. The same time, not enough research has been done on how better cybersecurity could make peace operations more effective, even though the UN is starting to show some good examples.

As asymmetric warfare and changes in geopolitics happen, peace operations are becoming more and more vulnerable to complex cyber threats. This is because both state and non-state actors are quickly improving their cyber capabilities. Because high-tech tools are used to collect information and data during peace operations, the data is kept very secretly and in one place, which makes security breaches even worse. Several UN Secretariat offices are slowly working to fix these issues. It is up to these groups to handle information and communication technology (ICT) in the field, gather information, and turn peacekeeping operations into digital ones. To make sure the mission works, lawmakers need to learn more about the cyber threats that peace operations face and the moral, political, legal and operational problems that come up when they try to make the mission safer.

When it comes to cybersecurity and the risks that come with UN peace operations, things that the UN does for peace have very different cybersecurity issues than things that the UN does for other purposes. These risks come from business, politics and the law. Peacekeeping operations are legally limited in what they can and cannot do by Security Council mandates, especially those that are allowed by Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This lowers the risk they face. When operations are allowed to use “all necessary means” in war zones, they can often spy on people and gather private information about them, even

if it means being nosy. They are in charge of keeping an eye on things like disarmament, human rights and mediating in politics. As part of their job, they often have to deal with very sensitive information for host countries, nearby military troops and international powers.

Specific Risks Faced by United Nations Operations

Missions that keep the peace need more robust operational security measures than other UN bodies, which usually cost more. Say you want to keep the movements of your troops a secret, you might need to use end-to-end encrypted networks, secure communication systems and advanced anti-intrusion technologies. Status of mission or forces agreements between missions and host governments usually protect the privacy of communications between missions. Messages can be sent safely within the mission, between the mission and the UN headquarters and even with groups outside of the mission, such as the International Criminal Court. These deals help stop some cyberattacks, mostly those that come from the host country. They also show why strong security protocols should be bought.

IHL, or international humanitarian law, sets the rules for peace operations, but these rules can also make them less safe. People disagree on what the exact legal status of peacekeeping missions is, but most agree that offensive missions, such as MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade in the DRC or MINUSMA's work in Mali, must follow IHL. These rules say that enemies can look for information about what they are doing in secret. People who keep the peace can fight these attack, but they might not be able to catch the people who do them.¹

Dealing with Cybersecurity Risks in Missions to Keep the Peace

The Security Council instructs peacekeeping forces they have to gather private information. This data comes with its own set of cybersecurity risks, which are taken into account in the 2021 Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping. In this plan, there are important steps that can be taken to lower these risks. Some of these are using cyber threat analysis to help keep the peace, strengthening data governance frameworks and making new protocols to deal with the security holes that appear in technologies like AI and machine learning. However, it is harder to do all of these things because cyber threats are always changing. Because more and more digital tools are being used in peace activities, the company has some flaws. Some of them come from outside the project, which shows how the political and technological setting in which it operates is changing.²

Intelligence, Surveillance and Data Management Technologies

Hacking into the UN's networks is becoming a bigger problem and the use of more high-tech tools in peacekeeping has made things even worse. Even more so for systems that store data, keep an eye on people and gather information. All of these are now more likely to be hacked. It looks at how these new technologies have changed how operations that keep the peace handle cybersecurity.

The job of missions to keep the peace is to gather information and keep an eye on things. It's harder to keep the data safe now that more advanced tools are being used, though. There is a lot more sensitive information that needs to be collected now that police officers have more duties and work in more dangerous conditions. This makes the information more valuable to enemies and bad things could happen if it is leaked.³

Chad was the first place where the UN used its first big unmanned aerial surveillance drone in 2008. Drones began to be used more often in missions to keep the peace after this. Technologies that can find the sources of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), cell phone jammers used by MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade and systems for studying "patterns of life" have also been put to use. These tools find out a lot about people by watching what they do and how they act. Some long-standing practices, like getting information from people, have also caused new worries, especially when this information is stored in shared systems.⁴

Management and Analysis of Data from One Place

During the early 2000s, peacekeeping operations had trouble keeping track of their data. Based on how different sections reported things, records of security incidents and interview notes were often spread out in different places, such as shared folders that weren't organized, spreadsheets and even different computers. The UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) has worked hard to make sure that all the information that is used to spot trends and make decisions is handled in the same way every time. At first, most of the work was done on databases like Sage, which kept track of things like armed attacks and military activities and iBase, a Microsoft system that only certain teams used. Unite Aware is a tool that displays different types of data, such as operational, administrative and substantive data. These datasets were just added to it. There's no doubt that centralized data management is safer for everyone. It lowers the risks of storing private information on personal devices or in shared folders with weak controls on who can see them, for example.

On the other hand, centralization makes a single source of useful data, which makes it simple for hackers to break into these systems.⁵

How Peacekeeping Missions Share Information and Protect Cyberspace

Most of the time, people make it clear that they want sensitive information to be collected. People or organizations that work together to build trusting relationships are often the best ways to get this kind of information. Cybersecurity and data management practices are still not always the same in peace operations, even though efforts are being made to get mission parts to work together and share information more effectively. One example is that investigation teams in human rights offices that work with mission staff and OHCHR staff are often taught safe ways to handle private information. Part of this is taking steps to lower the risks of high-tech cyber threats like the Pegasus spyware that NSO Group sells. To be fair, though, not every mission office has the same rules about training and knowing about cybersecurity. In 2021, the UN's Joint Inspection Unit released a study that called for more role-specific cybersecurity training. This is especially important for people with important jobs or who work in dangerous places. These risks are higher in places where peace efforts are happening. A lot of places don't have strong laws to protect against cyberattacks. A lot of the time, missions that report on human rights list host governments as information sources. This can be problematic and makes it more likely that this information will be attacked. The OHCHR has a separate database for this type of information to keep it safe. However, other parts of their mission may not have the same safeguards for politically sensitive information they gather, such as about child protection or sexual violence during conflicts.⁶

Effects of Data Security on Contingent Owned Equipment

During peace operations, some of the tech used to spy on people and gather information comes from member states. This is known as contingent-owned equipment. One example is the use of forensic tools by special police units, drones by MINUSMA's intelligence and observation units and IMSI catchers by MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade to listen in on cell phone calls. During peace operations, the UN sets rules that everyone and everything must follow. But the national laws and rules that govern these devices often put limits on them. For example, the information that is gathered is sometimes sent to the city of the country that sent it so that it can be processed. There are UN rules about who owns data and this method breaks the chain of custody. It's called "reach-back." The UN's hacking team can't keep an eye on this kind of data because of this practice. National security rules may be strict. This makes it harder for the UN to keep an eye on the information and make sure it is handled correctly.⁷

Security Actors and How they Affect Peace Operations

As big changes happen in world politics, UN peacekeeping operations have had to deal with new issues brought up by security groups that work in the areas where they are sent. To give you an idea, the Wagner Group from Russia makes its presence felt in the Central African Republic, Mali, Libya, Sudan and Ukraine. Soldiers can't keep the peace, do their jobs, or make sure everyone is safe because this group puts them in dangerous situations. Though it offers to fight rebel groups and work with host countries to keep them safe, the Wagner Group has become a rival to the UN. Its actions, which are often planned with the help of local security forces, have made it harder to protect civilians, stopped UN flights and threatened UN staff in the area, among other things. These actions, along with the group's dislike of operations that keep the peace, make cybersecurity worries even greater. One example is that the fact that peacekeeping groups in uniform use government-provided phones makes people worry about the safety of internal communications. Also, the close surveillance by these parallel forces puts the operational safety and privacy of mission personnel at great risk. If missions and host states don't get along, host states are more likely to try to hack into UN networks. This is especially true if those states get closer to Russia.⁸

False Information, Invasions of Privacy and Cyber Threats

In the political settings where peacekeeping missions work, there is a lot of false information that gets around. This can lead to new cyberattacks that target these missions. Politicians, armed groups and other groups are using social media more and more to attack and make fun of people who are trying to keep the peace. Bad people can easily use mission networks for bad things, like looking for private or secret data, because of the way they are set up. Hackers could, for example, take over radio, social media, or email to make it look like they are part of the mission or spread false information. These actions could lead missions astray and make them do things that could be deadly. New technologies, such as generative AI, make things even more complicated by letting people change information in a way that hurts the mission's credibility or encourages staff to be violent. Mission leaders and staff could be attacked online in ways that are meant to hurt their reputations or make them look bad. Private information can be shared without permission and fake photos or videos can be made. These digital threats not only invade privacy, but they also pose risks. There are holes in the UN's Security Management System that these trends show. These holes aren't being fixed right now. People who work in security and their contacts may lose their privacy, have data leaks that cause harm and be in danger because false information is being shared online.⁹

Helping with Negotiations and Mediation

One of the main goals of peace operations is to help people who are fighting to understand each other better. The jobs of mediating, getting involved in politics and supporting peace processes are all very important because of this. This is especially true for the top mission staff. For the UN to be a good mediator, everyone needs to trust it. This depends on how honest and secret the mediation process is kept. If you want to get both sides to agree and keep the process credible, the UN's Guidance for Effective Mediation says that conversations must be kept safe. More and more, UN mediators use private messaging apps and tools to make sure that no one can listen in on or spy on their conversations. This is done to keep the mediation process safe. The Digital settlement Toolkit was manufactured by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA). It stresses how important it is to include digital security in all efforts to settle disputes. However, mediators need to give careful thought to how the different sides' technological know-how impacts the talks. It's possible that cybersecurity measures could make problems worse in some conflicts without meaning to. This is because they might stop some groups from breaking in more than others.

Making it Easier for Political Agreements and Mediation

To help people who are at odds with each other come to an agreement or see it through to the end is one of the main goals of peace operations. Because of this, it is very important for top mission leaders to mediate, help with politics and support peace processes. The UN can only help people work out their differences if everyone agrees with it. The UN's Guidance for Effective Mediation says that to build trust, it's important to keep things private and be honest during the mediation process. The power of UN mediators is protected by keeping things secret and parties can't abuse their negotiating strategies. The Digital Mediation Toolkit from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) talks about how monitored conversations can be dangerous and how important it is to use encrypted tools to keep private conversations safe. Emails and messaging apps that are encrypted are one of these steps. They are meant to keep people out who are never supposed to be there. When people talk, though, mediators need to be aware that the other people may not have the same tech skills. Taking cybersecurity steps that only stop certain people from breaking in could make things worse between the parties, which would make it harder to come to an agreement.¹⁰

Increasing Efforts to Protect

People in the media, those who fight for human rights, and regular people are more likely to be watched and punished as AI surveillance grows. As part of protecting those involved in peacekeeping, making sure these people can do their jobs safely can become very important. A lot of the time, these kinds of activities make things hard with the authorities in the host country. But they are in line with the main goal of keeping civil society members from being abused. So that protection operations can keep going, it is very important to keep communication networks safe and separate in mission areas. This is very important when people or groups outside of governments mess up national information systems, like when the internet goes down. In Mali, for example, MINUSMA was able to keep an eye on and report on violence against protesters even though the government blocked the internet before the results of the national election were made public.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Policy

It is mostly up to the Office of Information and Communication Technology and field technology units to look into hacking threats on a technical level right now. After more and more cyberattacks happen in mission settings, the UN needs a more thorough plan for how to handle them. To do this, they need to make connections with other people to share threat information, learn more about cybersecurity, and make sure that missions can get to technology more easily. The UN's Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), Department of Operating Support (DOS) and Department of Peace Operations (DPO) should all work with the Secretariat to create ways for all three to work together to assess cyber threats. Teams for information security, strategic communications and joint mission analysis should all be a part of this integration.

At this point, the UNDSS framework doesn't see privacy breaches as a clear threat to safety and security. It's different when bad behavior causes people to lose their privacy. This can hurt their health and safety for a long time and may even cause more risks. The UN is continuing efforts to gather more information on the matter that, what it needs to do to protect the privacy of its workers while they do their jobs. When it comes to staff privacy, the Secretariat and the UN Privacy Office should make it clear what their duty of care is. They should also come up with operational rules to lower threats in this area.

It is important for missions with cybersecurity measures to check if these measures stop all sides from getting in when they try to help settle political disputes. People are less likely to trust the process or the UN's role as a neutral

judge if they can't get to private data in an equal way. Missions might want to find ways to stop people from gathering too much digital data or make sure that everyone has the same access to some shared data.

Peace operations depend on the law to protect the conversations that happen inside them. But missions might have to avoid or block surveillance attempts to keep their calls safe in places where the host country or other security actors pose major cybersecurity risks. When doing these things, especially when they involve talking to people outside the organization, it's important to think carefully about how legally okay, operationally necessary and politically possible they are.

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Brief Biography



Squadron Leader Md Mahmudul Islam, BD/9738, Engg was commissioned in Bangladesh Air Force on 01 Dec 2013. He has served in various appointments in C&E Sqn, Simulator and Maintenance Units. He has completed various courses at home and abroad like Junior Command and Staff Course and Flight Safety Officers course from CSTI, United Nations Military Peacekeeping Intelligence Course from BIPSOT and Laser Based PCB Making Training from Germany. He also participated in UN mission in DR Congo. Currently the officer is serving as 2IC and OIC R&D Cell in 207 MROU BAF.

Effectiveness of Simulation-Based Training for Peacekeepers: Contribution of Bangladesh

Md. Jahan Shoieb

Introduction

The United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) have played a significant role in managing conflict and maintaining global peace and security since their inception in the mid-20th century. However, as global conflicts become increasingly complex and multifaceted, traditional peacekeeping methods face notable challenges. The necessity for technological innovation in UN peacekeeping operations is paramount as it can enhance operational effectiveness, improve situational awareness and ensure the safety of peacekeepers and civilians. In the 21st century, the UNPKOs have faced increasing complexity and volatility in conflict zones across the globe. As traditional modes of peacekeeping become less effective in managing modern conflicts, there arises an urgent need for technological innovation to enhance operational efficiency, improve situational awareness and better protect peacekeepers and civilians. As peacekeepers face multiple challenges on the ground, pre-departure training becomes crucial. Hence, their training through simulations can resolve the problem.

Nowadays, the nature of conflicts is becoming complicated, often involving a convergence of political, ethnic and religious tensions, compounded by non-state actors and terrorism. According to the UN, the number of UNPKOs has increased significantly with personnel deployed in increasingly dangerous environments. The traditional ways of peacekeeping-primarily based on the deployment of military personnel to observe ceasefires-have struggled to adapt necessitating a rethinking of strategies through technology. Today's conflicts are turning to more intra-state than inter-state conflicts. In the contemporary world, asymmetric and non-traditional threats are becoming eminent along with traditional threats (e.g. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), land mines, frequent use of terrorist tactics and targeting civilians). The use of new-generation weapons is a common feature in today's world. It is evident that conflicting groups nowadays use technology and sometimes pose cyber threats targeting System Integrity-a wide circulation of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech.¹

With the technological inventions, the video games industry has been heavily tilting towards war, conflict and defeat of the simulated enemies.² Peacekeepers can benefit from the games not only at the tactical level but also

at the strategic and operational levels. Through role-playing simulation games, several audiences can benefit in the following ways:-

1. Present as well as future peacekeepers and simultaneously police personnel and civilians working in the field;
2. Policymakers and decision-makers who are involved in planning process and chalk out the deployment and support them from outside the mission; and
3. General people who like to become educated and acquire knowledge about the challenges and activities of peacekeepers.

Bangladesh is one of the torchbearers of global peacekeeping endeavours. Currently, from Bangladesh's armed forces (army, navy and air force) 5,818 peacekeepers are deployed on ten ongoing missions in ten countries.³ The Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) unveiled its simulation programme United Nations Peace Operation Simulation Training (UNPOST) at the 12th AGM and Workshop AAPTC-2024. UNPOST simulates mission area terrain accurately, enhances preparedness and decision-making in real contexts and empowers personnel to respond effectively in mission operations. Hence, the country has also included its name in the arena of simulation-based training providers.

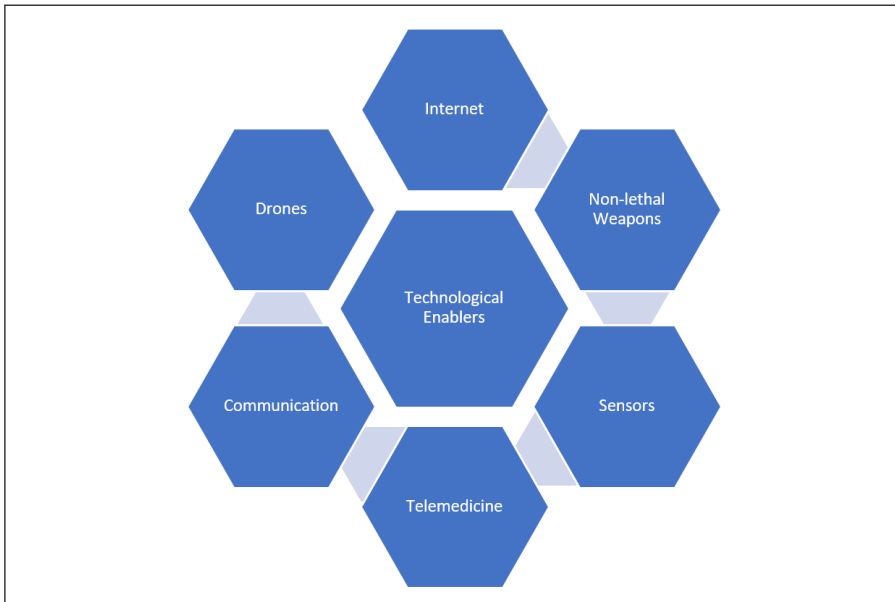
Against the backdrop, this paper aims to look into the importance of computer-aided simulation training for peacekeepers and the contribution of Bangladesh in this regard. The key research questions of this paper are why war gaming simulations are important in peacekeeping missions? What are the differences between general computer games? and what are Bangladesh's contribution to the field? To answer the questions, the paper is divided into five sections including an introduction and a conclusion. Section two elaborates on the evolving landscape of conflict and the necessity and challenges of training simulations. Section three highlights a conceptual understanding of game options for the peacekeepers. Section four sheds light on Bangladesh's contribution to simulation-based training programmes. And section five concludes the paper.

The Evolving Landscape of Conflict vis-a-vis Necessity and Challenges of Training Simulations

Peacekeepers usually operate amidst volatile regions characterized by civil unrest and armed conflicts. Since 1948 the United Nations has been launching missions almost every year. However, despite the support of powerful

nations the UN missions have not always been able to meet their desired mandates.⁴ As the missions are increasingly becoming complex, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) urged the United Nations to ensure greater inclusion of a rapidly evolving array of new technologies to make peacekeeping missions more effective and time-tested while working in some of the world's most complex security and political environments.⁵ However, the use of technology is not new in peace operations. For various purposes, technology is used in peacekeeping missions. A glimpse on the use of technology in peacekeeping missions can be understood from the following Figure:-

Figure 1: Use of Technology for Peacekeepers



Source: Author's self-construct

In the subsequent paragraphs, the advantages of incorporating technology and simulation-based training are discussed briefly:-

1. Enhanced Situational Awareness: Technology can significantly improve situational awareness through the use of drones, surveillance systems and satellite imagery. Drones, for instance, can provide real-time data and imagery of conflict zones, enabling peacekeepers to monitor movements and settlements accurately. A study by the RAND Corporation⁶ found that using drones in peacekeeping operations could enhance decision-making and reduce risks associated with ground patrols.⁷

2. Improved Communication and Coordination: Innovative communication tools, such as mobile applications and secure communication networks, facilitate better coordination among peacekeepers and between troops and local populations. The use of such technologies helps ensure timely information sharing, which is crucial for effective mission planning and operational response.⁸

3. Data Analytics and Predictive Modeling: Integration of data analytics into peacekeeping operations allows for the assessment of conflict dynamics and potential flash-points. Predictive modeling can be used to analyze trends and predict incidents of violence, helping peacekeepers allocate resources more effectively to areas at risk.⁹

4. Protection of Peacekeepers: Advanced technologies, such as armoured vehicles, body cameras and personal safety devices, contribute to the safety of peacekeeping personnel. Implementation of these technologies serves as a deterrent to potential aggressors and helps investigate incidents involving peacekeepers.¹⁰

Challenges to Technological Integration

While the potential benefits of technological innovation in UN peacekeeping are compelling, several challenges hinder its implementation which are mentioned below:-

1. Resource Constraints: Many UN missions operate under limited budgets, which can limit the procurement of advanced technologies. A report by the UN Board of Auditors highlighted issues related to inadequate funding and resource allocation for technology adoption in peacekeeping operations.¹¹

2. Training and Capacity Building: The effectiveness of technology depends on the personnel's ability to operate and maintain high-tech equipment. Proper training and capacity-building programs are essential for peacekeepers to effectively use new technologies. The UN has made strides in this area, but ongoing efforts are needed to ensure comprehensive training. Technological capacities can help transcend geopolitical complexities for peacekeepers.¹²

3. Ethical and Legal Considerations: The use of technology in peacekeeping raises ethical and legal questions, especially concerning surveillance and privacy rights. The implementation of tech must align with international laws and human rights standards to maintain

legitimacy and trust among local populations. Without ethical and legal considerations, the UN shall largely lag behind in fulfilling its some of the core principles in protecting civilians as well as peacekeepers working in a complex geographical context.¹³

A Conceptual Understanding of Game Options for the Peacekeepers and Challenges of Commercially Available Video Games

One of the key objectives of simulation-based games and training programme is to equip the learners with the knowledge of various avenues of peace operations and peace processes. Therefore, it is expected that some video games work as an effective training mechanism. In the process, there needs to be a certain level of in-game adaptation mechanisms that challenge a player with multiple avenues to success.¹⁴ There are several commercial war-fighting simulation games available in the market. Some of them are first-person shooters and some of those are third-person shooters. Some of those are turned base and some of them are real-oriented. A good variety of digital gaming types could be applied in the case of peacekeeping including turn-based games (e.g., chess) and also real-time games (operated using controllable avatars used in modern-day video games).¹⁵ Those games can help the peacekeepers with tactical, operational and strategic-level decision-making. Although until today there is no commercially available video game on peacekeeping or the role of the UN in conflict prevention, there are some games that deal with various aspects of conflict and peace more generally. For instance, 'This War of Mine' is a rare example of a survival game that depicts an environment very similar to the Siege of Sarajevo.¹⁶

Figure 2: Key Features of Simulation-Based Games for Peacekeepers



Source: Author's self-construct

The prime focus of a peacekeeping mission is the use of tactics, teamwork and coordination of forces to conduct operations and fulfill objectives. However, there are a couple of difficulties with the commercially available war-fighting games. To begin with, those glorify combats, reward killing and defeating enemies and there is a risk of dehumanising in the process. For

instance, typical war games like *Call of Duty*¹⁷ and *Medal of Honour*¹⁸ drive a person to shoot all available enemies with various types of weapons. Hence, it appears that indiscriminating shooting is a key feature of traditional video games.

It is an undeniable fact that the characteristics of conventional warfare and peace operations are completely different. There is no winning and losing or defeating the enemy in the warfare in the peace operations. The objective is to establish peace. Hence conventional and available video games or war games can hardly be used to portray a real peace-time scenario. Peacekeeping simulation games need to offer a role-playing adventure of war gaming. Instead of abundant shooting, it would highlight ethical judgments, empathy, humanity and the strict use of armed forces as a last resort. Peacekeeping games might show mass atrocities but the peacekeepers would try to stop them and not create them like the conventional war games.

The simulation-based peacekeeping operation games provide some advantages as they can be played at any time and any place, they can be played solo or in any group and one can generate a greater range of atmosphere, environment and complexities in the game and record the game to demonstrate the lessons and it can be cost-effective. And one can progress the game gradually based on the skills of the peacekeeper. And any combination of games is possible. For example, a peacekeeper from Bangladesh can play a peacekeeper's role sitting in Sweden. Most importantly, this is as close to reality as possible without causing casualties.

An ideal simulation game for peacekeepers could incorporate roles for both warfighters and belligerent parties. Alternatively, peacekeepers' role could be introduced into some of the existing warfighting games. An ideal simulation-based game should incorporate both warfighting and diplomacy dynamics that can ensure conflict resolution dynamics in the game. In the process, players can learn to manage multiple relationships with distinct factions while benefiting from cooperation. And the whole process should be made in a way that a peacekeeper can navigate into a complex geographical terrain. As peacekeeping has distinct characteristics compared to traditional warfare, military platforms can serve the purposes of peacekeepers in developing e-games incorporating civilian and police roles as well as military ones in peacekeeping.¹⁹ Some countries and organisations are preparing simulations/ games for their concerned personnel to educate them with the necessary knowledge and training. For instance, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is in the process of developing a simulation game by their Bangkok-based VR team focusing on the nitty-gritty and principles

of international humanitarian law.²⁰ In the following sections, Bangladesh's contribution in this arena is elaborated.

Contribution of Bangladesh in Providing Simulation-based Training

Digital technologies play a crucial role in peacekeeping even before the deployment of troops in conflict areas. Technologies create new opportunities that help to improve the efficacy of peacekeeping operations. It also helps to enhance the safety and security of a peacekeeper.²¹ Advanced militaries tend to fully capitalize on the advantages of digital technology and try to create realistic and sophisticated training environments like Virtual Battle Space (e.g., VBS4) prepared for warfighting.²² These are used as peacekeepers' games. And some military command-post exercises also can benefit peacekeepers.²³

As mentioned earlier, Bangladesh is one of the prominent torchbearers of global peacekeeping endeavours. The country also provides quality peacekeeper training through its Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations and Training (BIPSOT). At the last 12th AGM and Workshop AAPTC-2024, a group of young soldiers of the Bangladesh army unveiled its simulation-based training software, United Nations Peace Operations Simulation Training (UNPOST).

At present, Bangladesh's war game centre provides simulation training for the UN infantry battalions. However, it plans to train all types of UN contingents that would be deployed in the UN missions from 2025. In the next stage, it will provide packages for the military observers, staff officers, United Nations Police (UNPOL) and formed police unit personnel. At some point, it plans to include multiple entities in the virtual reality mode to bring more realities. In the future, strategic operational and tactical level playing will also be included in the centre's software.

The development of UNPOST aligns with key UN initiatives such as Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) and Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+), which emphasise the use of technology as part of the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace. Recognising the limitations of traditional PDT methods, UNPOST seeks to modernise peacekeeping training by leveraging advanced simulation technologies. The initiative is spearheaded by the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT), which has integrated cutting-edge simulation techniques to strengthen the decision-making capabilities of commanders and staff officers.

UNPOST operates using the Integrated War Gaming and Simulation System (IWGSS), a simulation platform developed by the Army War Game

Centre of the Bangladesh Army. IWGSS is a constructive and aggregated simulation platform designed to facilitate realistic scenario modeling and strategic planning. It provides advanced technical features such as real-time data integration, scenario customisation and dynamic feedback analysis. These capabilities enable UNPOST to conduct sophisticated training exercises, optimise strategic planning and enhance decision-making processes with precision and efficiency. The platform offers terrain area simulation of over 300 x 300 km, supports multiple levels of engagement from individual to corps level and can handle up to 900,000 messages per second. Additional features include realistic bullet effects, terrain and behavioural control and mission assignments across different operational levels.

IWGSS allows the simulation of critical tactical scenarios relevant to UN peacekeeping missions. These include abduction scenarios and responses, threats to the protection of civilians (POC), civilian protests and crowd control measures, village confrontations, riot control operations, convoy escorts, aerial reconnaissance using UAVs, improvised explosive device (IED) threats, ambush and counter-ambush tactics, cordon and search operations and the protection of humanitarian convoys. The platform also facilitates realistic communication through voice and text messaging, further enhancing the training experience.

UNPOST offers several key advantages that address the limitations of traditional PDT methods. Traditional training exercises such as Field Training Exercises (FTX) and Command Post Exercises (CPX) often lack the depth and realism necessary to adequately prepare commanders and staff officers for modern peacekeeping challenges. UNPOST overcomes these limitations by providing an accurate simulation of mission terrains, realistically portraying UN bases and protected sites and offering a dynamic environment where commanders can develop effective responses. The system enables participants to engage in decision-making dilemmas, observe the consequences of their actions, and refine their strategies accordingly.

BIPSOT has successfully conducted a pilot UN Computer Assisted Exercise (CAX) at UNPOST with BANRDB/7 (MONUSCO) as the primary training audience. The exercise presented realistic peacekeeping challenges, allowing participants to experience and respond to mission dynamics in real time. This exercise demonstrated the effectiveness of UNPOST in preparing peacekeepers for actual deployment scenarios.

As part of its training framework, BIPSOT endeavours to continue conducting UN CAX sessions using UNPOST for UN contingents before their deployment. Additionally, BIPSOT plans to offer specialised courses on the

conduct of UN CAX for participants from interested member states. The training outcomes of UNPOST include realistic peacekeeping training, the simulation of complex mission environments, enhanced decision-making capabilities for commanders and the opportunity to practice real-time operational procedures. The system allows participants to engage in action-reaction-counteraction cycles, improving their ability to handle evolving peacekeeping challenges effectively.²⁴ Hence, in coming days it is expected the computer-aided exercises offered by the BIPSOT for potential peacekeepers is well-positioned to serve the peacekeepers with best possible training keeping back in mind the aims and objectives of the UN in enshrining global peace and security in a volatile global order.

Conclusion

As global conflict dynamics continue to evolve, the necessity for technological innovation in UN peacekeeping operations becomes increasingly evident. To enhance operational effectiveness, improve situational awareness and protect personnel and civilians, the UN must prioritise the integration of technology into its peacekeeping strategies. While challenges exist, addressing these issues through adequate funding, training and ethical considerations will be crucial for the future success of UN peacekeeping missions.

The effectiveness of war gaming simulation as an evolving tool for peacekeepers is underscored predominantly by its ability to replicate complex operational environments. It provides a unique opportunity for critical decision-making processes. This method is also suitable for providing dynamic and immersive learning experiences which instigates the preparedness of peacekeepers to navigate various challenges they may face in real missions. Thus, peacekeeping games simultaneously provide amusement as well as education to its learners. In a simulation game, human-centrism games should be at the heart and dehumanising would not serve the objectives of peacekeepers. Lessons can be learned for real situations borrowed from the field and applied to the game environment. Given the changing circumstances in the field, peacekeeping games could be useful to train UN peacekeepers during deployment, as well as before.

Bangladesh, with its robust contributions to the UN peacekeeping missions, once again comes up with the adoption of such innovative technology. Particularly, the UNPOST provides ample opportunities for peacekeepers and decision-makers to work in a more realistic environment. The country's commitment to utilizing war gaming simulations is a clear reflection of its understanding of the evolving nature of conflicts and the necessity for adaptive

training methodologies. By contributing to the simulation-based training the country not only provides quality training to the peacekeepers but also contributes to achieving its objectives of maintaining international peace and security.

In the contemporary global context, Bangladesh and other contributing countries must continue refining their training methods leveraging technologies like war gaming to ensure peacekeepers are well-equipped to uphold their mandates in increasingly complex and volatile environments. Although there are some challenges in adopting such a new technology, the positive outcomes undoubtedly outweigh the negative aspects. Hence, it can be noted that the integration of war gaming simulations into peacekeeper training aligns with global best practices and reinforces the importance of preparedness, collaboration and innovation in peacekeeping efforts.

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Brief Biography



Md. Jahan Shoieb joined Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) as a Research Officer in August 2012. He graduated from the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka. Later, he obtained his second Master's degree from the Department of Politics and International Relations of Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, being awarded the prestigious Australia Awards Endeavour Postgraduate (Masters) Scholarship 2016. He was also a visiting Research Fellow at Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences (YASS) where he researched 'BCIM-EC and One Belt and One Road'. He has received many awards and scholarships for his academic attainments. Presently he is a Research Fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS). As a researcher, he has authored a good number of articles and book chapters.

Future Dynamics of the Conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Inevitable Realities for Bangladeshi Contingents in MONUSCO

Colonel Mohammad Tariq Hossain, afwc, psc

Introduction

Eastern DRC has been plagued with numerous conflicts and prolonged instabilities since its independence in 1960. The successive Congolese Wars are still considered as significant post-Cold War clashes in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country also experienced significant population displacement, extreme violence and unparalleled resource looting. The abundant natural resources-especially its precious minerals have globalized the conflict in Eastern DRC.¹ As such, historically Eastern DRC has been the epicenter of all types of conflicts. The conflict between non-state armed actors, most prominently the 23 March Movement (M23) and the Congolese Government's Armed Force (FARDC) has been ongoing relentlessly in late January 2025, killing more than 7,000 people in 2025 alone and leading to a record level of 7.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in DRC and 103,000 people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries (with Burundi registering 70,000 new arrivals and Uganda nearly 29,000). Following the M23's order to evacuate IDP camps around Goma, nearly 1 million people were forced to return to their villages, many of which have been fully destroyed.

By mid-February 2025, M23 has been advancing westwards in North Kivu and southward in South Kivu. A Qatari-mediated ceasefire announcement by the Presidents of DRC and Rwanda following a meeting in Doha, Qatar, on 18 March 2025, has so far shown little effect. Different than announced, M23 has not withdrawn troops from Walikale, North Kivu, while fighting continued around Bukavu and Uvira, South Kivu.

Bangladesh Army contingents have been highly effective in protecting civilians and establishing peace in MONUSCO since 2003. Ongoing conflict and its future dynamics may take Bangladeshi contingents into complicated intersections. Being one of the leading components in MONUSCO, Bangladesh Army needs to be aware of the future dynamics of the present conflict and prepare themselves accordingly. At this backdrop, this paper will initially analyze the present conflict scenario in Eastern DRC with a view to ascertaining its future dynamics. Thereafter, corresponding intricacies to Bangladeshi Contingents due to present conflict and means of overcoming those will be

discussed sequentially. Considering the number of deployed contingents in MONUSCO, the discussion will be confined within Bangladesh Army only.

Aim

The aim of this paper is to critically analyze the present conflict scenario of Eastern DRC with a view to assessing its future dynamics and inevitable realities for Bangladeshi Contingents.

Conflict Analysis: Background and the Pattern of Conflict

Background of Conflict

a. Pre-Colonial Era, Colonial Era to Independence in 1960: The causes of conflict in Eastern DRC is deeply rooted in its history. The country was first discovered in 1482 and later, were further explored by the Scottish, American and French explorers.² Among them, American explorer Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) was hired by the Belgian King Leopold II (1835-1909).³ In late 19th Century, Stanley signed the controversial 'Land Ownership Treaty' which turned Congo as the personal property of King Leopold II.⁴ The Land Ownership Treaty is still considered as the core issue of ethnic clashes and land disputes. The Belgian Government took over Congo from King Leopold II in 1908.⁵ Finally, amid huge popular reprisal, colonial rulers left the country, and Congolese became independent in 1960.

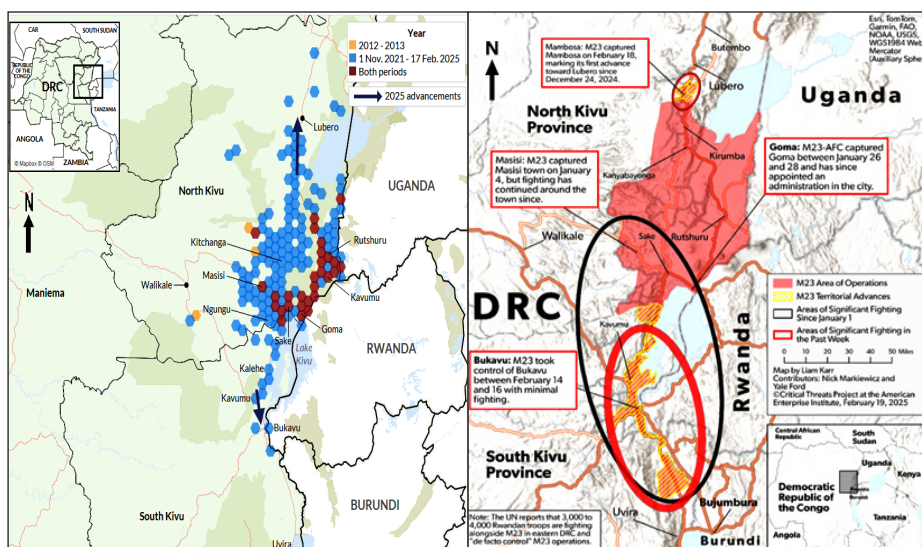
b. Rwandan Genocide and Successive Congolese Wars: During and after the genocide, nearly two million Hutus took refuge in North Kivu and Bukavu - along the eastern border of DRC.⁶ Following the victory against the genocidal Rwandan Government, Mr Paul Kagame - the Rwandan President was looking for an opportunity to take revenge against the Hutus in Eastern DRC. Eventually, 1st Congolese war in 1996 offered him that opportunity where he made coalition with Mr Laurent Kabila, fought against President Mbutu and ousted him. However, immediately after winning the war, the coalition broke apart on the issue of returning Rwandan troops out of DRC which thus led to the 2nd Congolese War in 1998.

c. End of 2nd Congolese War and Rise of M23: 2nd Congolese War – also named as Africa's World War - where Uganda along with Rwanda fought against DRC its new coalition force of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Lusaka Treaty could bring the end of 2nd Congolese War in 1999 but subsequently failed to address many

contentious ethnic issues. Subsequently, those issues continued to flare up and amid continued tension, National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) was formed in 2006 to protect the Congolese Tutsi. Later, in January 2009, the DRC and Rwanda Government jointly agreed to integrate CNDP fighters into the Armed Forces of the DRC. However, DRC was reluctant to implement this integration which finally gave birth to M23 in 2012.

d. **M23 Offensive in North Kivu from 2012-2025:** M23 captured Goma in 2012 for the first time but had to withdraw immediately under huge international pressure. In 2021, M23 again resumed offensive and captured vast territory in North Kivu. Thereafter, series of ceasefires and negotiation continued for more than three years until their latest offensive in December 2024. Finally, by mid-February 2025, they captured Goma and Bukavu – two provincial capitals of North and South Kivu. This time, M23 seems to be more organized in comparison to 2012. M23's gradual operational area expansion since 2012 along with the brief highlight of the latest offensive are given in Map-1 below:-

Map-1: M23's Operational Area Expansion (2012-2025) and Territorial Expansion due to latest M23 Offensive in 2025



Source: <https://acleddata.com/2025/02/19/expert-comment-expanding-areas-of-m23s-operations>, retrieved on 25 February 2025 and

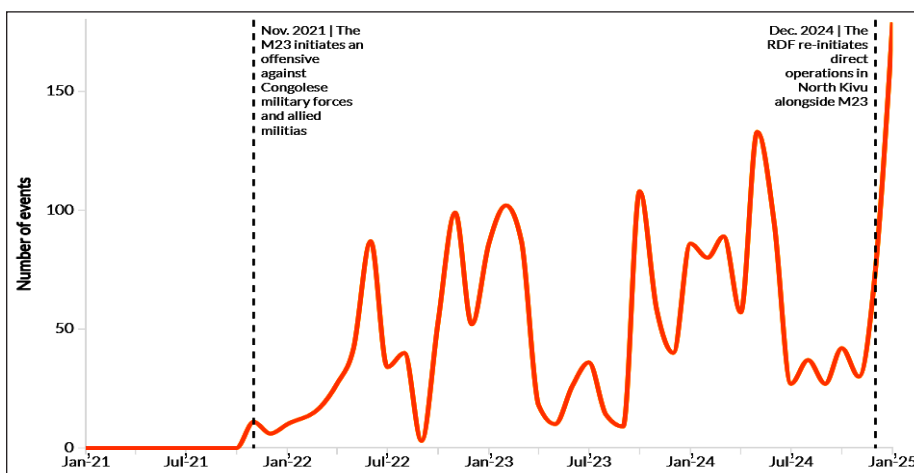
<https://www.understandingwar.org/background/africa-file-february-13-2025-saf-announces-government-plan-and-russian-naval-base-drc>, retrieved on 25 February 2025

Pattern of Conflict

a. Increased Political Conflict between Armed Forces Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC)/Wazalendu and M23 in North Kivu:

North Kivu accounts for the lion share of the violent conflicts mainly between FARDC/Wazalendu (emerged as the local youth self defence group fighting alongside with FARDC) and M23 over political rivalries and ethnic issues. Besides, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR- Rwandan Hutus; the successors of exterminated Hutus during Rwandan Genocide) are also fighting with the FARDC/ Wazalendu Coalition. Initially in 2012 offensive, mainly civilians were targeted by M23. Since 2021, after launching their renewed offensive, the number of civilian casualties were reduced and the number of political clashes were raised significantly (the trend of political violence is shown below). However, during the latest M23 offensive, nearly 3000 civilians died⁷ and approximately 2,37,000 civilians were internally displaced.⁸

Graph-1: Political Violence between FARDC/Wazalendu and M23 in North Kivu January '21 to January '25

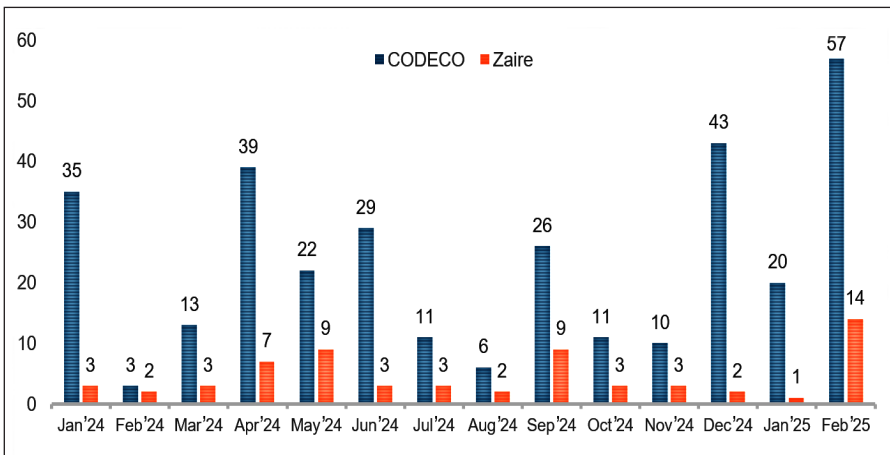


Source: <https://acleddata.com/2025/01/29/qa-what-is-happening-in-and-around-goma/> retrieved on 31 January 2025

b. Ethnic Conflict between CODECO and Zaire in Ituri: In Ituri, the conflict dynamics hinges mainly on the complicacies of two ethnic factions -Hema and Lendu on the issues related to land ownership, customary land rights and access to the land. Due to the political ties with the Mobutu administration, Hema elites acquired land that was previously owned by Lendu.⁹ Land issues kept on boiling high and finally flared up in 2017 resulting large scale conflicts by the

armed groups - mainly between CODECO (representing the Lendu Community) and Zaire (representing the Hema Community). Due to the armed conflicts, large scale killings and displacements of local population took place in various parts of Ituri. Government declared Martial Law in 2021 to control the situation which is still enforced. Rate of communal clashes and killing significantly increased with the fall of Goma. In the 2nd week of February 2025, CODECO killed 51 Hema people in the Area of Responsibility of Nepali Battalion (NEPBAT) and torched several houses in a retaliatory attack at Djugu Territory.¹⁰ Brief highlight on the recent fatalities of CODECO and Zaire are given below:-

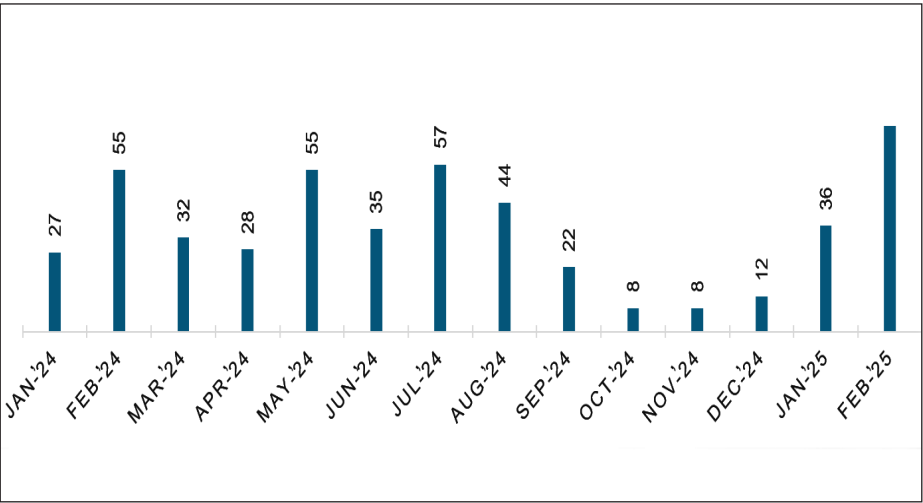
Chart-1: State of Fatalities due to CODECO and Zaire Conflict in Ituri



Source: Author's self-construct

c. Joint Offensive by FARDC and Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) against Allied Defence Force (ADF) both in North Kivu and Ituri: Since 2013, ADF has been considered as another significant armed group operating in part of North Kivu and Ituri Province. ADF is also known for launching the deadliest attack on UN peacekeepers in 2017 which killed 15 Tanzanian peacekeepers and 05 Congolese soldiers.¹¹ After launching Operations Sujja jointly by the FARDC and UPDF since November 2023, fighting strength of ADF has been reduced considerably. However, at present, they have dispersed in different parts of Beni and Mambassa Territory of Ituri Province and continuing attack on the civilians. In connection with M23 offensive, ADF also reportedly killed 76 people within the same time frame¹² in Irumu Territory. Brief account of ADF's recent atrocities are shown below:-

Chart-2: State of Fatalities due to ADF Atrocities



Source: Author's self-construct

Future Dynamics of Conflict

Continued Territorial Expansion by M23: M23 is likely to continue territorial expansion in North Kivu, South Kivu and whenever possible in Ituri Province. Capturing strategic important cities like Goma and Kavumu will seriously degrade FARDC’s capability of launching counter offensive. Their physical control over the airports, land ports and Lake Kivu will also deny any external support or reinforcement. Their advanced weapon systems and jamming devices will restrict MONUSCO to use its critical assets including helicopters and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). Moreover, their latest success may attract the young generation to join M23. Finally, even after one month of capturing Goma, international community could not create any credible pressure to withdraw M23. Thus, M23 may retain permanent control over the captured territory including full control over its administration. This will hamper freedom of movement of MONUSCO and implementing the mandated tasks. Pictures representing M23’s control over Goma Airport and Land Port are attached below:-

Picture-1: M23 Soldiers Controlling Goma Airport and Land port

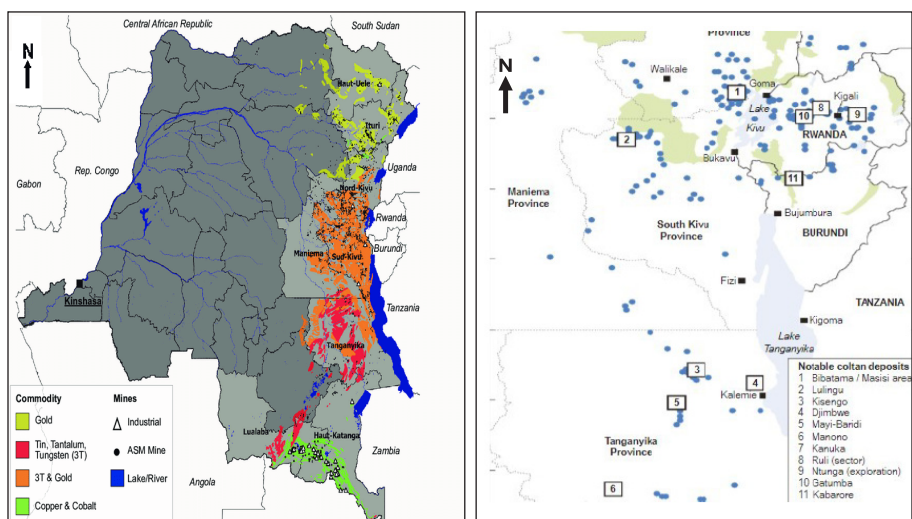


Source: <https://en.igihe.com/news/article/m23-rebels-take-full-control-of-goma-international-airport>, retrieved on 23 February 2025 and

<https://www.independent.co.ug/who-un-report-700-killed-during-goma-city-capture/> retrieved on 27 February 2025.

Increased Mineral Extraction and Domination Over Supply Routes by the Armed Groups: Large number of mining sites being located in the close proximity of the bordering areas of Eastern DRC will continue enticing the armed groups. In the past years, after capturing areas in North Kivu, M23 aimed to broaden authority in North Kivu province, extract resources from mining sites, and generate revenue through taxation. According to the report of UN Security Council, armed groups are capable of extracting approximately 150 tons of Coltan and those are being exported to neighbouring counties. M23 also collected at least 0.8 million USD monthly revenue from the Coltan exportation. According to the same report, armed groups also illegally export gold worth of approximate 140 million USD from Ituri per year.¹³ This huge revenue earning will assist them in running a parallel administration and also at the same time will allow them to recruit new combatants to control and expand newly occupied territories. Layout of mining areas in Eastern DRC and Coltan deposition in the Great Lakes Region minefields are given below:-

Map-2: Mining Areas of Eastern DRC and Coltan Deposition in the Great Lakes Region



Source: <https://journals.rudn.ru/international-relations/article/view/42200>.
Retrieved on 25 February 2025.

Increased Threat to the Civilians: Causing a Serious Concern

a. In Ituri Province: In consonance with the M23 offensive, situation at Ituri has also deteriorated. Since February 2025, attacks and retaliatory attacks were observed between the two-armed groups. The incident caused widespread panic and raised serious concern on the Protection of Civilians. Taking the advantage of lack of local security forces, both the groups are likely to continue atrocities in coming days. Both CODECO and Zaire would try to gain and retain control over the mining areas especially located in the north-western portion of Ituri Province.

b. In Other Parts of Eastern DRC: Situation across the other parts of Eastern DRC also resembles the same. The number of security incidents has increased by 300% since 24 January 2025. During the same period, 250% increase in the cases of sexual violence, 600% rise in abductions, 700% increase in killing and maiming, and 1200% increase in attacks on schools and hospitals were recorded.¹⁴ M23 offensive in Eastern DRC has led to the complete collapse of essential services. Hundreds of schools remain closed and thousands of children have been separated from their families.

Increased Anti MONUSCO Sentiment: Since last few years, anti-MONUSCO sentiment has been on the rise especially in Kinshasa and Goma. Locals blame MONUSCO for not being able to control the situation and establish peace despite of their prolonged stay at DRC. Country wide protest, large scale vandalization and torching vehicles were observed in number of occasions in past few years.¹⁵ Recent M23 offensive in North and South Kivu is likely to add additional fuel to their discontentment. After the fall of Goma, protesters demonstrated against MONUSCO, torched vehicles and installations both at Goma and Kinshasa. M23 and other armed groups may exploit the prevailing anti MONUSCO sentiment and spread it all over the Eastern DRC. Large scale anti MONUSCO sentiment will restrict MONUSCO movement and is likely to hinder its operational activities.

Picture-2 : Anti MONUSCO Protest in Goma



Source: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/drc-shut-un-peacekeeping-mission-discontent-aid-agencies-grows/> retrieved on 27 February 2025 and

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220804-drc-expels-monusco-spokesman-over-deadly-anti-un-protests-in-eastern-kivu-provinces>, retrieved on 26 January 2025.

Increased Attack on MONUSCO Forces: Till date, MONUSCO has experienced total 289 fatalities.¹⁶ Various armed groups targeted MONUSCO by both physical assault and direct fire attacks. Last year, M23 fired Surface to Air Missile (SAM) targeting MONUSCO Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAV).¹⁷ Recently, increased use of drones above different MONUSCO bases both in Ituri and North Kivu also indicates their same intention against the MONUSCO Forces. Under the changed security

dynamics, other armed groups may also launch attack against MONUSCO Forces. The armed groups are likely to deter MONUSCO Force and compel them to be tied down in base security and other activities related to force protection. This will enable the armed groups to increase their domination and attacking their opponents.

Possibility of a Wide Range of Conflict in the Region: The ever-shifting regional alignment of DRC and her neighbours may further complicate present conflict dynamics and gradually move to a regional conflict. Already Chief of Defence Staff of UPDF expressed serious concern on the horrific killing of Hema people in Ituri.¹⁸ In future, UPDF may strengthen its troops in Ituri for protecting Hema Community and also to reduce ADF atrocities. This may seriously worsen the overall situation in Ituri.

Inevitable Realities for Bangladeshi Contingents

Balancing Between the Mandated Tasks and Initiating the Disengagement Process: MONUSCO remains at the complex crossroad for its scheduled disengagement and the same time anticipating its critical role of implementing mandated tasks due to perceived security dynamics. On 20 December 2024, UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2765 (2024), renewed MONUSCO Mandate till 20 December 2025.¹⁹ The resolution reiterated on the mission priorities of protecting civilians, supporting the stabilization and strengthening of state institutions, key governance and security reforms. Furthermore, the Security Council requested MONUSCO to evaluate a tailored approach to its gradual, responsible and sustainable withdrawal. However, in reality security system in the Eastern DRC experienced severe losses due to the M23 offensive. Moreover, to stop M23 advance up north, large number of FARDC soldiers are taken out of Ituri creating huge security void in the province. Due to the present context, all contingents had to intensify operations and the situation is likely to continue for an uncertain period. As such, considering the recent security situation, Bangladeshi Contingents will find extreme difficulty in weighing balance between the mandated tasks vis-à-vis initiating the disengagement process.

Hampering Rotations of both Contingents and Contingent Owned Equipment (COE): Due to M23 offensive, contingents' scheduled rotations became uncertain. Owing to disengagement and reduced budget, MONUSCO also could not rotate COE as per UN COE Manual. As such, most of the contingents are operating with their age-old armaments and equipment. Though Bangladesh Army regularly arrange the availability of critical spares, however M23 is likely to hinder its entry and may also delay its associated

customs clearance. As such, most of the Bangladeshi contingents will have to continue operating with age old fighting vehicles and limited critical spares which would seriously affect their operational capabilities.

Mandated Constraints of Launching Targeted Offensive: MONUSCO mandate only authorizes Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) and Special Forces of Guatemala Contingent to carry out targeted offensive. Whereas Bangladeshi Contingents are authorized to resort to offensive actions only when the civilians and UN Forces are affected. This restricts them to take proactive operational actions. Miscreants taking the advantage of this constraints, move in small groups without posing a threat and even sometimes carryout atrocities silently with machetes. As such, Bangladesh Rapidly Deployable Battalion (BANRDB) -7, being responsible to provide security in Djugu Territory is facing tremendous difficulties in controlling armed groups' atrocities.

Intricacies of Operating in Areas Controlled and Administered by the Armed Groups and Flying through High-Risk Flying Zones: As per Status of Mission Agreement (SOMA), Government of DRC is responsible to provide general facilities and also ensures freedom of movement. Due to complete fall of North Kivu, 04 x Bangladeshi Contingents (Bangladesh Military Police Contingent-19, Bangladesh Engineer Contingent-15, Bangladesh Armed Utility Helicopter Unit -1 and Bangladesh Explosive Ordnance Disposal Contingent-1) located at Goma are not receiving any support from the host nation. M23 has no legal obligation about these contingents. Moreover, M23's jamming devices, surveillance system and SAM missiles also compel the Bangladesh Armed Utility Helicopter Unit -1 to fly through increased high-risk zones.²⁰ Similarly, Bangladesh Engineer Contingent-15 and Bangladesh Explosive Ordnance Disposal-1 will have to perform their classical role without having any protection from the legitimate Government. Pictures of Bangladesh Armed Utility Helicopter Unit -1's flying in armed role through high-risk zones while lifting troops to the designated operational area are shown below:-

Picture-3: Bangladesh Armed Utility Helicopter Unit -1 in Armed Role while Flying through High Risk Zones of North Kivu



Source: Author's collection

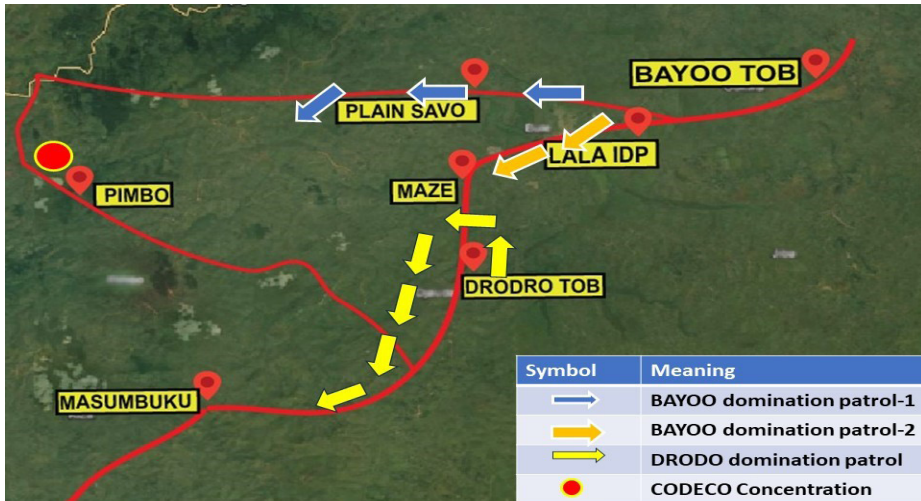
Force Protection Issue: Due to resource constraints, all UN bases do not have required Over Head Protection (OHP). However, during Goma offensive, M23 extensively used different indirect fire assets including Multi Launched Rocket System (MLRS). For this, most of the contingents remained highly vulnerable to heavy casualties during the decisive phase of Goma offensive. Furthermore, MONUSCO could not provide any harden air shelter to the helicopters. This situation will be further aggravated if it turns into a regional conflict. As a whole, force protection remains as a critical vulnerability for almost all Bangladeshi Contingents deployed in MONUSCO.

Performing the Mandated Tasks under Inevitable Realities: Being one of the leading troops contributing nations, Bangladeshi Contingents have been performing instrumental role despite the complexities and constraints as described above. Bangladeshi Contingents have adopted following measures/ techniques to offset the complexities and constraints.

Efficient Alert Response and Community Alert Network (CAN) System: As per Standing Operating Procedure (SOP), contingents are to generate alert response within 10 minutes upon receipt of any alert.²¹ Since the latest crisis, BANRDB-7 accelerated its alert response mechanism and on average, has been able to make it within 6 minutes.²² This quick alert response significantly bolstered overall security system within BANRDB Area of Responsibility (AOR). Besides, BANRDB-7 maintains round the clock patrol in and around the hotspots. Additionally, Quick Reaction Team (QRT) also remains standby in the bases round the clock. Upon receiving any alert, both of these patrols are directed towards the locations of armed groups' movement. BANRDB-7 also practices Integrated Security Plans on weekly basis in different

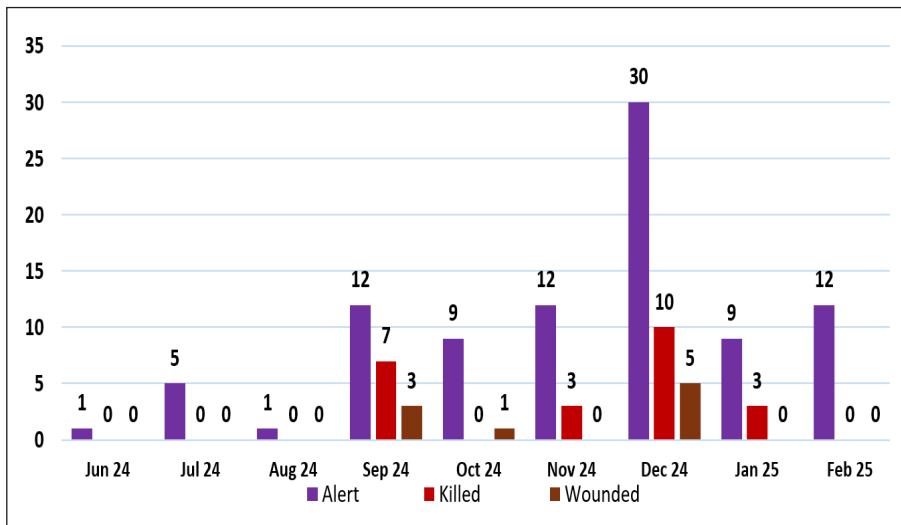
IDP Camps. With a coordinated efforts taken by the CANs, Local Security Forces and BANRDB-7, all the IDPs of BANRDB AOR are still secured even at this crisis period. Diagram representing BANRDB-7's alert response and statistics showing its corresponding operational effect are shown below:-

Diagram-1: BANRDB-7 Alert Response to Pimbo Area from DRODRO and BAYOO TOB – Alert Response Time: 6 Minutes (calculated by author)



Source: Author's self-construct

Chart-3: Statistics Showing Reduced Fatalities and Wounded Cases for BANRDB-7's Efficient Alert Response System



Source: Author's self-construct

Protection Through Projection: Following the CODECO atrocity on Hema Community, BANRDB-7 has immediately launched 'Operation Peace Horizon-4' to deter the armed activities retaliatory attacks in its AOR. This operation were meticulously planned incorporating patrols of neighbouring NEPBAT Contingent. The operational bases were highly mobile and covered almost all the hotspots including armed groups' likely routes of ingresses. This proactive response ensured protection of the civilians of both Hema and Lendu community and achieved almost the same effect of Targeted Offensive. Besides, BANRDB-7 also conducts regular helicopter reconnaissance and air inserted operations to demonstrate maximum force projection. Few pictorial glimpses are appended below:-

**Picture-4: Glimpses of BANRDB-7's Recent Operational Activities:
Operation Peace Horizon-4 and Air Inserted Patrol**



Source: Author's collection

Quick Dispersion of Critical Air Assets: On 26 January 2025, immediately before the fall of Goma, Bangladesh Armed Utility Helicopter Unit -1 quickly dispersed from Goma Airport and within few hours, all 3 x MI 171 SH helicopters safely flew to Bunia. This was a very critical move that took place through very high-risk flying zones which ultimately saved the critical assets from complete destruction due to M23 offensive.

Preparation of Over Head Protection (OHP): Considering the future security dynamics, all Bangladeshi Contingents have already started preparing the OHP. Due to resource and budgetary constraints, contingents are modifying available containers into safe bunkers. In addition, few dug-in bunkers are also being prepared. Picture of a container based OHP is given below:-

Diagram-2: OHP of Bangladesh Headquarters Support and Signal Company-19



Source: Author's self-construct

Countering Threats from the Drones: Bangladeshi contingents are also adopting both active and passive Counter Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) measures for hostile drones. Any unidentified drones flying above the bases and convoys are considered as hostile and are actively engaged immediately upon detection. Besides, procurement of anti drone guns, equipment and sensors through Bangladesh Army and also MONUSCO Forces Headquarters are on the process. In this connection, few pictures are shown below:-

Picture-5: Air Sentry Observing and Ready to Engage Hostile Drones in the Operational Bases of BANRDB-7



Source: Author's collection

Operation Secure Harvest-4: This operation was conducted by BANRDB-7 and also proved to be very effective in securing the crops of the local Congolese in Ituri. Amid anti MONUSCO sentiment in other parts of Eastern DRC, Operation Secure Harvest proved to be very effective in building positive image among the locals. This year, BANRDB-7 could secure harvest of more than 3,00,00 locals of different communities.²³ Few pictures are attached below:-

Picture-6: BANRDB-7 Patrols Securing Harvesting Sites in Ituri



Source: Author's collection

Conclusion

Conflict in Eastern DRC is deeply rooted in its ethnic and land issues. However, huge deposition of mineral resources along its eastern boundary and strategies of her neighbours would remain as main factors in shaping the dynamics of its future conflict. M23 since inception is playing crucial role in North Kivu. Recent offensive and controlling over the provinces indicates materializing their outstanding political intention. Their unprecedented success against the FARDC/Wazalendu and other coalition may lure the other armed groups to materialize their objectives. As such, situation in Ituri is likely to deteriorate following the increased activities by CODECO, Zaire and ADF. Accordingly, the protection of civilians will continue to be more challenging tasks for all contingents. Besides, due to growing anti-MONUSCO sentiment and targeting MONUSCO force the issue of force protection needs to be duly considered in future.

Bangladeshi Contingents instrumental role in MONUSCO needs to continue despite of its inherent challenge of balancing between the mandated tasks and gradually transformation to the MONUSCO disengagement process. Due to present security dynamics, they need to emphasize more on efficient alert response system and also project themselves aggressively for ensuring overall protection of the civilians. Last but not the least, force protection issue needs to be duly focused specially at the event any direct and indirect attack by the armed group.

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Brief Biography



Colonel Mohammad Tariq Hossain, afwc, psc was commissioned in Mighty Sixers-the 6th East Bengal Regiment in December 1999. He attended a good number of courses both at home and abroad. He is a graduate from the Defence Services Command and Staff College, National Defence College Mirpur and attained Masters in Defence Studies Degree from the National University. Besides serving in his parent unit, he served in Roaring Nineteen -the 19th East Bengal Regiment (Support Battalion) and also commanded Atandro Atanno-the 58th East Bengal Regiment. As Staff Officer, he served as General Staff Officer-3 (Operations) in Headquarters 203 Infantry Brigade, as Brigade Major in Headquarters 72 Infantry Brigade, as General Staff Officer-1 in Military Training Directorate, General Staff Officer-1 (Training) in Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) and as Colonel Staff in Overseas Operations Directorate in Army Headquarters. As Instructor, he served as Instructor Class B in School of Infantry and Tactics (Tactics Wing) and as Instructor Class A in BIPSOT. Under blue helmet, the officer has served as the Company Second in Command and Military Observer in UNMIL, Liberia. Presently, Colonel Tariq is serving as the Deputy Sector Commander in Headquarters Northern Sector of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO)

Bangladesh's Commitment to UN Peacekeeping: Role in Conflict Management and Peace Science Perspective

Commander Mohammad Abu Syed, (TAS), psc, BN

Introduction

Its a world-wide phenomena that several conflicts jeopardize the safety and security of entire areas. UN peacekeeping deployments are crucial in addressing these disputes and advocating for the entire affected region. Bangladesh is one of the major contributors to such peacekeeping efforts. Bangladesh has been contributing with military superlative personnel to restore peace through different mission's at the most complex conflict areas. For Bangladesh, UN peacekeeping is more than just dispatching troops to the edge of nowhere. It is not a matter of intervening or ignoring but answering the call to help infighting nations around in preserving peace and end uprising. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are spreading the message of peace in various conflict-ridden areas around the world. Large sections of Bangladesh Armed Forces and members of the police and other forces have played a glorious role by participating in UN peacekeeping operations.

In addition, they perform vital work-not only in protecting at-risk populations but helping to recover communities. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are playing an exemplary role in the construction of roads, facilities and medical services in different conflict-ridden countries. The significance of Bangladesh in UN peacekeeping has risen. More than ever peaceful forces are required with conflicts still on-going in parts of Africa, the Middle East and certain areas across Asia. Bangladesh's peacekeepers are known for their professionalism, discipline and commitment to the principles of peacekeeping. It is undeniable that Bangladesh has become a bright star in the UN peace mission and if contribution can be made to the maintenance of world peace then the image of Bangladesh in the comity of nations will be enhanced day by day.

This paper will initially highlight the impact of Bangladesh's contributions to UN peacekeeping. Thereafter, it will explore the impact of Bangladesh's contributions to UN peacekeeping specially highlighting the challenges and successes that Bangladeshi peacekeepers have encountered in the field. Finally, some strategy and future directions for Bangladesh will be projected out.

Historical Context and Background

Early Involvement: Bangladesh entered UN peacekeeping in 1988 with deployments in two operations viz. UNIIMOG in Iraq and UNTAG in Namibia.¹

After gaining independence in 1971, the country was still establishing its position in the world. Bangladesh wanted to improve its international status and demonstrate its commitment to peace by participating in peacekeeping. Bangladeshi peacekeepers with the Blue Helmet started the journey in 1988 and initially sent 15 observers to the UN Iraq-Iran military observer group mission (UNIIMOG). Since 1993, personnel from the Bangladesh Navy have been volunteering for the UN to keep the peace. 4399 Officers and Sailors have been deployed with honour and dedication in 29 UN military missions until now.² As part of DMZ enforcement, the first separate Bangladesh Navy contingent was sent to UNIKOM after the First Gulf War which took place in 1990-1991 (also known as the Persian Gulf War or Operation Desert Storm) to patrol the waters that marked the border between Iraq and Kuwait. In 2005, the Bangladesh Navy sent the first independent Force Riverine Unit to the UN Mission in Sudan, where it stayed until 2012. Bangladesh Navy also sent a boat detachment to the Ivory Coast in 2005, where it worked for 11 years in the lagoons of Abidjan. Since the beginning, Armed Forces personnel of Bangladesh have quickly responded to the UN's calls to improve global stability and safety by deploying troops to keep the peace. About 1,78,743 members of the Bangladesh Armed Forces have been sent to 63 peacekeeping missions and assignments in about 44 countries and places. With a total of 5,818 soldiers stationed in 10 countries, Bangladesh is one of the countries deploying the majority of forces.³

Photo 1: A Group of Bangladesh Navy Peacekeepers in 1993

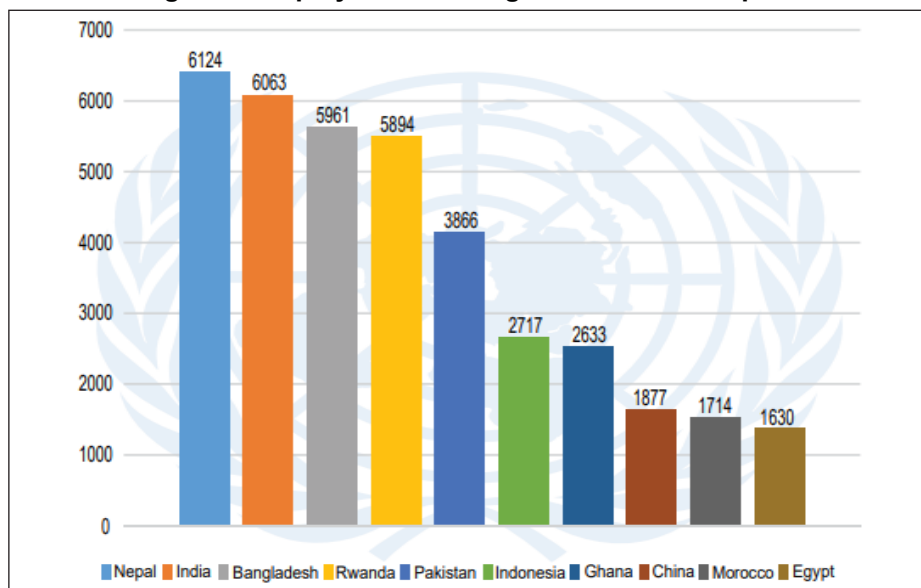


Source: <https://www.navy.mil.bd/Others>

Growth and Expansion: Bangladesh expanded its UN peacekeeping engagement in Africa, Middle East and Asia. The contribution to world peace and

security and the awareness that peacekeeping gave the Bangladeshi military vital experience and training drove this expansion. Bangladesh's peacekeeping contribution rose in terms of personnel and duties. Bangladeshi peacekeepers maintained ceasefires, protected civilians, provided humanitarian relief and rebuilt infrastructures. Bangladeshi troops performed engineering, medical and logistics duties in addition to military duties. As per 31 March 2024 data the contribution of UN peacekeepers in total is 5961 persons.⁴

Figure-1: Deployment of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers



Source: *International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers Journal*, Volume 10, Issue 10, Armed Forces Division, May 2024, p.viii.

Bangladesh gained reputation as a trustworthy and competent UN peacekeeper as its role developed. Bangladesh became a major UN peacekeeping contributor day by day. This was a major achievement for a country that had just earned freedom decades before. These missions strengthened the Bangladeshi military and established Bangladesh as a worldwide peacekeeper. Subsequently this led to increase the contribution of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers. As of 30 April 2024 the total contribution of UN peacekeepers is 6,092 persons.⁴

Table-1: Deployment of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers around the Globe

Ser.	Country/Location wise	Deployment
1.	DR Congo	2028
2.	South Sudan	1678
3.	CAR	1468
4.	Abyei	533
5.	Mali	215
6.	Lebanon	119
7.	Western Sahara	32
8.	UNHQ	11
9.	Sudan	02
10.	Cyprus	02
11.	Libya	02
12.	Ethiopia	01
13.	Yemen	01

Source: *International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers Journal*, Volume 10, Issue 10, Armed Forces Division, May 2024, p.vi.

Recognition and Impact: Bangladesh's efforts to UN peacekeeping have had a beneficial influence on conflict zones and global recognition. Bangladeshi troops have been lauded for their professionalism, efficiency and dedication to peacekeeping. Their activities have stabilized combat zones, protected populations and supported peace transitions in numerous places. This recognition has raised Bangladesh's worldwide position and strengthened diplomatic connections with other nations and organizations. In addition to worldwide prominence, Bangladeshis in peacekeeping operations have gained military training as well as operating experience. This has improved Bangladesh's military professionalism and effectiveness, boosting its global security contributions. With a lot of experience from sea missions, the Bangladesh Navy took on more risky tasks by being the first to send two ships, a Frigate and an Offshore Patrol vessel, to Lebanon in 2010 as part of the UN Maritime Task Force. Additionally, the Bangladesh Navy participated in United Nations Peacekeeping operations in a total of 29 different nations. Within the United Nations Peacekeeping operations, around 509 officers and sailors from the Bangladesh Navy are now serving as observers, members of the military staff, liaison officers, and contingent members. These personnel are currently stationed in Western Sahara, Liberia, Lebanon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Darfur, Central African Republic and South Sudan.

Conflict Management Contributions

Troop Contributions: In the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Bangladesh has emerged as one of the leading Troops and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCC).⁵ Hundreds of Bangladeshi peacekeepers have supported global conflicts in various missions. These personnel are regularly deployed in dangerous areas where peacekeeping is crucial. In numerous crisis zones, Bangladeshi troops have stabilized violence and fostered peace. Besides monitoring ceasefires and safeguarding people, these forces have helped distribute humanitarian assistance.⁶ Before peacekeeping operations, they undertake intense training that makes them adaptable. Training includes military skills, cultural awareness, conflict resolution and international humanitarian law. This thorough preparation equips Bangladeshi troops for current peacekeeping deployments. Many UN mission commanders have praised their professionalism and devotion in the field.

Photo 2: Peacekeepers engaged in salvage operation



Source: <https://www.navy.mil.bd/navy/photo-gallery/11>

Diverse Roles: Modern UN peacekeeping is diverse and Bangladeshi troops do more than fight. In various ways, engineers, medics, logisticians and other aid missions. Rebuilding war-torn infrastructure using Bangladeshi military is notable in engineering. War zone stability requires basic services and calm. Bangladeshi engineers helped restore and maintain roads, allowing people and products to travel. Infrastructure repair enabled peacekeepers move and improved communities' access to markets, healthcare and education.⁷ Bangladeshi forces have also provided medical treatment. Bangladeshi doctors have saved peacekeepers and civilians in combat zones without medical care.

Peacekeepers and villagers receive emergency and preventative medical care from these teams. Bangladeshi doctors treated patients in remote areas of Lebanon with inadequate resources.⁸ Bangladeshi peacekeepers coordinated UN troop, supply and equipment movements under tough conditions.

Photo 3: Doctors Giving Treatment to Patients in Remote Areas of Lebanon



Source: <https://www.navy.mil.bd/navy/photo-gallery/11>

Training and Preparedness: The extensive training Bangladeshi peacekeepers get before deployment helps them perform these different responsibilities. Gwyn Lewis very aptly remarks, “....the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) remains a cornerstone of effort to provide training to the next generation of peacekeepers, not only for those from Bangladesh but also from other troop contributing countries.”⁹ This training prepares peacekeepers for challenging and risky field circumstances. Bangladeshi personnel receive comprehensive instruction in cultural awareness to learn about their deployment zones’ traditions and nations. They improve their fieldwork and community relations with this training. Besides cultural sensitivity, Bangladeshi troops learn international humanitarian law. This training is essential for peacekeepers to follow UN and other international law. It also helps peacekeepers maintain neutrality, impartiality, and human rights, which are essential to UN mission legitimacy and effectiveness. Knowing and practicing these ideals helps Bangladeshi peacekeepers serve honestly and professionally. Bangladeshi troops are also trained for the physical and emotional requirements of peacekeeping. Peacekeepers face physical dangers, terrible weather and tremendous stress in difficult and dangerous situations. Peacekeepers must be prepared to serve under unfamiliar conditions.

Photo 4: Participating in Different Training to Serve Under Tough Conditions



Source: <https://www.navy.mil.bd/navy/photo-gallery/11>

Peace Science Perspectives

Effectiveness and Impact: Bangladesh's peacekeepers are competent and effective. They have reduced violence and stabilized belligerent zones in South Sudan, Congo and the Central African Republic. Their initiatives have helped manage conflicts and establish long-term peace and stability in certain places. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are effective due to their training, discipline and peacekeeping standards. They have maintained peace and security in some of the world's most dangerous and unstable locations. Bangladeshi troops have stabilized warring zones long-term as well as immediately. Bangladeshi troops have improved many UN operations.

Challenges: Bangladeshi peacekeepers deal with rules of engagement, resources, and operational challenges despite their contributions. Sometimes due to limitations, peacekeeping operations may lack crucial supplies and equipment. The complex structure of engagement rules is another issue. Peacekeepers perform duties in blurred combatant-civilian settings. This can make it hard to figure out when and how to deploy force, resulting in unavoidable issues at times. The rules of engagement guarantee peacekeepers follow international law, but they can sometimes complicate operations. These peacekeeping limitation shows constant improvement and adaptability are necessary for long-lasting stability and peace in any region.

Adaptation and Innovation: Bangladesh has quickly adapted to the changing demands of peacekeeping missions. By using advanced technology for communication and logistics, Bangladesh has improved its global peacekeeping operations. This includes adopting lessons learned from other missions, ensuring that peacekeepers are well-prepared for new

challenges. Bangladesh improves its global peacekeeping operations by using sophisticated technology for communication and logistics support from other missions. Satellites and drones help peacekeepers monitor conflict zones and gather intelligence. This has helped peacekeepers anticipate and respond to threats, lowering bloodshed and boosting mission security.

Strategic and Policy Implications

National Strategy: Bangladesh participates in UN peacekeeping deployments to promote global stability and improve its diplomatic status. Bangladesh has earned global recognition by sending troops, police and other personnel to some of the most dangerous conflict zones. Bangladesh's national strategy uses peacekeeping to project power and influence in international venues. This strategic placement boosts Bangladesh's influence in international forums like the UN General Assembly. It can advocate important matters for other developing nations. The Bangladesh Armed Forces use UN operations to improve their own capacity and contribute to world peace as an extension of their defence and foreign policy. This dual approach helps Bangladesh improve its military's operational experience and professionalism. It also improves national security responses. Leading peacekeeping operations boosts the morale of the personnel of Bangladesh Armed Forces. Strategically, UN troop contribution payments are reinvested in the military to modernize it. Economic peacekeeping is crucial for Bangladesh since it generates cash for poverty alleviation and infrastructure development.

International Relations: Bangladesh's participation in UN peacekeeping operations has enhanced its relationship with other states and international organizations. Moreover, peacekeeping deployments allow Bangladesh to engage in military diplomacy with other states. Its military routinely collaborate with those of other big nations for creating trust. These exchanges improve peacekeeping missions and establish diplomatic and military relationships. Field connections may lead to larger collaboration in military, counterterrorism and disaster response. Bangladesh has good bilateral and multilateral partnerships because it is a trusted partner in global peace efforts through UN missions. These partnerships are crucial for Bangladesh's relations with major countries. Bangladesh has gained the respect and trust of these countries through its peacekeeping efforts, which has led to stronger diplomatic ties. Active involvement in UN missions, has gained the nation a reputation as a prominent contributor to world peace and security.

Future Directions

Bangladesh must invest in training, technology and strategic planning to sustain its UN peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping troops must be increasingly versatile, technologically advanced and strategically knowledgeable as global security threats change. Bangladesh must align its peacekeeping efforts with these growing standards and overcome operational issues to be a top UN peacekeeper.

Specialized Training: Future investment in training is crucial. As peacekeeping operations get increasingly complicated, highly trained individuals who can handle a variety of situations are needed more than ever. Bangladesh must invest in peacekeeper training to ensure they can work effectively in diverse and risky areas. This training should cover military skills and conflict resolution, human rights and cultural awareness. To equip Bangladeshi troops for field difficulties, training programmes should be updated to incorporate the newest peacekeeping techniques and technology.

Technological Developments: Technology investment is another priority. Technology is essential to modern peacekeeping operations. It is improving efficiency and safety. Bangladesh must invest in cutting-edge communication, surveillance and logistical support technologies to preserve its UN peacekeeping leadership. These tools can enable Bangladeshi peacekeepers monitor combat zones, collaborate with other troops and respond to new threats. Technological integration into peacekeeping operations may also boost mission efficiency, reduce resource waste and human danger.

Adaptation of Modern Strategy: Strategic planning is needed for Bangladesh's peacekeeping operations to succeed. Bangladesh must be proactive in modifying its peacekeeping techniques to changing global crises. This requires strategic planning that considers peacekeeping operations' immediate demands and the geopolitical context in which they operate. By creating and executing forward-looking initiatives, Bangladesh can maintain its relevance of peacekeeping efforts and achieve success in a changing world. Bangladesh may need to solve field operating issues in the future. Bangladesh must also adapt its peacekeeping to changing international norms. As the UN refines its peacekeeping strategy, Bangladesh must lead. Bangladesh must work closely with the UN and other international partners to ensure its peacekeeping efforts meet the newest standards and best practices.

Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Post-conflict peace building should be another future focus for Bangladesh. Peacekeeping operations traditionally prioritize conflict prevention, but there is growing awareness of the need to promote long-term stability and development in post-conflict zones. Bangladesh's peacekeeping expertise may help reconstruct infrastructure, support government and the rule of law and promote economic growth. Bangladesh can boost post-conflict peace building to guarantee that its peacekeeping efforts last and that damaged regions can recover and prosper.

Advancing Women Empowerment: In line with Action for Peacekeeping Declaration (A4P) and its implementation plan A4P+, Bangladesh is prioritizing women in peacekeeping operations.¹⁰ In conflict resolution, community involvement and vulnerable population protection, women in peacekeeping operations improve mission performance. Bangladesh may make its peacekeeping deployments more inclusive and better serve all community members by increasing the number of female troops. Bangladesh's progressive and responsible international reputation is enhanced by this focus on gender equality in peacekeeping, which corresponds with worldwide initiatives to encourage women in peace and security. Gwyn Lewis further avers, "Diverse peacekeeping teams that include more women help to better reflect the communities we serve and make peacekeeping operations more effective."¹¹

Conclusion

Bangladesh's contributions to UN peacekeeping missions are demonstrating its commitment to global peace and stability. Bangladesh has become a major peacekeeping force in the world. It is sending well-trained, disciplined and devoted personnel to some of the world's most difficult conflict zones. This persistent dedication has stabilized many regions. It raised Bangladesh's worldwide status as a peace, security and humanitarian nation. Bangladeshi peacekeepers professionalism and ability to adapt to different and harsh circumstances have gained them broad praise and solidified Bangladesh's role in global peacekeeping.

Bangladesh may adapt and innovate to preserve its peacekeeping efficacy as global conflicts change. Bangladeshi peacekeepers confront complicated rules of engagement, resource restrictions and operational issues that require continual training, technology and strategic planning. Bangladesh must overcome these hurdles to maintain its UN peacekeeping leadership. Bangladesh is determined to stay at the forefront of global peacekeeping and equipped to adapt to new security challenges by aligning its peacekeeping activities with growing international standards and best practices.

Bangladesh's peacekeeping future depends on its ability to invest in advanced training, technical innovation and strategic planning. Bangladesh can improve its peacekeepers and prepare them for current operations by focusing on these areas. Bangladesh's global peace and security efforts will be strengthened by strengthening its post-conflict peace building role and include women in peacekeeping operations.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis and discussion above, the following recommendations may help in future:-

- a. The Bangladesh Armed Forces Training Department may enhance and update their training programs annually. The training should include advanced military skills, conflict resolution techniques. The latest peacekeeping technologies and strategies must be taught to ensure that Bangladeshi peacekeepers are always ready to perform their duties effectively.
- b. The Ministry of Defence may invest in modern technological capabilities over the next 5 years, with a phased implementation plan. This investment should focus on both Bangladesh and deployed UN mission areas. It also ensures that peacekeepers are equipped with advanced communication systems, surveillance tools and logistical technologies in high conflict zones.
- c. Bangladeshi peacekeepers may put emphasis on post-conflict peace building efforts throughout their missions. So that Bangladesh can participate in rebuilding infrastructure, supporting governance and promoting economic development.

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Brief Biography



Commander Mohammad Abu Syed, (TAS), psc, BN joined Bangladesh Navy on 01 June 2002. He was commissioned in the Executive branch on 01 June 2004. After commission, he completed his Executive Officers Basic Course (XOBC) from BNS ISSA KHAN and attained his Watch Keeping Certificate from Ex-BNS OSMAN. He did Special Warfare Basic Course from Naval Special Warfare Training School, South Korea. He served in the Special Security Force (SSF) as Assistant Director & Deputy Director as well. He has completed the 6th Torpedo Anti-Submarine Specialization Course from BNS ISSA KHAN and 38th BN JSC from Bangladesh Naval Academy. He has served as an ADC to the Honourable President. He is a graduate of Defence Services Command & Staff College, Mirpur, Dhaka. He has served in various ships and establishments of Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Coast Guard. Mentionable are SO (Sig) to CG/West Zone, TASO & TCO of EX BNS OMAR FAROOQ, SO (I) to DNI/NHQ. His last appointment was Commanding Officer of BNS APARAJEYA.

UN Peacekeeping Operations: Leading the Way to Zero Carbon Footprints for a Sustainable Future

Major Shajeda Akter Moni, BSP, psc

Introduction

The connection between climate change and peacekeeping poses a daunting task for UN peacekeeping missions, which have to react to the urgency of environmental sustainability, security and peace simultaneously. As global warming is fast turning into a daily reality, demand for environmentally friendly solutions is being given growing priority. The UN has shown the necessity to reduce the ecological footprint of its operations, especially in areas already ravaged by the impacts of climate change and torn apart by conflict. As these areas have little resources, peacekeeping footprint is further emphasized. Peacekeeping, involving massive logistics support like waste management, energy generation, and mobility, is equally a significant source of carbon emissions. Peacekeeping adds to the environmental footprint of missions through the establishment of infrastructure and temporary bases. The UN has committed to reducing its environmental footprint using zero-carbon policy as the global climatic crisis continues to exacerbate vulnerabilities in such missions. This pledge ensures that ecological sustainability and long-term well-being will not be compromised in the interest of peacekeeping activities.

One of the most noticeable aspects of the UN strategy is to incorporate renewable energy in peacekeeping missions. In order to avoid carbon emissions, the UN will cut down the use of fossil fuels by incorporating renewable energy sources like solar and wind. Energy-efficient technology like LED light and low-emission vehicles, and waste treatment system also play an important role in promoting the UN's sustainability agenda. Furthermore, as a move towards reducing the environmental footprint of peacekeeping operations, the implementation of these principles encourages a culture of sustainability by the regions subject to such operations. The discussion that follows is on how UN Peacekeeping Operations are transforming to address climate changes by embracing sustainable practices. From this study, it is apparent how such practices are assisting in the reduction of emissions while fostering resilience and sustainable peace in impacted regions. The UN is trying to illustrate that peace and environmental sustainability are complementary and can reinforce one another through innovation, partnerships and green technologies.

Eco-Friendly Strategies in Peacekeeping

Adoption of Fuel-Efficient Vehicles: The utilization of fuel-efficient vehicles and equipment is a vital method of emission reduction in peacekeeping missions. The utilization of diesel vehicles in traditional peacekeeping missions has heightened carbon emissions substantially. Nonetheless, the United Nations is progressively investing in hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs) for applications such as transportation, convoys and peacekeeping bases. Apart from being energy efficient, these vehicles lower the need for fossil fuels, which sometimes are expensive and extremely difficult to transport to conflict zones. EVs also minimize noise as well as air pollution, making the environment cleaner for peacekeepers and residents.¹

Integration of Solar-Powered and Renewable Energy Equipment: The United Nations in peacekeeping operations is embracing the use of renewable energy sources, especially solar-powered equipment and the use of electric vehicles. Solar is the most feasible and cheapest source of renewable energy in most areas of operation. For the generation of power for essential equipment like lighting, water pumps and communication devices, the UN has set up solar panels at their camps.² The avoidable expense and logistic burden of diesel generators and their adverse effect on the environment can be reduced significantly with the use of solar energy. Peacekeeping missions can be made more efficient and at the same time, reduce their carbon footprint by embracing solar energy. Further, to make potable water independent of fuel-dependent technology, solar-driven water purification plants are being introduced, with the objective of reducing carbon emission and logistics complexity.³











Sustainable Transport and Logistics Initiatives: The other main source of emission for UN peacekeeping missions is transport and logistics. This is being tackled by the UN through low-carbon emission transport procedures, supply chains and mission logistics in general. This entails the use of more sustainable materials for building, packaging and food provision. Apart from its attempts at curbing its use of fossil fuels in the movement of individuals and goods, the organization also seeks alternative sources of fuel like biofuels.⁴ The UN also invests in supply chain systems that are more efficient, use less fuel and limit excessive transit. As a result, there is reduced environmental degradation and carbon release in the immediate deployment site environment.

Water Conservation and Waste Management: In order to minimize their environmental footprint, UN peacekeeping missions also focus greatly on water conservation and waste management. Waste management and pollution

are some of the greatest issues in conflict zones, where environmental damage can be leveraged to propagate already tense conditions. Peacekeeping missions are taking up more sustainable methods of waste management in a bid to put this to an end. These include cutting single-use plastics in UN camps, recycling and treating organic waste. To limit the carbon footprint of food transport, the UN is also trying to cut food waste and supply food locally. In a bid to reduce water loss where there is not much, peacekeeping missions now come with water-conserving technologies like rainwater harvesting systems and very low water usage toilets.

Utilization of Digital Technology for Enhanced Operational Effectiveness: Utilization of digital technology for communication and coordination is one of the key approaches that can be used to reduce the environmental footprint involved in peacekeeping operations. Previously, a lot of physical movement was employed for communication and coordination between field offices, mission headquarters and local governments in the scenario of traditional peacekeeping operations. In turn, emissions from travel translated into the production of a high carbon footprint. However, to promote coordination and provide avenues for effortless sharing of information, the United Nations is increasingly using electronic platforms and tools like cloud communication systems, videoconferencing and e-meetings. These digital technologies reduce transport-related emissions by cutting down on dependence on movement and it is an environmentally friendly method of peacekeeping.

Table 1: Eco-friendly approaches in peacekeeping

Eco-Friendly Approach	Impact
Energy-Efficient Vehicles  	Reduces fuel use, air pollution and costs; lowers noise pollution; enhances sustainability in conflict zones.
Solar-Powered Equipment  	Cuts reliance on diesel generators; provides renewable energy for lighting, water pumps and communication systems.
Eco-Friendly Logistics  	Reduces carbon emissions from supply chains; promotes sustainable packaging, alternative fuels and efficient transportation.
Water & Waste Management  	Minimizes pollution; promotes rainwater harvesting, waste reduction and sustainable sanitation.
Digital Communication  	Reduces travel-related emissions by using cloud-based platforms, video conferencing and remote coordination.

Source: Author’s self-construct

Case Studies

Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO): In an effort to minimize its footprint on the globe, MONUSCO in DRC has done much to incorporate the use of renewable energy resources. One of the greatest attempts is the setting up of solar panels in various camps. Solar power in DRC, in which the use of diesel-operated generators is logistically as well as ecologically problematic and shipping fuel generally proves to be costly and complex, is significantly pertinent. MONUSCO has increased energy reliability and lowered its carbon footprint significantly by moving away from these generators to solar energy. A systematic waste management system with a focus on material minimization, recycling and reuse has also been put in place by MONUSCO. To recycle paper, metal and plastic effectively, the mission's waste management system places utmost importance on segregation of waste at the source. Composting of organic waste supplies nutrients to the surrounding soil and reduces the application of chemical fertilizers.⁵

Photo 1: Installing public lighting in the locality of Karuba, in Masisi territory (MONUSCO)



Source: Ong COMOA / Guillain Mulimbwa

Mali (MINUSMA): The energy-saving technologies are integrated into the MINUSMA camps as a component of its green infrastructure initiative in Mali. Some of the infrastructures have energy-saving air conditioners and light-emitting diodes for lighting, reducing the overall use of energy. The improvements have reduced the mission's impact on the environment, particularly in a region where diesel generators are the norm for energy and

electricity is typically scarce. MINUSMA has introduced solar and wind energy into its energy supply infrastructure in addition to these technologies. Through the reduced use of fossil fuels by the mission, the use of the renewable energy technologies has cut down emissions. In order to make the mission sustainable even in the unforgiving desert climate, solar-powered water pumping stations have replaced diesel generators for water supply. The wastewater treatment plants and water-conserving materials are fitted in the camps, reducing waste and saving water, a valuable resource in the Sahel.⁶

South Sudan (UNMISS): The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has included a number of sustainable measures in its overall operations. The most prominent among them are rainwater harvesting systems in camps and bases. These systems capture and harvest rainwater, which is a steady and sustainable supply of water for peacekeepers and the local community. UNMISS reduces the impact on local water resources through rainwater harvesting, especially where freshwater is not easily accessible. UNMISS has also replaced diesel with solar-powered water pumps that have reduced the mission's carbon footprint.⁷ Apart from reducing greenhouse gas emissions as an indirect consequence of the lack of importation and transportation of fuel, solar systems are a low-cost solution. In order to decrease the mission's reliance on diesel generators and enhance sustainability, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has also been outfitted with solar street lights within the camps.⁸

Photo 2: Waste management and recycling in Aweil (UNMISS)



Source: UNMISS website⁹

Lebanon (UNIFIL): For patrol and transportation, UNIFIL should embrace hybrid electric vehicles to realize radical emissions reduction and fuel savings. Hybrid cars are viable for field use, where challenging terrain and security concerns necessitate wide mobilization and transportation. Using less fuel enables UNIFIL to maintain the presence it needs while reducing the carbon footprint of its activities. Regarding waste management, UNIFIL has made great strides by establishing a recycling program and composting food scraps. This effort minimizes the environmental burden on surrounding communities as less waste is diverted to landfills. Furthermore, the mission champions eco-friendly packaging for food deliveries and goods sent to the camps to avoid plastic dependence.¹⁰

Haiti (MINUSTAH): Wherever the mission could accomplish necessary functions without the dependency on sporadic grid electricity or dirty diesel generators-MINUSTAH also installed solar lights and communication systems. These solar systems guaranteed that should the need arise, mission operations would be sustained, while also decreasing the cost of operations and carbon footprint. In addition, MINUSTAH recycled heavily within its camps. Food scraps were composted, plastics were recycled and materials were used to integrate into local infrastructure. Reducing waste was beneficial but also aided sustainable efforts regionally by better utilizing materials at hand.¹¹

Central African Republic (MINUSCA): MINUSCA utilized the technology of tomorrow to guarantee peace and sustainability in the Central African Republic. For example, the mission used solar lamps in its base camps instead of diesel generators. This type of energy consumption reduction also negates the need for logistical maneuvering in transporting fuel. In addition, MINUSCA advocated the use of sustainable materials for construction projects, emphasizing renewable resources and local resources where applicable. This creates opportunities for local merchants and labour where sustainability efforts would increase costs elsewhere while simultaneously boosting the economy.¹²

Implementing Sustainability Presents Difficulties

However, there are many pressing issues that challenge carbon neutrality that may slow or complicate sustainable integration down the line in sensitive, complicated situations, apart from the UN's implementation of sustainability in peacekeeping endeavours.

Access and Reliability: Perhaps two of the biggest obstacles to sustainability in peacekeeping are the access and reliability of conflict zones. Many of the areas in which peacekeeping missions take place are remote,

active combat zones and underdeveloped. They do not have the support systems available to engage in renewable energy with wind turbines and solar panels. Furthermore, these areas complicate transporting materials and people. Supply operations rely on traditional fuel sources because they are the most convenient; renewables are not available or cannot conveniently be used in third-world/second-world countries. Therefore, the use of diesel fuel and other traditional energy sources adds to the carbon footprint for those agencies whose operations are worldwide-and ongoing. Transitioning to sustainable operations gets progressively more complex.

Budgetary Constraints: Peacekeeping is also a significant obstacle to sustainability in the budgetary realm. Whereas sustainable technology saves and pays dividends further down the line, the complicated peacekeeping budget necessary for energy-efficient vehicles or solar installation systems simply doesn't. Most peacekeeping missions have such strict budgetary constraints that there is a post-hoc trade-off between sustainability and operational and security concerns. This is because there is inviable financing for the upfront expenses of sustainable technology since temporary peacekeeping missions must prioritize security and humanitarian goals. The innovations never occur because installing renewable energies and other sustainability initiatives are too expensive and such technologies are not seen as a higher operational priority.

Change Aversions: Change aversion is another barrier to peacekeeping sustainable efforts. Many peacekeeping operations do not realize or understand the value of environmentally friendly efforts in peacekeeping operations; thus, they're resistant to other sustainable technologies. For example, many missions are concerned with operational effectiveness; peacekeepers may believe that changing what they're doing will interfere with their policies or make time for essential operations too extended. Some peacekeeping operations are so used to utilizing traditional fuel and its related logistical patterns that switching to more sustainable approaches is seen as an unnecessary effort or a burden. Therefore, to overcome this resistance takes a cultural shift of the organization and a training effort for staff to understand sustainability's benefits for mission effectiveness and environmental health over the long term.

Cooperation and Alliances

Sustainability in UN peacekeeping operations will require the assistance of key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and local communities. A partnership approach is necessary to guarantee peacekeeping efforts are sufficiently supported to meet their environmental obligations while

simultaneously continuing their peacebuilding efforts. In this way, the UN can access resources from various sectors to implement sustainable practices that benefit the need of the area ravaged by war and the global need for decreased carbon footprints.

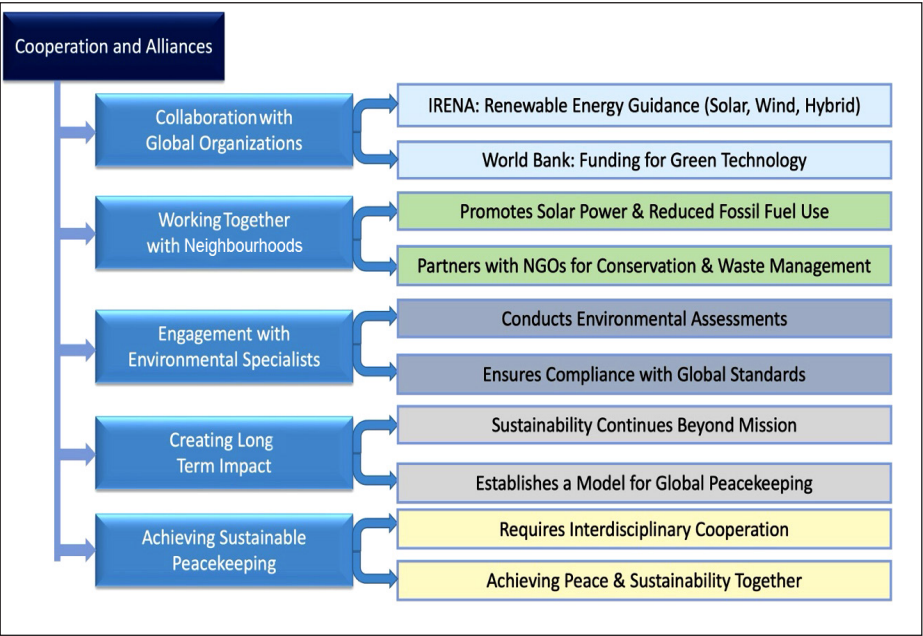
Collaborative Efforts with International Agencies: The UN collaborates with the World Bank and IRENA. Across peacekeeping efforts, sustainable technological implementation is more likely with learned efforts through IRENA. For instance, IRENA consults on whether solar or wind is better for a specific region (or hybrid). Collaboration frequently affords sustainable energy options during and thereafter, as well. In addition, the World Bank facilitates payment plans for renewable resource efforts and therefore minimizes financial restraints that might delay work. With a peacekeeping focus, efforts can be made at a fair price to adjust the operation sustainably without sacrificing intent for which the mission was established.

Sustainable Solutions with Community for Neighbours: The UN partners with communities for neighbouring populations and peacekeeping endeavours to create sustainable solutions. When the UN arrives in war-torn areas, sometimes the environmental concern that the UN brings is just as fatal. Thus, the UN assists communities in creating sustainable livelihoods, minimizing the environmentally detrimental aspects of what the UN does. For example, the UN partners with communities to create sustainable energy solutions, solar panels are often preferred so that reliance upon wood, a need for fossil fuels and fuel sources is lessened. Workshops are often included for sustainability. Furthermore, the UN works in tandem with community nonprofits to teach and learn best practices for conservation, sustainability and management of resources to foster resiliency and stable sustenance.

Interaction with Environmental Auditors: Many peacekeeping operations now employ environmental consultants to help reduce their overall carbon footprint during operations without sacrificing the mission of peace and security. Environmental assessments and planning occur through specialized environmental auditors who work with the peacekeeping forces to assess reduced emissions, natural resource usages, and long-term sustainability. For example, strategic waste management, “green” oriented itinerant technology, and temporary or permanent structures are recommended as supplementary troubleshooting ventures for peacekeepers tasked with international peace and security yet operating with limited resources. Deployed environmental auditors reassess emissions and resource usage post mission to ensure sustainability intentions remain on course and that operations are in compliance with global environmental standards.

Long-Term Benefits of Sustainability: Because the UN and larger organizations, localized communities and environmental specialists are involved, sustainability creates environmental advantages in the long run. The UN minimizes organizational carbon emissions-with peacekeeping endeavors leading to sustainable gains-but also, it brings a beneficial byproduct to any region in which it operates for it successfully internationalizes sustainability within its peacekeeping operations. Thus, many of the projects and collaborations sustained during peacekeeping missions last beyond the mission's natural conclusion so the insight gained and sustainability efforts enacted show potential for continued community upshots and future peacekeeping missions.

Figure 1: Flowchart of cooperation and alliances in peacekeeping operations for sustainability

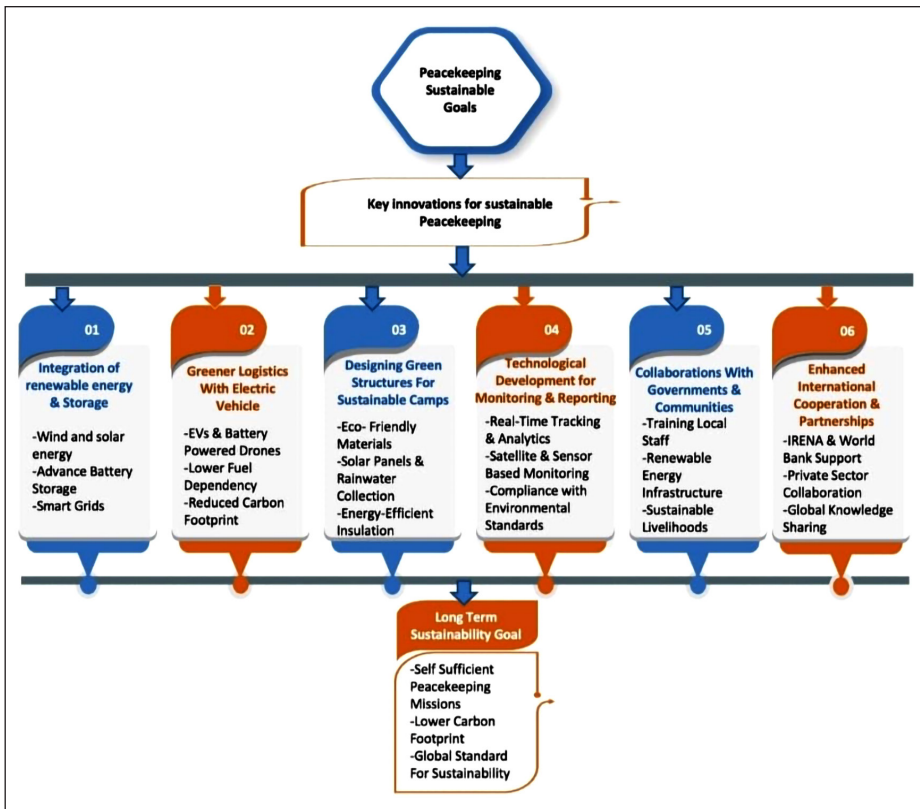


Source: Author's self-construct

Future Trends for Sustainable Peacekeeping

New, sustainable and effective technologies are expected to enhance UN peacekeeping operations in the future. New industries, like developments in battery technology, electrification and green buildings will reduce the peacekeepers' carbon footprint while rendering operations more effective.

Figure 2: Future developments in sustainable peacekeeping



Source: Author's self-construct

Renewable Energy and Energy Storage Integration: Wind, solar and other intermittent sources of renewable energy have great potential for use in peacekeeping operations, but they may be difficult to sustain a consistent energy production. An important technology needed to remedy this is an energy storage technology. With advanced battery technology, peacekeeping operations will be able to harness excess energy produced during times of overproduction to use during times when renewable energy production wanes. Such a necessity will ensure that energy consumption is consistent in remote areas of conflict where local energy infrastructures are few and far between, or nonexistent. In addition to storage batteries, smart grids will be necessary to control energy output. These technologies can control energy output in real-time to maximize renewable use and allow peacekeeping operations to depend upon fossil fuels to a lesser extent. By coupling energy storage with smart grids, UN operations can increase energy reliability and decrease the carbon footprint.

Greener Logistics with Electric Vehicles: Transportation is another significant area where sustainable improvements would be beneficial. Casual peacekeeping operations release a lot of greenhouse gases due to conventional fueled vehicles. Switching to electric vehicles (EVs) can significantly reduce the carbon footprint. Currently, battery technology has advanced to a point where using EVs for peacekeeping operations is practical, as they possess longer ranges, lower maintenance costs, and reduced environmental impact. In war-torn regions, fewer EVs are needed for fossil fuel transportation and refueling. In addition, using electric-powered drones for transport and surveillance during peacekeeping operations minimizes emissions and transportation expenses. In addition, since EVs have lower maintenance costs and operating needs than conventional vehicles, such a sustainable improvement would pave the way for cost-effective operations for peacekeeping efforts as well.

Greening Camp Designs for Sustainable Operations: One of the easiest ways to incorporate sustainability into peacekeeping operations is through green building. The anticipated peacekeeping camps are constructed with the expectation of temporary structures as well, using unsustainable materials and practices. Although this is detrimental to the environment significantly, peacekeeping operations can minimize their carbon footprint and sustainable efforts by implementing green building practices where necessary, such as low impact or renewable resources, for construction. For example, if structures are constructed out of recycled materials, bamboo, or rammed earth, then less high-carbon intensive materials like concrete will be used. In addition, procedures that include sustainable design-solar, rainwater catching, energy-efficient insulation-reduce reliance on water and power generation which increases the autonomy of the camps. Ultimately, peacekeeping operations can be more environmentally friendly while on the ground-and change the sustainability and resiliency of their infrastructure-by reducing negative impacts to ecosystems in which they reside and thrive through such green building options.

New Technologies for Reporting and Assessment: Tracking and assessing environmental developments is needed to ensure peacekeeping missions adhere to sustainability goals. Advanced technology devices would allow for real-time assessments of emissions, consumption, and environmental impact. Sensors, satellite devices, and analytics will empower peacekeeping missions to assess progress, identify deficiencies, and readjust. In addition, with international environmental standards for peacekeeping missions-allowing the UN to maintain transparency in both environmental and peacekeeping efforts-such devices to assess ongoing developments will ensure compliance. Mission

leaders will also benefit from real-time collection assessment to acknowledge sustainable efforts and potential environmental hazards. This ensures that short-term sustainability attempts can be successful in the long term.

Collaborations with Governments and Local Communities: For the successful adoption of these sustainable innovations, strong collaborations with regional governments and communities will be necessary. In addition, localized involvement not only creates buy-in and sustainable future prospects, but it will ensure that the UN develops technology for each mission area' particular needs and difficulties. UN intervention with local governments will create the appropriate atmosphere to facilitate electric vehicles, sustainable architecture, and alternative energy projects. Furthermore, working in conjunction with percolated communities can foster sustainable and green ways of life so that such projects go beyond peacekeeping efforts. It's important that this collaboration involves training locals in the operation and maintenance of sustainable technology. Peacekeeping sustainability projects will be transferable, successfully and sustainably.

Greater International and Private Sector Collaboration: Greater collaboration with private sector and international entities is also necessary to establish such endeavors. Partnerships with the World Bank and IRENA would allow for peacekeeping missions to obtain necessary funding and cutting-edge technology. Such partnerships would also create information-sharing venues that equip peacekeeping missions with the know-how needed to successfully integrate sustainable technologies. Working in conjunction with private-sector providers of technology could guarantee that peacekeeping missions receive the most up-to-date, efficient, and affordable options. Utilizing local stakeholders, technology providers, and international organizations can allow the UN to replicate such efforts on a wider scale and accomplish great feats in the name of more sustainable peacekeeping efforts.

Long-Term Goals for Sustainable Peacekeeping: When sustainable innovations are incorporated into peacekeeping operations, there are substantial long-term advantages for the environment and peacebuilding initiatives. If these technologies are developed and scaled, peacekeeping operations will become more ecologically conscious, self-sufficient, and energy-efficient. By showing how peacekeeping missions may support climate action while carrying out their primary duty of preserving security and peace, these modifications will establish a global standard for sustainability in conflict areas. Energy storage, electric vehicles, green construction plans, and sophisticated monitoring systems must be developed and put into use for

successful and sustainable future peacekeeping missions. By creating a more resilient, environmentally conscious peacekeeping structure and working with governments, local communities, and international partners the UN can set the standard for environmental responsibility.

Conclusion

A zero-carbon footprint for UN peacekeeping operations in accordance with both global climate agendas as well as peacebuilding agendas, though ambitious, is an imperative aspiration. As the UN's commitment to sustainability underscores, peacekeeping has the potential to leave a positive footprint on the environment and society. Through the deployment of green technologies, the harnessing of renewable energy sources, and encouraging eco-friendly behaviors peacekeepers are lessening their environmental effect and establishing a benchmark for ethical operations in conflict areas.

Innovation takes centre stage in this transition. Emerging technologies in energy storage, electric vehicles, and green infrastructure are crucial in reducing the carbon footprint of peace operations. The technologies facilitate sustainability and scalability over the long term, as well as partnerships and collaborations with governments, local populations and international organizations. In order that we can ensure sustainable measures are not just included in peacekeeping missions but also build resilience in the areas where the operations are deployed, joint efforts also facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise.

Continued investment in environmental responsibility and sustainability in peacekeeping will yield long-term benefits. It also reduces the adverse environmental consequences of conflict, clearing the path for societies to move out of conflict and become more resilient, as well as helping towards the achievement of global climate goals. In short, by showing that environmental protection and the quest for global peace are not incompatible but can instead be complementary to each other in order to help construct a more sustainable future, UN peacekeeping operations set an example of integrating sustainability with peace.

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Brief Biography



Major Shajeda Akter Moni, BSP, psc was commissioned on 31 Dec 2002 with 47 BMA Long Course in the Artillery Corps. On being commissioned, she was posted to 2 Field Regiment Artillery at Cumilla Cantonment. She attended different military training both at home and abroad. As part of extra regimental appointments, she has served as Staff Captain in Personnel Administration Directorate, Army Headquarters and as Deputy Assistant Adjutant General in 10 Infantry Division. Her tri- service experience includes serving as an Instructor at BIPSOT and GSO-2 (TS) at Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC). She is a graduate from DSCSC, Mirpur. She has served as the Second in Command of an Artillery Regiment. In the international platform she has participated in UN as a Staff Officer in Ivory Coast and as an Operations Officer in South Sudan. She has worked with UN Women, New York as an international Instructor of Female Military Officers Course for quite a long time. It is worth mentioning that as a recognition of her outstanding performance during Rohingya crisis in Cox's Bazar she is awarded with Distinguished Service Medal (BSP) by the Bangladesh Army. She has authored a number of articles in both national and international journals. Presently the officer is serving as Deputy Director at Research Centre of Bangladesh University of Professionals.

Greening the Blue Helmets: A Study of Bangladesh Army's Peacekeeping Operations through the Lens of Ostrom's Social-Ecological Systems Framework

Colonel G M Sohag, SGP, afwc, psc

Introduction

The United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO), often referred to as the "Blue Helmets," play a crucial role in maintaining peace and stability in conflict-affected regions around the world.¹ But these operations are not without their environmental impacts, as the peacekeepers and the equipment deployed may unintentionally damage ecosystems, deplete natural resources, or contribute to pollution in host countries.² Infact, the environmental impact of these missions has often been overlooked, as the focus is primarily on maintaining peace and security. Hence, the concept of greening the blue helmets emerged as a response to the increasing recognition of the environmental challenges faced by peacekeeping missions, including pollution, deforestation and resource depletion. As such, the need to "green" peacekeeping operations, by incorporating sustainable practices that minimize environmental harm and promote community well-being is a requirement of the time.

While Bangladesh Army has made significant contributions to UN peacekeeping missions, there is limited research on the environmental and social impacts of its operations. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the integration of green practices in Bangladesh Army's peacekeeping operations, and how these practices contribute to sustainable peacebuilding. By applying Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom's³ Social-Ecological Systems (SES) Framework, this study aims to analyze the interactions between the Bangladesh Army, host communities, and the environment in the context of peacekeeping missions. It is to be mentioned that Elinor Ostrom's SES Framework is a theoretical and analytical tool used to understand and study the complex interactions between human societies and the environment.⁴ The framework is based on Ostrom's extensive research on the governance of common pool resources, such as forests, fisheries and water bodies. It also emphasizes the interconnectedness of social and ecological systems, highlighting the importance of considering environmental factors in decision-making processes.⁵ By applying the SES Framework, this study may provide insights into the complex interactions among the peace keepers, the environment, and local populations, and propose recommendations for promoting sustainability and resilience in peacekeeping operations.

In light of above, the need for this study lies in exploring how the Bangladesh Army, as a major contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, can integrate green practices into its operations to minimize environmental harm and enhance the well-being of host communities. Hence, this study will investigate the incorporation of green practices in Bangladesh Army's peacekeeping operations and its impact on host communities and the environment. In doing so, the study will first discuss the Ostrom's SES framework and its linkage with PKO followed by analyzing Bangladesh Army's environmentally sustainable practices in PKO. Thereafter the study will discuss the impact of green practices on host communities' livelihoods and local environment along with associated challenges in implementing the SES framework. Finally, the study will make some recommendations to the appropriate authority concerned.

Rationale of the Study

Bangladesh Army is one of the largest contributors to UNPKO, with a long history of participation in such operations. As a key player in global peacekeeping efforts, she has the opportunity to lead by example and integrate green practices into its PKO. This study identifies the extent to which the Bangladesh Army has adopted sustainable practices in its peacekeeping missions, and the impact of these practices on host communities and the environment. By examining the environmental sustainability practices of the Bangladesh Army's PKO through the lens of Ostrom's SES Framework, this study is expected to uncover the strategies and mechanisms employed by the Bangladesh Army to promote sustainable peacekeeping practices. This framework will also offer a comprehensive and holistic approach to understand the interactions between human behaviour, institutions and the natural environment, providing a valuable tool for analyzing the Bangladesh Army's efforts in this regard.

Moreover, this study is expected to shed light on the potential benefits and challenges associated with these practices. By understanding the impact of these sustainability initiatives on host communities and the environment, the study can generate valuable insights for policymakers, stakeholders, and other peacekeeping actors on how to improve the environmental sustainability of peacekeeping operations. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on environmental sustainability in PKO and to provide practical recommendations for enhancing Bangladesh Army's green practices in their peacekeeping missions.

Objectives of the Study

Broad Objective: The broad objective of this study is to examine the environmental sustainability practices of Bangladesh Army's PKO within the framework of Ostrom's SES Framework.

Specific Objectives: Following specific objectives will be pursued in this study:

- a. To analyze how Bangladesh Army integrates green principles into its peacekeeping missions.
- b. To assess the impact of Bangladesh Army's environmental sustainability practices on host communities and the environment.
- c. To identify challenges and opportunities for enhancing the environmental sustainability of Bangladesh Army's peacekeeping operations.
- d. To provide recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to improve the environmental sustainability of peacekeeping missions.

Ostrom's SES Framework

Ostrom's SES Framework is a theoretical framework developed by Elinor Ostrom that aims to understand and analyze the complex interactions between social systems (such as human communities and institutions) and ecological systems (natural resources, ecosystems, etc.). The framework emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to study and manage common pool resources, which are resources that are shared and managed collectively by a group of people.⁶ SES Framework consists of several key components that interact with one another to shape the outcomes of resource management. Components are as below:-

Resource System: Resource System is the component which refers to the natural resources that are being used or managed within a particular system. These includes forests, water bodies, wildlife, or any other resources that are essential for sustaining ecosystems and human well-being. In the context of Bangladesh Army's peacekeeping operations, the resource system could include the local water sources, agricultural lands and forests in the area where the PKO is taking place.

Resource Users: This component includes the individuals, communities, or organizations that have a stake in the utilization and management of the resources within the system. These users may have different

interests, needs, and power dynamics that shape their interactions with the resource system. The resource users in the context of Bangladesh Army's peacekeeping operations could include the local population, the peacekeepers themselves and any other stakeholders involved in the management of resources in the area.

Governance System: Governance System refers to the rules, norms, and institutions that govern how resources are accessed, used, managed and distributed within the system. This can include the institutions, formal policies, rules and regulations, agreements and informal social norms that influence resource management practices and govern the interactions between resource users and resource systems. In the context of Bangladesh Army's PKO, it may include the rules and regulations set by the UN, the agreements between the peacekeeping mission and the host country and the local customs and traditions that guide resource management in the area.

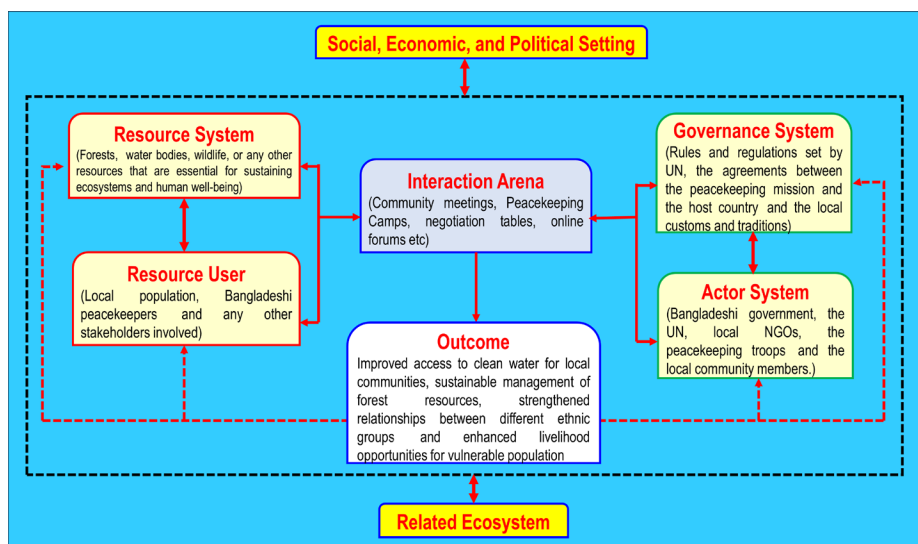
Actor System: Actor System includes the diverse set of actors or stakeholders that are involved in decision-making processes related to resource management within the system.⁷ This can include government agencies, community groups, non-governmental organizations, private sector entities and others who have a role in shaping resource governance outcomes. In the context of Bangladesh Army's PKO, it includes the Bangladeshi government, the UN, local NGOs, the peacekeeping troops and the local community members.

Interaction Arena: Interaction arena represents the physical or virtual spaces where interactions and negotiations take place among resource users, governance systems and actor systems.⁸ These arenas can include community meetings, stakeholder workshops, policy forums, or other spaces where decisions are made, conflicts are resolved, actions are taken and resources are used. In the context of Bangladesh Army's PKO, it could include peacekeeping camps, meetings with local stakeholders, virtual communication platforms and other spaces where collaboration and decision-making take place.

Outcome: Outcome is the component that refers to the results and impacts of interactions within the SES. These outcomes can include changes in resource availability, distribution of benefits and costs, ecological sustainability, social equity and overall well-being of communities and ecosystems.

SES Framework and Linkage with PKO: The Ostrom SES Framework provides a useful lens through which to analyze the integration of green practices in the Bangladesh Army's PKO. By examining how the army interacts with the environment and host communities, how decisions are made about resource use and conservation and what outcomes result from these interactions, the framework can help identify opportunities for promoting sustainability and enhancing the well-being of all stakeholders involved. The SES Framework and it's linkage in the context of PKO by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers is shown below in Figure-1:-

Figure 1: Elinor Ostrom's SES Framework and Linkage in the Context of PKO

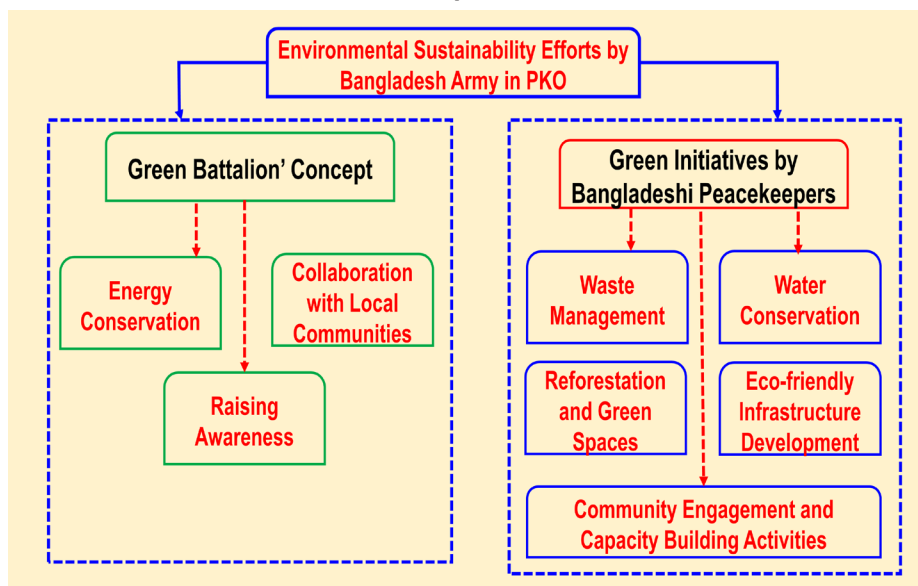


Source: Adapted from M.D. McGinnis & E. Ostrom, 'Social-ecological system framework: initial changes and continuing challenges,' *Ecology and Society*, 19 (2), 2014.

Analyzing Bangladesh Army's Environmentally Sustainable Practices in PKO

Bangladesh Army has made significant strides in adopting environmentally sustainable practices in its PKO. Basically, these initiatives are divided in two categories where concept of 'Green Battalion' focuses on the initiatives that is taken for the Battalion itself and her own members by integrating green practices into the day-to-day operations of peacekeeping missions. On the other hand, number of initiatives are also taken by the Bangladeshi peacekeepers in managing the environmental issues in host countries. A look on the environmental sustainability efforts of Bangladeshi peacekeepers at PKO reveals the details which are shown at Figure 2:-

Figure 2: Environmental Sustainability Efforts of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers at PKO



Source: Author's self construct based on Interview with Contingent Commanders at PKO

Implementation of the 'Green Battalion' Concept: As mentioned above, Bangladesh Army has adopted number of environmentally sustainable practices in its PKO. One of the key initiatives undertaken by the Bangladesh Army in this regard is the implementation of the 'Green Battalion' concept, which focuses on integrating green practices into the day-to-day operations of peacekeeping missions including behavioural changes of the peacekeepers.⁹ Important initiatives of 'Green Battalion Concept' by Bangladeshi peacekeepers include following:-

Energy Conservation: To reduce energy consumption in military camps, Bangladeshi peacekeepers have implemented energy-saving measures such as using energy-efficient lighting; charging electronic devices and other appliances; and promoting renewable energy sources like solar power. This not only reduces the reliance on fossil fuels but also contributes in reducing carbon emissions and environmental impact.¹⁰

Raising Awareness: Training programs and workshops on environmental conservation and sustainability have been organized for peacekeeping personnel, with an emphasis on the role that individuals can play in protecting the environment. This helps in building a culture of environmental responsibility within the military and raise

awareness among its personnel about the importance of environmental sustainability and encourage them to adopt sustainable practices in their daily operations.¹¹

Photo 1: Bangladeshi Peacekeepers being Trained on Environmental Conservation and Sustainability Efforts at Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)



Source: Collected from BANRDB-7 Contingent Deployed at MONUSCO Mission at DRC, 2020

Collaboration with Local Communities: The Bangladesh Army has also collaborated with local communities and international organizations to promote environmental sustainability in peacekeeping missions.¹² For example, the Bangladesh Army has partnered with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to conduct environmental impact assessments and implement sustainable practices in areas affected by conflict.

Green Initiatives by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers: Bangladeshi peacekeepers deployed in various host countries have already initiated several green projects aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and reducing carbon footprint. By implementing these green initiatives, Bangladeshi peacekeepers not only contribute to the environmental well-being of host countries but also demonstrate Bangladesh's commitment to global sustainability goals.¹³ Some of the key environmental issues undertaken by Bangladeshi peacekeepers during UN missions are shown below:-

Waste Management: Bangladeshi peacekeepers have implemented efficient waste management systems in its PKO to reduce the waste generation and promote recycling and proper disposal of waste materials. Photo 2 below highlights the efforts of Bangladeshi peacekeepers at UNMISS involved in a cleaning drive at South Sudan's different locations in the capital.

Photo 2: Bangladeshi UNMISS Peacekeepers at a Clean Up Drive at South Sudan



Source: Collected from the Official Facebook Page of UNMISS, 2011

Water Conservation: Bangladeshi peacekeepers have implemented water conservation measures, such as use of rainwater harvesting systems, installing water-saving fixtures, promoting water reuse and awareness campaigns to promote water conservation among personnel. They also work to protect local water sources and prevent pollution of rivers and lakes of the area where they are deployed.¹⁴

Reforestation and Green Spaces: To combat deforestation and mitigate the effects of climate change, Bangladeshi peacekeepers promote and participate the planting of trees and the creation of green spaces in military camps. It helps to improve air quality, provide shade and create a more sustainable environment. Moreover, the reforestation projects help in restoring degraded landscapes and improve biodiversity. Photo 3 explains the awareness program conducted by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers at DRC.

Photo 3 : Contingent Commander of Bangladesh Rapidly Deployable Battalion (BANRDB) interacting with the host population at Ituri province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)



Photo 4: Interaction and awareness program by Female Engagement Platoon of BANRDB about combatting deforestation and creating green spaces at DRC



Source: Collected from Contingent Commander of BANRDB Deployed at United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)

Community Engagement and Capacity Building Activities:

Bangladesh Army actively engages with host communities to promote environmental awareness and sustainability as shown in Photo 4 above. This includes training programs on conservation practices, environmental education initiatives, sustainable agriculture practices, resource management and collaboration with local stakeholders for sustainable development and environmental conservation.¹⁵

Photo 5: Community Engagement and Capacity Building Activities by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers at MONUSCO



Source: Collected from Bangladesh Rapidly Deployable Battalion (BANRDB) Deployed at MONUSCO, 2020

Eco-friendly Infrastructure Development: Bangladesh Army has been involved in infrastructure development projects that prioritize environmental sustainability, such as the construction of eco-friendly buildings and the use of renewable energy sources. For example, Bangladesh Engineers Company (BANENGR) has installed a 10-kilowatt photovoltaic system at the headquarters within the UNMISS base in Juba, with funding from Bangladesh. This system can retain or generate its own power within the main electricity system which is more reliable and cost-effective. This photovoltaic system has 26 panels with the capacity to generate 25 kilowatts of power.¹⁶ It has the potential to substantially reduce fuel usage once implemented on a larger scale. These initiatives not only contributed to the well-being of local communities but also help to minimize the environmental impact of PKO. Besides, this type of initiative leaves provisions for future contingents to be able to increase the project which Photos 6, 7 & 8 highlights.

Photo 6: Bangladeshi Peacekeepers at MINUSCA Fixed Solar Street Lights at Central African Republic



Photo 7: Bangladeshi Engineer Company Peacekeepers at UNMISS installing photovoltaic system for UN Mission in South Sudan



Photo 8: Bangladeshi Peacekeepers at UNMISS installed Photovoltaic System for UN Mission in South Sudan which has 26 Panels with the Capacity to Generate 25 Kilowatts of Power



Source: Author's Collection from the Respective Contingent deployed at UN Mission, 2011

Impact of Green Practices on Host Communities' Livelihoods and Local Environment

The integration of green practices in Bangladesh Army's PKO can have a significant impact on host communities' livelihoods and the local environment. By adopting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices, Bangladeshi peacekeepers can contribute to the well-being of the communities they are serving in and help to protect the local environment.

Sustainable Development Initiatives: One of the key ways in which green practices by Bangladeshi peacekeepers can impact host communities' livelihoods is through the promotion of sustainable development initiatives. For example, implementing renewable energy projects such as solar panels or wind turbines can provide access to clean and reliable energy sources for local communities, reducing their dependence on fossil fuels and lowering their carbon footprint. This in turn can improve living standards, create job opportunities and enhance economic resilience in the long run.

Environmentally Friendly Practices: The adoption of environmentally friendly practices like waste management, water conservation and reforestation efforts can help protect natural resources and ecosystems in host countries. Preserving biodiversity, reducing pollution and mitigating the impacts of climate change can ultimately benefit the local environment and the communities that depend on it for their livelihoods.

Capacity Building Programs: By promoting sustainable agricultural practices and capacity building programs, Bangladeshi peacekeepers can help enhance food security, promote resilient farming methods and improve the overall resilience of host communities to external shocks and stresses. This can lead to increased food production, improved nutrition and greater economic opportunities for local farmers and producers.

Challenges in Implementing the SES Framework

The key challenges faced by the Bangladesh Army in implementing the SES framework in UNPKO include the following:-

Complex Operational Environment: PKO often takes place in complex and volatile environments, which can pose challenges in implementing the SES framework. Bangladesh Army may struggle to balance the competing demands of maintaining peace and addressing environmental and social issues simultaneously. Hence, it is very

natural that Bangladesh Army will prioritize security and stability over environmental and social considerations in such environments.¹⁷

Communication and Coordination: Effective communication and coordination among different stakeholders, including local communities, international organizations and other peacekeeping troops, are essential for the successful implementation of the SES framework. Bangladesh Army may face challenges in fostering collaboration and cooperation among these diverse actors.

Host Country's Political Stability and Economy: Host countries with stable political systems and robust economies are more likely to continue and expand green projects initiated by Bangladeshi peacekeepers. On the contrary, countries facing political instability or economic hardships may struggle to allocate resources towards sustaining environmental programs, leading to the eventual decline of these initiatives.¹⁸

Absence of Technical Expertise at Host Country: The availability or non-availability of technical expertise and resources within host countries play a significant role in the long-term success of green initiatives. Bangladeshi peacekeepers often rely on local partnerships and support to implement environmental projects. Therefore, the presence of skilled professionals, access to relevant technology and financial resources are critical in ensuring the sustainability of green initiatives beyond the tenure of the PKO.

Lack of Initiative by Local Community: Although Bangladeshi peacekeepers have successfully mobilized local communities to actively participate in environmental conservation efforts, leading to the creation of self-sustaining green projects, but in other instances, there have been challenges in maintaining community involvement, resulting in the discontinuation of green initiatives once the PKO ends.¹⁹

Recommendations

Following recommendations are made to the appropriate authority/stakeholders concerned:-

For Policymakers of Bangladesh:

- a. Implement environmental sustainability guidelines and practices as a mandatory component of Bangladesh Army's PKO.
- b. Allocate specific resources and funds for the integration of green technologies and practices within PKO.

- c. Collaborate with international organizations and other peacekeeping countries to share best practices and lessons learned in green PKO.
- d. Develop policies that promote the protection of natural resources and biodiversity in host countries during PKO.

For Military Hierarchy of Bangladesh:

- a. Provide training and education for military personnel on sustainable practices and environmental conservation.
- b. Create incentives and recognition for units that actively participate in green initiatives during PKO.
- c. Incorporate environmental impact assessments into mission planning processes to ensure the protection of ecosystems and local communities. Besides, partnerships with local NGOs and environmental organizations to support sustainability initiatives in host communities may be fostered.
- d. Appoint an Environmental Focal Point within the organization who will be responsible for coordinating and overseeing all environmental initiatives and practices to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into all aspects of PKO.

For Host Government/Local Communities:

- a. Encourage information sharing and collaboration with Bangladesh Army in implementing green practices during PKO.
- b. Advocate for the inclusion of environmental protection measures in peacekeeping agreements and mandates with the UN.
- c. Engage communities in sustainable development projects that benefit both the environment and local livelihoods.
- d. Establish communication channels for feedback and dialogue between local residents, peacekeeping forces and government officials to address environmental concerns effectively.

Conclusion

UNPKO are instrumental in maintaining international peace and security, with military forces from various countries deployed to conflict zones to support peace efforts. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the need for sustainable development and environmental protection worldwide. As part of this global effort, Bangladesh, being a major contributor of peacekeepers

to the UN, has been actively involved in implementing green initiatives in host countries. This study examined the long-term sustainability of these initiatives and identified the challenges to integrate environmental sustainability practices into its peacekeeping operations, in line with the SES framework. This framework can help to understand how the army's actions impact the social and ecological systems in deployed areas and identify strategies for sustainable peacekeeping operations that promote environmental conservation and community well-being.

By examining the experiences and perspectives of all stakeholders involved, this study discussed the implementation of the 'Green Battalion' concept by the Bangladesh Army which demonstrates a commitment to environmental sustainability in peacekeeping missions and sets an example for other military organizations to follow. Side by side, Bangladeshi peacekeepers have implemented a good number of green initiatives which include waste management, energy conservation, reforestation project and creation of green spaces, community engagement and capacity building activities, and developing ecofriendly infrastructure etc. Through these initiatives, Bangladeshi peacekeepers not only contributed to the environmental well-being of host countries but also demonstrates Bangladesh's commitment to global sustainability goals.

The study also discussed few challenges in implementing the SES framework that includes complex PKO environment, communication and coordination, host country's political stability and economy and absence of technical expertise at host country. The findings of this study can inform policy recommendations for the Bangladesh Army, the UN and other peacekeeping forces, to contribute to a more environmentally friendly and socially responsible approach to peacekeeping, that benefits both host communities and the global environment.

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Brief Biography



Colonel G M Sohag, SGP, afwc, psc was commissioned in the Corps of Infantry on 7th June 2000 with 42 BMA Long Course. He has served in number of Infantry Battalions in different appointments. His experience includes serving as a General Staff Officer-3 in the Intelligence Branch, as well as Brigade Major in an Infantry Brigade deployed for Counter Insurgency Operations (CIO) at Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). He has also served as the Deputy Assistant Military Secretary at Army Headquarters, Military Secretary's Branch.

He commanded an Infantry Battalion deployed for CIO in the challenging terrain of CHT; and later in the plain lands. He served as a General Staff Officer-1 in a Divisional Headquarters and later also as the Private Secretary to the Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP).

Apart from the mandatory military courses applicable in different ranks, he completed Advanced Course in Administration and Development from Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, Savar. Additionally, he has completed the United Nations Staff and Logistics Officer Course from the Centre of United Nations Peacekeeping, New Delhi, India; and the Combat Group Commanders' Course from the Armoured Corps Centre and School, Ahmadnagar, India.

Colonel Sohag's international experience includes serving as a contingent member in UNOCI, Ivory Coast, and a Military Observers' Team Site Leader at Sector North of MINUSMA, Mali. His academic achievements include graduating from the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, as well as graduating from the Armed Forces War Course at the National Defence College, Mirpur; obtaining a Master's in Defence Studies and a Master of Social Science in Security and Development from BUP. Currently, the officer is serving as the Colonel Staff in a Divisional Headquarters located at northern part of the country.

Bangladesh Force Marine Unit in Nile Waterways: An Iconic Path Finder for UNMISS Operation in South Sudan

Commander M Yousuf Ali, (H1), psc, BN

Introduction

Bangladesh is a peace-loving country. Its foreign policy is “Friendship to all, malice to none” to which the entire nation is committed to uphold at any cost. Based on this principle, Bangladesh is in quest to establish world peace under the support of blue helmet. Presently, Bangladesh is mostly recognized as a branding in the Peacekeeping domain and she firmly believes that it is her sacred duty to serve the humanity anywhere and anytime. Under this connotation Bangladesh Navy is deployed in United Nations mission over the world. United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is one of the largest and most challenging peacekeeping operations of United Nations (UN) where Bangladesh Navy (BN) is operating with pride, dedication and a very high note.

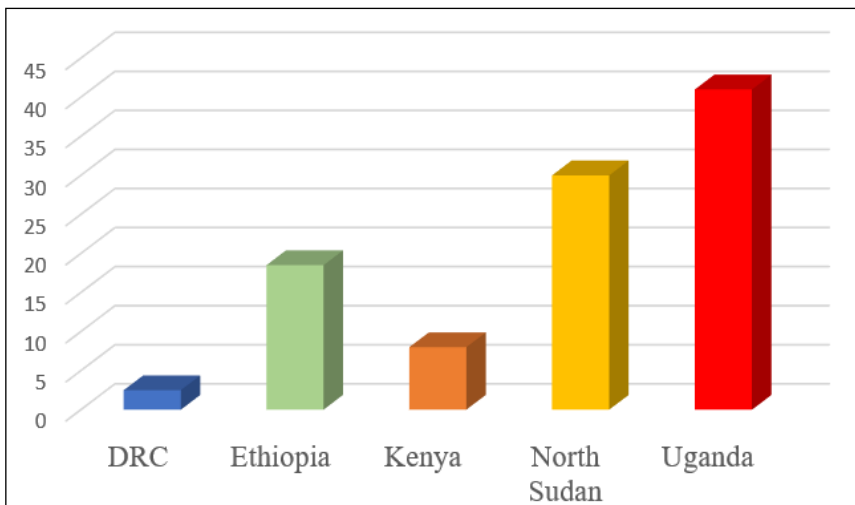
Peacekeeping Operations have been going on under the blue helmet in South Sudan (UNMISS) to establish peace among the belligerent ethnics of South Sudan under Security Council Resolution 2155, 2014.¹ For enhancing the peace process in general and protecting the barge carrying UN supplies and humanitarian assistance through White Nile River from capital city Juba to Malakal (938 km approx.).² UN has included Bangladesh Force Marine Unit (BANFMU) in the beginning of 2015. BANFMU consisting of 200 personnel including 12 x High Speed Boat as Light Patrol Craft (Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) & Defender Class Boat (DCB)) fitted with heavy and light weapons and other major and self-sustainment equipment.³ Presently, BANFMU-9 is operating from Juba to Malakal including other important places of UNMISS along the river White Nile.

South Sudan officially the Republic of South Sudan is a landlocked country in East Africa. It is bordered by Ethiopia, Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Kenya. Its population was estimated 11,987,330 as of September 2024.⁴ Juba is the capital and largest city. It gained independence from Sudan on 9 July 2011 with widespread recognition. It is one of the most significant countries in Africa.

The White Nile, begins at Lake Victoria in Tanzania and flows north until it reaches Khartoum, Sudan, where it converges with the Blue Nile. This river known as the Nile flows in northeast Africa and has long been recognized as

worsened food shortages and weakened economy also play a havoc in South Sudan. Therefore, ongoing violence contributes to a high level of displacement, with many people forced to flee their homes. The majority of South Sudanese refugees have been in asylum for over a decade in the neighbouring countries. Over 2.2 million refugees spread across the neighbouring countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, North Sudan and Uganda.⁶ This displacement exacerbates humanitarian needs, complicating efforts to provide aid and maintain stability.

Figure 2: IDPs from South Sudan to Neighbouring Countries



Source: UNHCR, 2023 situation overview

Operation Life Line in Nile Waterways a Gigantic task for BANFMU

BANGLADESH FORCE MARINE UNIT (BANFMU) contingent (Bangladesh Navy Special Force) is mandated to provide the enroute security to the cargo carrying barges (mainly transport fuel, Aviation fuel, goods and other necessary commodities) at White Nile from Juba to Malakal. This gigantic operation is called Operation Life Line (OpLL) and BANFMU is continuing the mandated task from 2015. OpLL is one of the world's largest humanitarian programs ever conceived, kicked into action by BANFMU. It is the prime mover of UNMISS activities in South Sudan. Basically, OpLL is to carry goods and food staff for the UNMISS personnel including most significant world's largest Internally Displaced Personnel (IDP) camps. Bulk amount of all necessary commodities is carried by the OpLL through White Nile and BANFMU is to play leading role by protecting the barges all the way from Juba to Malakal. Without OpLL UNMISS will not be able to run the mission activities in South Sudan

as because basic needs are distributed from capital city Juba to other cities. Phase wise preparation of Operation Life Line (OpLL) are shown in Figure-3 below:-

Figure 3: Phase wise preparation of Operation Life Line (OpLL)



Source: Extract from OpLL reports

Activities prior to launching of OpLL are shown in the following photos:-

Photo-1: Training of BANFMU troops prior OpLL



Photo-2: Simulated Counter Attack by BANFMU



Photo-3: AVPD Cdr's brief on board OpLL barge prior sailing

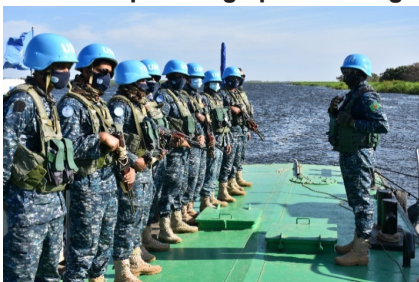


Photo-4: CASEVAC Ex by BANFMU



Source: BANFMU -09

Photo- 5: Providing physical protection of OpLL barges by BANFMU LPC



Source: BANFMU -09

Challenges of OpLL and Check Points Enroute

The OPLL barges sails from Mangala with full of UNMISS supplies which include Jet fuel, Dry food, Diesel oil, Patrol, Octane and other necessary accessories with FP team of BANFMU. En route there are as many as 20 check posts by both Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA- IO). Maximum check posts are manned by armed personnel with Light to Heavy guns. Some of the check posts are under covered by Tank and riverine unit with full time operational complement.

In each check point the Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment (AVPD) commander is to play an intellectual role and to manage the SPLA or SPLA-IO while checking the barges. Without the clearance of the check points authority barges are not allowed to move forward. Sometimes it takes 5 to 6 hours to complete the checking. Basically, they used to check the illegal arms or any illegal goods or any opposition soldiers staying at barge as barge crew. Both the group believe that, the opposition soldiers are collecting information regarding the operational status of other group or any illegal arms are carrying for the opponent through barge. Sometime, it might also happen that the soldiers who checks on board barges they allow the barges to move forward and from the check post higher official they put embargo for further movement. So, barges are to halt in the same place hours together even days. Thereby, barge operation in South Sudan is very challenging and risky.

There are almost 35 check points between Mangala and Malakal. SPLA has the control over 20 and rest are with SPLA-IO. While checking the barges they used to demand for food, fuel, medicine and other stuffs which is difficult

to provide from the UN barges. It might happen that barges are in between the cross fire of both the parties in riverine route. This situation is very dangerous and challenging for the AVPD commander to save the lives of the barges crew and troops as well as the full of flammable fuel of UN which will be exploded like atom bomb if any cluster hit the barges. That's why the OP Life Line is more challenging to continue in such an adverse situation. BANFMU is continuing this extreme operation with pride, dedication and with professional excellence. Some important check points information are given below in Table 1:-

Table 1: Few Check Points information en route OpLL

Ser	Name of Check Points	Command & Control over Check Points	Remarks
1.	BOR	SPLA	a. Largest base for SPLA. b. Most of the high officials of SPLA are staying in BOR.
2.	ADOK	SPLA-IO	a. Largest check posts of SPLA-IO. b. Full control in their AOR. c. Support barge is kept to carry the troops and vehicles in need.
3.	KALDAL	SPLA-IO	a. Officers and troops are always ready with heavy gun to defend SPLA in the AOR. b. One of the operation bases of SPLA-IO.
4.	TONGA	SPLA-IO	River dominance group of opposition party is staying at this point.
5.	WASKET	SPLA	WASKET check point is a small check point of SPLA.

Source: Author's self-construct

OpLL is to cross all the check posts enroute successfully by displaying highest professionalism, dedication, patience and showing good behaviour to the soldiers and civilian personnel of South Sudan. Bangladesh Navy could win the heart and mind of South Sudanese from 2015 as a pro-active actor of UNMISS.

Overcoming the Challenges at Check Points in OpLL

Bangladesh Navy is flying her flag in South Sudan from last 10 Years. BANFMU is overcoming the extreme challenges of OpLL and achieved

success and resilience in the White Nile operations in South Sudan, whereas other countries (India, Nepal) have struggled and withdrawn. The key factors for the overwhelming success in OpLL may be as follows:-

Widespread Peacekeeping Experience: Bangladesh has long history of participation in UN peacekeeping and peace building mission. Bangladesh is achieving highest commendation in any UN mission over the world with noteworthy experience in diverse and challenging environments.

Specialized Training: Bangladesh Navy has special commando forces with specialized capability to carry out special operation in adverse situation including indented coastal, Maritime and riverine areas. They are to undergo a rigorous training both home and aboard which is very essential for operating effectively in the White Nile's challenging conditions.

Adaptation to Local Conditions and Adverse Environment: The Bangladesh Navy special forces have demonstrated the ability to adapt to the severe climatic conditions and complex riverine and marshy geography of South Sudan. BANFMU personnel is trained to operate in adverse environment including marshy wet land with specialized equipment and techniques suited to the environment. Furthermore, Pre deployment Training (PDT) is also a catalyst to learn about the challenges and environment including other phenomenon of South Sudan which also help BANFMU personnel to increase the adaptability.

Capability of Motivation and Situational Awareness: The Bangladesh Navy personnel have the ability to quickly judge and response with the situation to manage and handle the unexpected challenges. Operation in South Sudan is always volatile and unpredictable where patience, dedication, wisdom, experience and capability to judge the situation is foremost. Thereby, Bangladesh Navy may be the ultimate choice for having such attributes and experiences specially for the OPLL of UNMISS.

Commitment to Peacekeeping Objectives: The Bangladesh Navy is extremely committed to the objectives of UNMISS. The mandate of UNMISS operation is to protect civilians, enabling humanitarian assistance and supporting peace processes. BANFMU is committed to uphold the mandates of UNMISS in any situation. Therefore, BANFMU is the utmost choice for UNMISS specially in OPLL.

Captivating Leadership and Self Disciplined: Attractive and effective leadership with strict disciplined within BANFMU help to contribute to the UNMISS operation maintaining high morale and operational effectiveness.

Acceptance within Local Communities by Trust Building: BANFMU actively engages with local communities displaying many social events, competition, playing games and sports. With these local engagement BANFMU is fostering trust and cooperation. These community engagement helps mitigate hostility among the South Sudanese and promotes peace process operations in a friendly environment.

Respect in Customs and Cultural Sensitivity: BANFMU is always respectful to the customs and cultural heritage of the locals. The unit's also efforts to comprehend and admiration local customs, ethnicity, religious sensitivity and practices augment their acceptance and effectiveness in the region.

Coordination with Other Component of UNMISS: BANFMU works closely with other stakeholders of UNMISS including local law enforcing agencies. Therefore, coordinated and comprehensive approach with the other stakeholders of UNMISS help BANFMU to carry out any sorts of operation and humanitarian efforts.

Support from Bangladesh: BANFMU is a self-sustained unit of UNMISS. The Bangladesh Navy including the government of Bangladesh provides BANFMU a strong logistical and political support for ensuring the smooth operation of UNMISS as per mandate. The LPCs and other equipment including armaments are always ready and operational. Thereby, to meet any emergency and unprecedented operation can be demonstrated along with many humanitarian efforts.

Humanitarian Vow: Bangladesh is a peace loving country and always tried to spread peace over the world. Whenever Bangladesh got chance to deliver any humanitarian assistance to the neighbouring, regional or any other countries after the natural calamities, Bangladesh has displayed a highest professionalism by extending her helping hand. BANFMU is not the out of this kind of attitude. Thereby, BANFMU is dedicated to deliver humanitarian aids and assistance to remote and vulnerable populations of UNMISS in South Sudan. This humanitarian attribute aligns with UNMISS's objectives and underscores the importance of BANFMU.

Professional Behaviour: The Bangladesh Navy is known for its professionalism, hard work, dedication and devotion to international standards of behaviour, which has received respect and trust within the UN and among local populations.

Previous Experience: Presently BANFMU 09 (Nine) is operating in South Sudan. Successful track record and previous performance reflects their credibility and effectiveness in current operations.

Pre-Deployment Training at BIPSOT: Planned and Intensive pre-deployment training (PDT) are conducted at Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) before each and every deployment of troops. This training conforms to international standard and has got recognition. PDT training is tailored to the specific challenges, customs, traditions and religious ethnicity of the South Sudan including the environment prepares the Bangladesh Navy personnel for effective operations in South Sudan.

Boat Operation for Key Engagement Leadership (KEL)

Though Operation Life Line is the prime and mandated task of UNMISS for BANFMU but as per Statement of Unit Requirement (SUR) BANFMU is to carry out boat operation with other stakeholder of UNMISS like, Child Protection Group, Humanitarian Agent, Women and Child Abuse group, Conflict Related Sexual Violence Group, WFP team. Human Right Watch and many other NGOs as Key Engagement Leadership (KEL). This KEL, is very frequent. Some organization used to go for KEL twice in a day. Reality is that any movement in and around Malakal, BANFMU is the prime mover. Without boat operation it is very difficult to carry out KEL due to extremely poor road communication. And in rainy season one and only way for movement is BANFMU boat because the muddy road become sticky during rainy season due to the nature of the soil of South Sudan.

Photo-6: Group photo before proceeding for KEL by the stakeholders of UNMISS



Source: BANFMU-09

Photo-7: Boat Operation for KEL with stakeholders of UNMISS



Source: BANFMU -09

Search and Rescue Operation (SAR) and Humanitarian Assistance Op

BANFMU used to conduct special survey in White Nile, carried out Search and Rescue Operation (SAR OP), Salvage Operation, Special Diving Operation, Medical campaign save lives at White Nile many times during sudden or extreme weather. All kinds of activities are well appreciated by the UNMISS Headquarters and published both in UNMISS websites and press release as well. So, in a single word BANFMU is the life of UNMISS, South Sudan. By performing all these social and humanitarian activities BANFMU has won the heart and mind of the South Sudanese.

Photo-8: Rescued 2 persons with goods from White Nile by BANFMU



Source: <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/un-peacekeepers-rescue-capsized-boat-nile>

Photo-9: Salvage Operation by Peacekeepers through Diving



Source: <https://www.navy.mil.bd/navy/photo-gallery/11>

Photo-10: Medical Campaign by the BANFMU for locals



Source: BANFMU -09

Acknowledgement of BANFMU by Sudanese

BANFMU has participated in different social and cultural activities with locals as well as celebrated the few national events (Bangladeshi) where locals and high officials were invited. By mixing up with the locals and exchanging views BANFMU could win the heart and minds of the Sudanese. On the other hand, Captain Oraj of the barge (Nile Princess)⁷ who used to ply the barge in the White Nile since long also acknowledged the contribution and hard work of BANFMU. The Captain's remark given below is noteworthy:-

We have been working here even during the crisis, because if we stop, people on the other side will not get food. That is why we keep on our job even if there is a crisis and BANFMU is here to ensure the safety and security of us.⁸

Recognition by the UNMISS Force Commander

Getting essential supplies from Juba to Malakal is always been an enormous task for the UNMISS. By employing several modes of transportation, including land, air and waterways, UNMISS is operating OpLL through river Nile. During OpLL, BANFMU crew is to escort the barges back and forth along the Nile. In this regard UNMISS Force Commander Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar aptly observed:

Security is always an issue, but security is provided by the BANFMU - very brave sailors who accompany this barge throughout. It is not so easy to travel on the barge with very minimal facilities for a period of about 25 days almost on a stretch but Bangladeshi soldiers do it magnificently, and that is the spirit that is called upon. Furthermore, he said not only the OpLL but also every task that is given in a Bangladeshi peacekeeper is accomplished to full satisfaction.⁹

BANFMU the most Reliable Contingent in UNMISS

In UNMISS amongst all the contingent BANFMU is considered as the most reliable contingent by the authority. It is a true recognition of the hard work, dedication, commitment, devotion to the mandate of UNMISS operation and overall taking responsibilities of the BANFMU troops. Not only regular routine but also the SAR Op, Salvage and Diving Op, Rescue Op, Engagement with the locals in different social, cultural and religious events including medical campaign makes BANFMU a most trustworthy and significant contingent in UNMISS. All these factors including reliability and operational reach demands the BANFMU to be an integral part of UNMISS as well as an iconic pathfinder for UNMISS Operation.¹⁰

Conclusion

Bangladesh wants harmony amongst the countries. This very fact is enshrined in the constitution of the Bangladesh with salient feature of foreign policy "Friendship to all, malice towards none." Bangladesh on its quest to establish world peace has already made, enormous contribution under the blue helmet. Today, Bangladesh is proudly renowned as a brand name in the Peacekeeping realm and she definitely believes that it is her sacred duty to serve the humanity anywhere and anytime.

BANFMU's continued success in the White Nile operations is a result of their extensive experience, adaptability, strong commitment to the mission, effective community engagement, strategic coordination and professional conduct. These factors combine to enable BANFMU to overcome the significant challenges of operating in South Sudan, ensuring that they remain a vital component of UNMISS's efforts to promote peace and security in the region.

BANFMU is now the brand of UNMISS for their professionalism, hard work, dedication, humanity and acceptance. The South Sudanese, the mission personnel including the force commander of UNMISS deeply appreciated bravery soldering, commitment and good behaviour. Despite of limitations BANFMU is continuing the most important Operation, OpLL at river White Nile from Mangala to Malakal or beyond as per the mission requirement. BANFMU's other social activities, KEL Engagement with local leaders, SAR OP, Salvage OP and medical campaign at White Nile is also appreciated by all concern. Thus, BANFMU grew as an iconic pathfinder of UNMISS.

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Brief Biography



Commander M Yousuf Ali, (H1), psc, BN was commissioned in Bangladesh Navy on July 2007. Before joining BN, he completed MSc in Physics from Jagannath University, Dhaka. In his naval service he served on board various ships and establishment in different capacities. He has commanded BNS TALLASHI and BNS CHITRA and served as Executive officer, survey officer of BNS AGRADOOT (Ex). He has mix balance of instructional and staff duties. He has served as staff officer Operations to BN Chief Hydrographer, Deputy Chief Hydrographer and Staff Officer Hydrography at Naval Headquarters level. He was the Officer in Charge of Bangladesh Navy Hydrographic School. He graduated from Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, Dhaka along with Masters in Social Science and Security Studies from Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP). He is Specialist on Hydrography and completed CAT A Hydrography course from National Institute of Hydrography, GOA, INDIA and achieved Post Graduate Diploma in Hydrography from GOA University, INDIA. He has also participated in UN Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan. Presently he is serving as Deputy Director Hydrography at Naval Headquarters.

United Nations Peacekeepers in Africa: Present Unwelcome Trend and Measures to Increase Acceptance

Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Mahmudur Rahman Niaz, SGP, psc

Introduction

United Nations (UN) had been working for maintaining global peace, security, shielding human rights, conveying humanitarian aid, assisting justifiable development and safeguarding universal law since 1948. UN deploys military personnel after getting authorisation and mandates from UN Security Council. Rising tension, hunger, political unrest and conflict for resource control are increasing humanitarian crises in Africa. Since 1960, UN undertook more than 30 peacekeeping missions across Africa which is maximum among all continents. Peacebuilding remained a challenging issue in African continent at the backdrop of affected regions, indigenous actors and volatile situations.¹ In most cases of Africa, UN could effectively control conflict, assisted states during the risky transition from war to peace, mitigate humanitarian crises, protect civilians and facilitated development.² UN Missions created a positive image by assisting in achieving sustainable peace and development. However, the 21st century brings enormous challenges to the peacekeeping and peacebuilding affairs. Role of UN is criticised in some regions for being ineffective at creating lasting peace. Even UN peacekeeping forces were involved in human rights violation and sexual abuse incidents. Present geopolitical dynamics and interest of superpowers impact mode of conduct of African missions. Negative feelings are increasing among general mass due to its ineffectiveness in many aspects including protection of civilians and these are widely circulated in international media. Sometimes, these challenges amplified by misinformation which caused even life of peacekeepers by hostile vested groups. Recently host governments of Mali and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) call for the withdrawal of UN from their countries. For UN, it is difficult to carry out its mandated tasks without consent of host nations.

Effective role of UN cannot be ruled out. Absence of UN may cause rise of terrorism, worsen humanitarian issues and hurt the general people. To address the challenges presently reforms are necessary to improve peacebuilding. These can also enhance confidence-building measures. Winning hearts and minds can overlap with a 'carrot- and stick' strategy, though the focus is much more on attaining local population's allegiance and support.³ However, UN already started The Action for Peacekeeping (A4P+) initiative from 2021 which

intended to make missions sturdier, safer and more effective. Its effectiveness demands a holistic approach considering actual reality and accordingly mandates or charters should be formulated. Set goals should be achievable with capacities rather than fixing inflated expectations. Getting countries to agree on major deviations rely on trust between member states. Integrating Africa Union (AU) and regional blocs can give dividends in conflict resolution. Still UN has demand to global communities with its active role in upholding global collaboration, maintaining peace and safety and providing humanitarian aid. However, motivation, commitment to humanity and preparedness of contributing states are very important to improve image of UN in Africa.

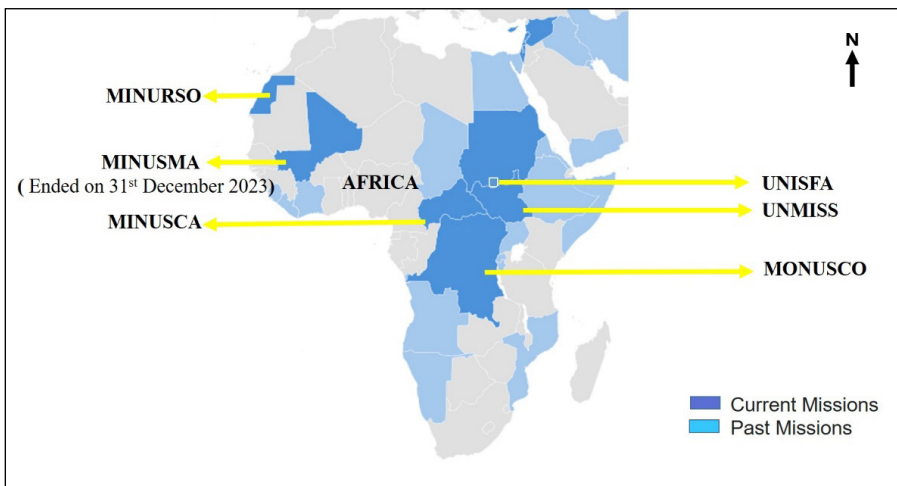
In this context an endeavour has been made to give an overview of UN Missions in Africa at the very outset. Then recent setbacks and analysis of findings will be elaborated. Finally, this paper will suggest few reform options of UN.

Dimensions of UN Missions in Africa

a. **Types of Peace Operations Conducted:** UN undertakes peace operations like Peacekeeping Operation (PKO), Peace Enforcing Operation (PEO), Peace Building, Peace-making and conflict Prevention. Whereas PKO aims to reach a long-term political settlement by implementing an agreement, but PEO consists of coercive measures. Peace Building create conditions for a lasting peace. UN undertook all these types of missions in Africa. Here, Key documents guided the missions are Mandate, Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA), terms of references, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Rules of Engagement (ROE).

b. **Total Missions in Africa:** The first peacekeeping of UN in Africa ran from 1960 to 1964 in DRC. So far in Africa UN has completed 26 missions. Presently 5 missions are running namely Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS). As of 30th November 2023 total 51393 military personnel are deployed in these missions.⁴

Map 1: Present UN Missions in Africa



Source: Author's self-construct

c. **Guiding Charters:** UN Charter gives the UN Security Council chief obligation for maintaining global peace and safety. UN peace operations have traditionally been associated with Chapter VI which deals with the conciliatory defrayal of disputes. Chapter VII legitimates action with respect to the peace when it is breached. It is mostly applied in unstable post-conflict conditions where the state is incapable to uphold security and civic order. Chapter VIII involves regional organisations in maintaining peace and security.

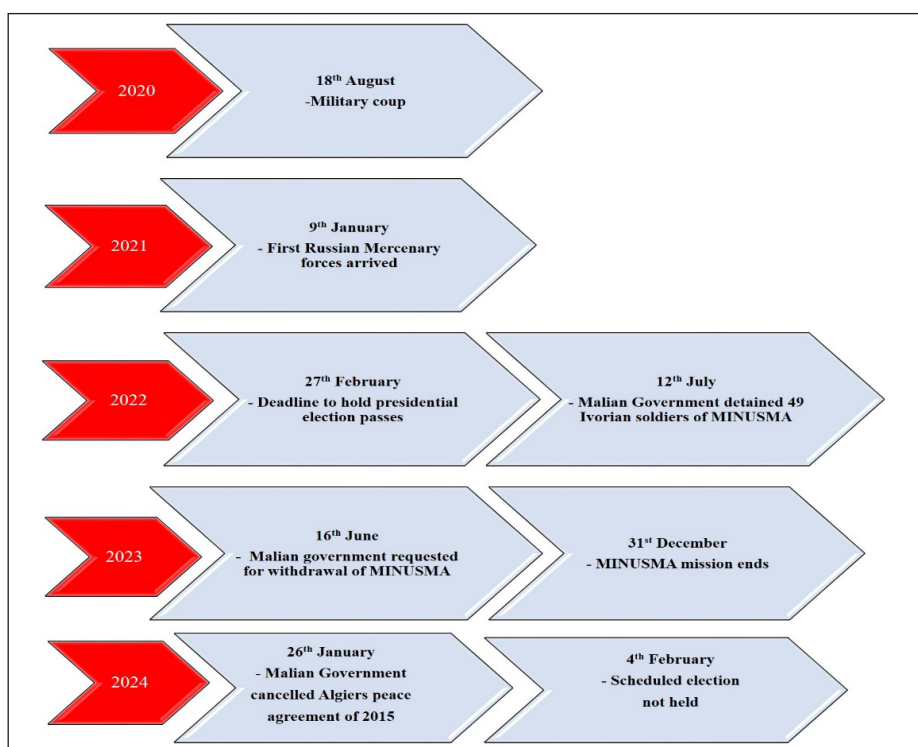
d. **Mandates:** Ideologies of peacekeeping include consensus of the embroiled parties, neutrality and restraining force application except in self-protection and implication of the mandate. Mandates provides basic of peace missions' scope and objectives. Depending on mandate UN mission in Africa worked to thwart the eruption of conflict, stabilize conflict, implement peace agreements, lead to political stability and economic development. Notable mandated peacebuilding activities include disarmament and demobilization, countering mine and Improvised Explosive Device (IED), security sector modification, protecting and promoting human rights, electoral assistance and promotion of social development.

Recent Setbacks

a. **Withdraw from Mali:** From deployment by supporting Malian armed forces impartiality of UN peacekeeping mission was questionable and it undermined their credibility. Considering the volume of tasks UN peacekeepers were lagging in equipment and manpower. These problems had exacerbated

as the Security Council could not effectively address these gaps. The political state in northern Mali is critical and Islamist groups are vigorous there. UN is alleged of doing very less in controlling the northern region and mainly focuses on city centres. Even locals blame UN for escalating tensions. Malian authority in UN Security Council portrayed that UN's peacekeepers had become a part of the problem and less effective. Besides, Mali's military rulers welcomed Russian Wagner Group, a private military to control the threat from the jihadist. The local authority gave timeline till 31st December of 2023 to withdraw MINUSMA mission. So, 13,000 personnel of MINUSMA were withdrawn from Mali and present UN Secretary-General termed this as unprecedented action. Impact of internal politics is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Impact of internal politics on MINUSMA



Source: Author's self-construct

b. **Withdraw from DRC:** Various armed groups like the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and M23, are vigorous in eastern regions of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces. They committed killing, sexual violence, abductions and retaliatory attacks against civilians regularly using heavy weaponry. Most locals are displaced and living in inhuman state. MONUSCO is often noticed very slow and relatively ineffective in addressing these. In

August 2010, MONUSCO could not avert the mass rape of more than 300 natives of North Kivu during a raid steered by armed guerrillas. MONUSCO could not maintain harmonious relations with the government but aligned itself with the Congolese Army who are committing atrocities against the civilians.⁵ So, locals don't realise MONUSCO as a unbiased actor in addressing crises. Most of the anti-UN protests happened in the eastern region of Kivu as UN mission has failed to neutralise the militia groups and protect civilians from them. The mission became so unpopular that in September 2023, President of DRC requested UN to withdraw by 31st December of 2024, a year before their normal termination. However, on 14 July 2024 the foreign minister informed that, the pull-out of 11,000 UN peacekeepers have become difficult due to recent atrocities by M 23 rebels.

Photo 1: Protesters protesting in front of UN complex in Goma at eastern DRC



Source: Steve Wembi, 'Anti-U.N. Protests in Congo Leave 15 Dead, Including 3 Peacekeepers,' *The New York Times*, 2022.⁶

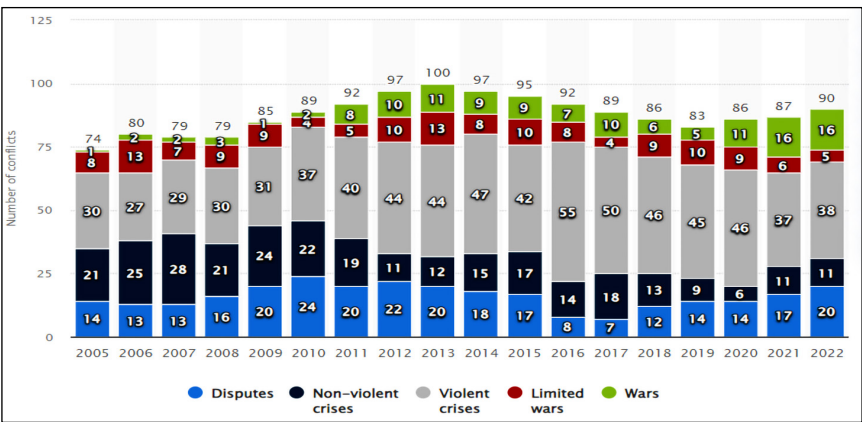
c. **UNMISS:** After independence of South Sudan in 2011, UNMISS had goal to consolidate peace and foster state building and economic development. However, in 2013 civil war broke out between the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups. It caused death of thousands. UN mission could not avert the massacre of hundreds of citizens during the violence of 2016 in Juba. UN remained inactive when many women and girls were raped near UN complexes. Besides, Mandate of UNMISS' may not be adequately addressing the root causes and underlying grievances that could lead to recidivism in the future.⁷ UNMISS units also confronted accusations of failing to control an outbreak of fighting inside the UN-led compound sheltering over 37,000 displaced persons in June of 2023.⁸

d. **MINUSCA:** This mission could not do much in September 2016 when more than 75 people were murdered in the north during an eruption of ferocity. The Interior Minister of CAR blamed the peacekeepers of colluding with armed militias.⁹ 41 peacekeepers were alleged in relation to sexual abuse and corruption between 2014 and 2015 and very little action was taken against them. Poor road network and limited airlifting capacity of MINUSCA hampered the mobility and humanitarian support. On 24th October, 2016 hundreds of anti-UN protesters demanded withdrawal of MINUSCA and 4 protesters were killed there. Till 2024 the political situation remained fragile with no certain timeline for next general election.

Present Challenges: In the subsequent paragraphs a qualitative analysis of challenges have been discussed:-

a. **Fluid Situation:** Security situations in Africa are very fluid or unpredictable which makes execution of mandates of UN very difficult. Armed conflicts are changing rapidly to inter-state from intra-state. Many non-state actors including terrorist and Islamic jihadist groups are active here. Some are targeting peacekeepers. Inability of UN to eradicate the terrorist groups booming in the Sahel region which stretches along the Sahara desert's southern rim, imposed serious blows to the trustworthiness of the peacekeepers. Current multidimensional conflicts also impeded the socioeconomic and political development. In countries like DRC, South Sudan, Mali and CAR peacekeepers have to deal with unfamiliar political and cultural situations. Vested interests of concerns may work against the UN mandate. The chart below covers mostly the states where UN Mission is going on and it is the highest compared to any region of earth.

Figure 2: Number of skirmishes in Sub- Saharan Africa from 2005 to 2022

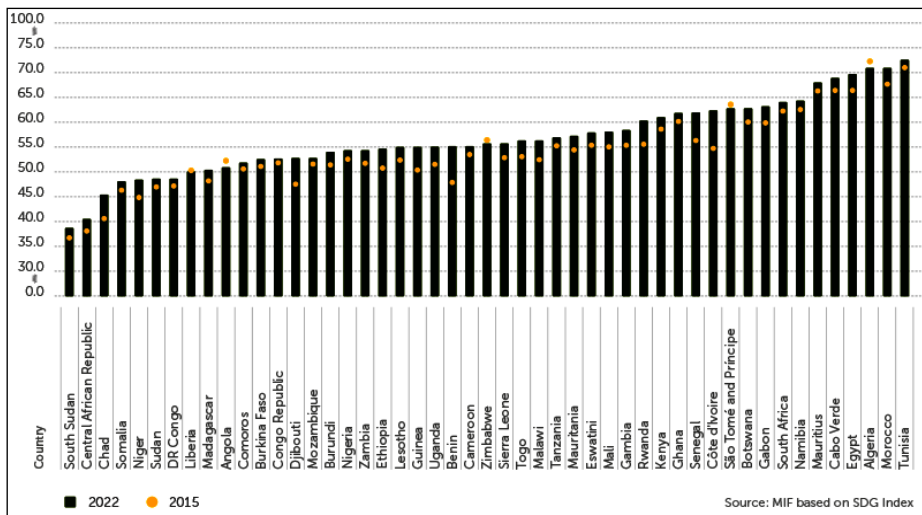


Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/262938/conflicts-in-sub-saharan-africa-by-intensity/>

b. Limitations in Coercive Approach: UN peacekeepers are not allowed to use lethal power except in self-defence or maintain the mandate. The nature of their mandate controls their effectiveness in the operational arena. Peacekeepers are now sent into civil war, counterterrorism operations and peace-enforcement assignments which are incompatible with their fundamental principles. Again, in the year 2014 an investigation report of UN found that peacekeepers responded to one in five cases in which civilians were endangered and failed to use force in noxious assaults.¹⁰

c. Shortfall of Development Goals: The timeline of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of UN expired in 2015. Aim of “zero hunger” could not be achieved here due to climate change effects. Achieving 17 goals of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are also challenging here. By 2030 around 500 million people will be living in extreme poverty of which 479 million will be from sub-Saharan Africa.¹¹

Figure 3: Africa: SDG index score (2015 - 2022)

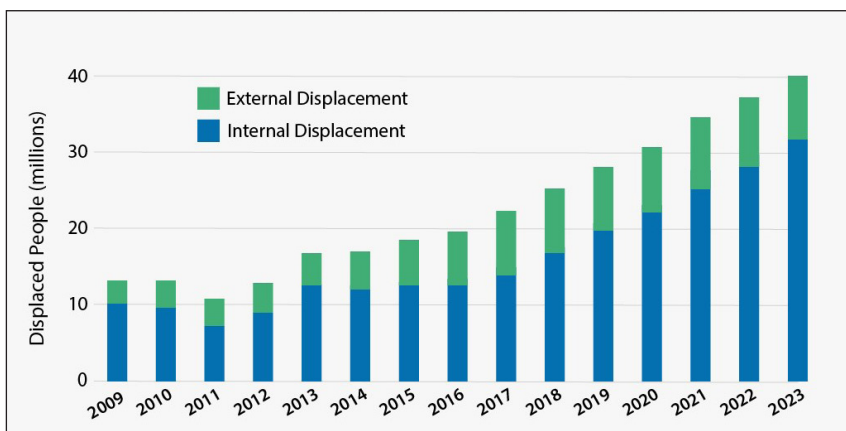


Source: <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/news/2023/2nd-sdg-summit-stagnating-progress-puts-sdgs-peril-africa>

d. Mandate Modifications with Situation: Peacekeeping assignments have been given astounding tasks and wide-ranging responsibilities. Often the broad mandates are difficult to implement. Any modification in mandate to address fluid situation require UNSC approval. Sometimes it makes UN operations and reactions slow which in turn affects self-protection. Even peacekeepers have come under fire for failing to arbitrate at critical instants. The full power of UN Missions based on Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter are insufficient to prevent a war or bringing an end to it.¹²

e. **Protection of Civilian:** UN members could not effectively prevent the 1994 Rwandan genocide despite. More than eight hundred thousand Rwandans were murdered then. UN peacekeepers in South Sudan also could not protect locals in clash amid government forces and insurgents in 2016. Some missions seem overwhelmed by worsening violence. In vast inaccessible area of DRC civilian protection issue is challenging. Reasons for this failure can be limitations of mandate and ROE of concern contingents. UN forces have been criticized for inaction at times of need. The consequence is increased number of displaced people.

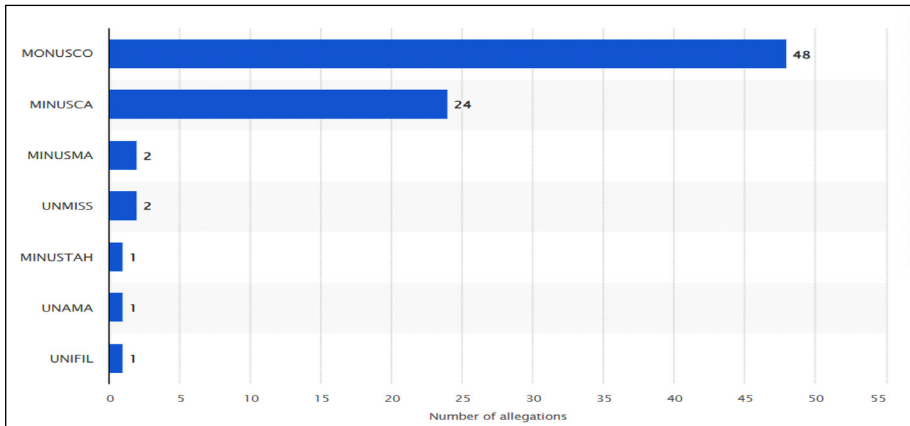
Figure 4: Forcibly displaced people of Africa



Source: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/african-conflicts-displace-over-40-million-people/>

f. **Human Rights Abuse:** A UN report in 2021 mentioned that the level of ethics and integrity of peacekeeping staff is low and accountability for misconduct is low. Allegations of exploitation were raised against peacekeepers of Darfur region. Peacekeepers were even accused of conducting human rights violation including sexual abuse. UN has 'Zero Tolerance Policy' for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). Even then, in 2021 UN withdrew 450 Gabonese peacekeepers and in 2023, 60 Tanzanian peacekeepers from CAR when allegations of sexual abuse were notified. Again, in 2023 several MONUSCO soldiers were charged for sexual exploitation and violence. However, action against many were not taken or long delayed which complicated the situation.¹³

Figure 5: Number of accusations of sexual abuse against UN peacekeepers in 2022



Source: statista.com, 2024¹⁴

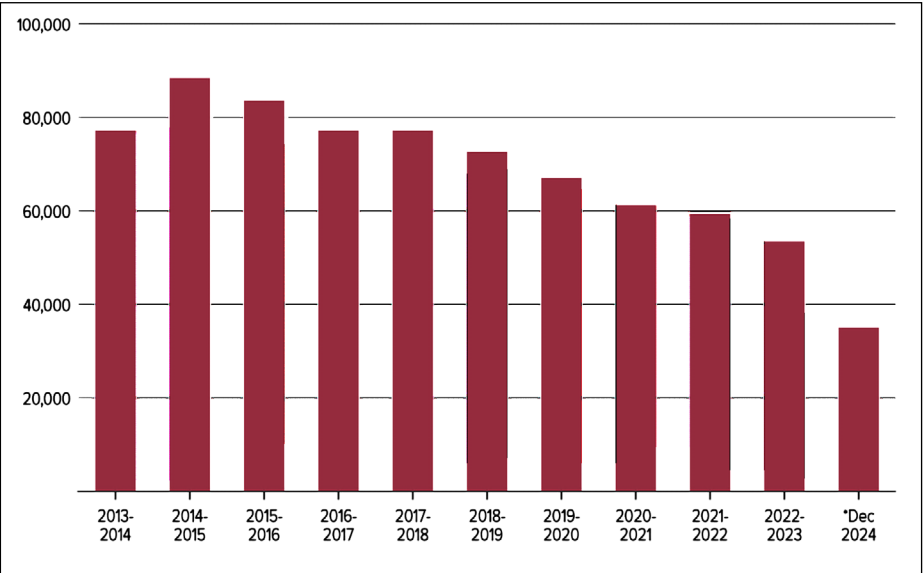
g. Interest of Superpower States: Peacekeeping missions are too costly and they rely on financing from a few major donors. US is the biggest donor of UN. In year 2023 China has boosted its support by launching a ten-year, USD 1 billion fund for peacekeeping operations.¹⁵ Besides, veto applied by permanent members of the Security Council can weaken peacekeeping mandates. Again, these missions contribute in economic development of some troops contributing countries. Several multi-national mining companies are pursuing the UN to renew MONUSCO's mandate. UN peacekeepers work beside troops from France and Russia who has their own interests in CAR. In Sudan and the CAR, Russian companies have been given exploration rights to gold and diamond mines.¹⁶ Ultimately, the mission of troops of France, Germany and the UK in the Sahel region is to avert Islamists reaching to Europe. The missions seem fulfilling economic interests rather than protecting local populations.

h. Political Instability: UN mission can only flourish when there is firm commitment politically. Mission faces serious problem when absence of such commitment remains. Host states devoid of effective democratic systems can hamper prospect of UN missions.

j. Mistrust by Misinterpretation: In Africa, the breach amid the expectations of the inhabitants and what they really see from peacekeepers keeps rising. The task of the assignment is so huge that it's easy to underestimate development being made. Some feel that it is a ploy by western powers to reassert and control over the countries in which these peacekeepers operate. Peacekeepers have often been denoted as tourists by the local communities.

k. **Unfriendly Host:** Several missions are deployed without effective political agreement and proper consent of host states. Sometimes, host stakeholders also have interests in volatility of conflicts. A few of the Congolese political leaders are benefited from the actions of the rebel groups in terms of resource ownership and maintaining political status. Again, UN panel stated that Rwanda and Uganda were prolonging the war of 1994 to extract wealth from the region.¹⁷ Restrictions imposed occasionally on freedom of movement affect effectiveness of peacekeeping. It averts swift replies on the ground, delays efforts to protect civilians and investigate human rights abuses. It undermines safety and security of service providers. Sometimes UN properties come under attack of rebels. Finding a equilibrium between the agreement of host states and gaining neutral environment become vital for peacekeeping.

Figure 6: The decreasing number of UN peacekeepers in Africa



Source: The New Humanitarian, 2024

l. **Neutrality:** UN supporting questionable regimes on power progressively lose acceptability as neutral forces in the eyes of both rebel groups and general mass. This may happen when Security Council deploys mission with implausible mandates in non-permissive situations. Again, when any stakeholder remains against resolution, it becomes difficult for sustainable peace which is observed in CAR and DRC. Also, good dealings with the host government are vital for carrying out a peace procedure and sustainable development strategy.¹⁸

Suggested Reforms: Few options those need attention and reforms are discussed below:-

a. Winning Confidence of Local Inhabitants: Conduct of peacekeepers are vital in this regard. A system of vetting from top is needed here. Various Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC) activities including medical campaign and open discussion can enhance mutual trust. Prevention of conflicts lies in sustainable and inclusive development. Infrastructural development works by military engineers can increase acceptance of UN.

b. Addressing Misconducts: Troops sending countries are responsible for charging their accused troops. Fast interrogation and follow up action are must in addressing any misconduct. Motivation and training should be effective to implement zero tolerance in SEA cases. Track records need to be considered when selecting any country for future assignments.

c. Regional Interventions: UN should meticulously manage the AU and regional organisations to supplement each another. AU-led operations funded by UN member nations can be an option. Other regional stakeholders can be the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The AU set development goals for the continent under Agenda 2063. This can provide a sense of continent-wide possession of growth and mitigate conflicts.

d. Peace Missions are Inevitable: Despite many complications, UN still have vital roles to play in Africa. Making UN Missions unwanted can become counterproductive and will create crises in host countries. Ideology-based terrorism and humanitarian crises can rise in Mali and DRC again.

e. Reforms and Restructuring: UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched A4P initiative in 2018, which emphasises on evolving peacekeeping mandates with strong political strategies, enhancing the safety of peacekeepers and locals and better prepared peacekeepers. Sexual exploitation and misconducts by peacekeepers should be made accountable. Inclusion of more women peacekeepers will allow to address gender and health issues. Mandates should be modified considering demands like protecting civilians, humanitarian programs and diplomatic goals.

Figure 7: Action for Peacekeeping



Source: Author's self-construct

f. **Commitment for Peace:** Stronger commitment of all stakeholders is must for success of any peacekeeping efforts. The entire peacekeeping scheme should assist the native's interests and function as per effective mandates. Motivation and training of peacekeepers should be harmonised with the overall goal. Besides, superpower states should support UN mandates by adequate funding.

Role of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers

In addition to above mentioned reforms, Bangladesh can focus, track and suggest the following:-

- a. Challenges like experiencing changing nature of conflict with nimble opponents, modifications of unrealistic mandates and power politics authorising operations need to be addressed.
- b. Present armed violence does not remain limited within conventional or identifiable opponents. It involves ideology driven militias, criminal gangs and transnational insurgents. They have radical maximalist agenda which demands tactful negotiation and motivation.
- c. As ideological agendas spread over neighbouring states, negotiation demands involvement of multi-party and regional forum.
- d. Negotiation or diplomatic processes should pave the way for better governance, building consensus within societies and political harmony within national actors.

Conclusion

UN was founded in 1945 with aim to promote peace, prosperity and security in the world. UN peacekeepers deploy with specific mandate and charter. Since 1960, more than thirty UN peacekeeping missions ran in Africa. Presently 5 missions are running here. The response of UN in the minds of oppressed community or nation is mixed. Though UN have many success stories but with the passage of time its role has been debatable. In many cases UN deployed without proper consent of governments. Implementing Chapter 7 of the Charter which compels all member countries to adhere to its decisions is found challenging.

Interest of superpower states also put limitations on humanitarian work of peacekeepers. Sometimes its inability to stop ethnic cleansing in Rwanda, Darfur, CAR and DRC were noticed. Widespread abuses, inaction, incompetence of UN was also observed in few incidents. The current focus of the MDG for sustainable social and economic development of African region is too narrow. Somewhere UN showed biasness to selected groups or suspected government. Again, rise of terrorism has become dangerous when it targets the peacekeepers. Withdrawing from Mali and order to withdraw from DRC by the end of 2024 projects consequences of bad reputation.

UN mission is also inevitable as it will rise instability, less growth and insecurity. UN is an institution in fundamental need of reform and new leadership. Confidence building, human centred development and employment should be looked into. Peacekeeping is a prevention, not a cure, for the menace of violent extremism or conflicts. Short-term tool of peacekeeping should lead into long-

term peace-building process. Finally, in determining the UN's forthcoming state in Africa suitable mandate and sensible response will be crucial.

Recommendations

Following are the suggestions:-

- a. Any misconduct, abuse and inaction by peacekeepers should be disposed justly.
- b. Reform of UN Peacekeeping aspects should be done predicting future scenarios.
- c. Collaboration with regional organisations and commitment by all stakeholders are must.

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Brief Biography



Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Mahmudur Rahman Niaz, SGP, psc was commissioned in Corps of Engineers in December 1999. He served in various appointments in four Engineer Battalions, one Independent Engineer Company and one BGB Battalion. He served as Instructor class-C in Engineer Centre and School of Military Engineering, Instructor class-B in Non-Commissioned Officers' Academy and Instructor class-A in Military Institute of Science and Technology. He also served as Garrison Engineer and Commander Military Engineer Services. Besides Mandatory courses, he attended Mid-Career Course at Pakistan. He has completed his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, Masters in Defence Studies and Masters in Business Administration. He has participated in United Nations mission in Darfur and DR Congo. He has to his credit a number of publications in various journals and national dailies and presented some papers in various national and international seminars. Presently he is serving as Town Planner in Bangladesh University of Professionals.

Supreme Sacrifice for Peace: A Tribute to the Dedicated UN Peacekeepers

Lieutenant Commander M M Azmolur Rahman, (Edn), BN

Introduction

Peace is one of the most cherished ideals of humanity. However, achieving and maintaining peace is often fraught with challenges, especially in regions ravaged by conflict. In the history of human civilization, numerous people dedicated their lives to establish peace. Many organizations and institutions have been formed to promote peace on the local or international level. The United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Missions have been instrumental in fostering peace across the globe, often at a great cost. These missions involve the deployment of military personnel to stabilize regions, rebuild societies and ensure the protection of civilians. The ultimate sacrifice made by these peacekeepers highlights their commitment to a world free from conflict, demonstrating a profound example of the supreme sacrifice for peace. For the outstanding commitment of the peacekeepers and overall success in promoting world peace, the UN Peacekeeping Force was awarded the most prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in 1988.¹

The United Nations has a fundamental duty to promote global peace and security through a multifaceted approach. Its responsibilities encompass the mediation of conflicts, the facilitation of peace negotiations and the implementation of peacekeeping missions to stabilize conflict zones. The UN also fosters diplomatic dialogue and cooperation among member states to address the root causes of conflict, such as inequality and injustice. By coordinating humanitarian aid, supporting post-conflict reconstruction and upholding international laws and human rights, the UN plays a crucial role in building and sustaining peaceful societies. Additionally, the organization works to prevent conflicts through early warning systems, promoting disarmament and encouraging sustainable development, all of which contribute to a more stable and secured international community.

The sacrifice of UN peacekeepers is a profound testament to their commitment to global peace and security. These brave souls, hailing from diverse nations, put their lives on the line to stabilize conflict zones, protect civilians and facilitate the rebuilding of war-torn societies. Their roles often place them in dangerous environments where they face not only armed conflict but also extreme conditions such as disease and isolation. According to the statistics from the inception of the UN till 31 May 2024 shown on the United

Nations' website, 4380 peacekeepers (168 from Bangladesh) have lost their lives in the line of duty, highlighting the inherent risks of their mission.² Their sacrifices are made in the pursuit of a higher goal-securing a safer world for those who are most vulnerable. The loss of peacekeepers underscores the perilous nature of their work and the grave cost of maintaining international peace. Each sacrifice is a poignant reminder of the human cost of conflict and the relentless dedication required to address it. The global community honours these fallen heroes by recognizing their bravery and reinforcing support for peacekeeping efforts. Their ultimate sacrifice is a powerful symbol of the profound impact of their work and serves as a call to continue striving for a world where peace and security prevail.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to highlight the sacrifice of the UN Peacekeepers in the course of promoting world peace being the brand ambassador of the United Nations. Focus has been given mainly on the perilous work environment of the UN Peacekeeping Mission area and the supreme sacrifice of the peacekeepers. The sacrifice of the Bangladeshi Peacekeepers has been specially considered and projected with due homage to the heroic martyrs. In order to set the paper in its proper context it is important to have a quick look at the history of global conflict, movement for peace, inception of the UN and the UN Peacekeeping Operations.

Peace and Conflict

Conflict and the quest for peace are as old as human civilization. In ancient times, when people lived in caves and survival was their primary focus, their first conflicts arose from the struggle to collect food. Wild animals were their main adversaries, threatening their access to resources. To overcome this, some brave individuals stepped forward. They confronted these dangers and established a sense of security and peace within their communities. As human societies evolved, new forms of conflict emerged, including differences in race, language, locality, ideology, colour, religion etc. These differences often fueled tensions and disputes among groups. However, just as in ancient times, there have always been those who rise to challenge the conflicts and restore peace. Throughout history, these peacemakers have worked tirelessly to bridge divides, address grievances and promote understanding, ensuring that the quest for harmony continues despite the ever-changing nature of human conflict.

Peace is never achieved without effort, sacrifice, and dedication. From ancient times to the present days, those who have taken it upon themselves to establish and maintain peace have often paid a heavy price for their

commitment. These individuals, driven by a deep sense of duty to humanity, have faced immense challenges, including personal risks, hardship and, for many, the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. Throughout history, countless people have lost their lives while working tirelessly to promote peace and protect others from the ravages of conflict. Their courage and selflessness have often introduced them as national heroes, revered for their unwavering dedication to the greater good.

As conflicts grew more complex over time, the role of peacekeepers became increasingly challenging. Nations frequently found themselves at odds, engaging in wars that spanned across regions and continents. The world has witnessed the horrors of numerous conflicts, including the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the Mexican Revolution (20 November 1910-01 December 1920), World War I (1914-1918), the Russian Revolution (March 8, 1917-June 16, 1923) etc. These wars and revolutions brought about widespread devastation, sufferings and loss of life, demonstrating the dire consequences of unchecked conflict. The unprecedented destruction caused by World War I and World War II (1939-1945), in particular, highlighted the urgent need for a collective effort to prevent such tragedies. The immense human and economic toll of these global conflicts spurred a growing desire among people and nations for an international organization dedicated to maintaining peace and preventing future wars. This led to the creation of institutions like the League of Nations and, later, the United Nations, aimed at fostering cooperation, dialogue and conflict resolution on a global scale.

Establishment of the UN and the Peacekeeping Mission

The United Nations (UN) was established on October 24, 1945, following the end of World War II, with the primary aim of preventing future conflicts and fostering international cooperation. The organization was created by 51 founding member states who signed the UN Charter in San Francisco, United States. The UN was envisioned as a successor to the League of Nations, which had failed to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War. Its creation was driven by a collective desire to promote peace, security and human rights, while also advancing social progress and better standards of living worldwide. The UN's structure includes six main organs, such as General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat, each tasked with different aspects of maintaining global order and supporting international law. Over the decades, the UN has grown to include 193 member states and has played a

critical role in addressing global challenges, ranging from peacekeeping and conflict resolution to humanitarian aid and sustainable development.

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations began in 1948 when the Security Council authorized the deployment of UN Military Observers to monitor the ceasefire during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. This mission, known as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), marked the start of UN peacekeeping efforts. Since then, the UN has launched 71 peacekeeping missions worldwide, 14 of which are still active.³ Over the years, millions of military personnel, UN police and civilians from more than 125 countries have participated in these operations. Initially, UN missions involved unarmed military observers and lightly armed troops, focusing on monitoring, reporting and building confidence among conflicting parties. The primary role of peacekeeping was to maintain ceasefires and stabilize situations, supporting political efforts to resolve conflicts peacefully. The first armed peacekeeping operation, the UN Emergency Force (UNEF), was deployed in 1956 to address the Suez Crisis. In the 1960s and 1970s, the UN conducted short-term missions in the Dominican Republic, West New Guinea (now part of Indonesia) and Yemen.⁴ This was followed by longer-term deployments in Cyprus, the Middle East and Lebanon. The UN Charter was originally designed to manage disputes between sovereign states, focusing on inter-state conflicts. However, following the Cold War, intra-state conflicts became more common in peace support operations. As global politics and the nature of conflicts evolve, peacekeeping operations have become increasingly challenging and demanding.

Fatalities and Risk Factors of the UN Peacekeeping Mission

The UN peacekeepers are typically deployed to regions experiencing or recovering from conflict, where there is a need to maintain peace and security, support the implementation of peace agreements and protect civilians. In this process, the peacekeepers carry out their duties in an endangered environment where there is fatality and risk of death at every step. During the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, the tragic fatalities of UN peacekeepers highlighted the perilous nature of their mission amidst one of the most brutal conflicts of the 20th century. On April 7, 1994, following the assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana, which triggered the Rwandan genocide, ten Belgian paratroopers from the UN force were disarmed and killed by Rwandan government troops.⁵ This attack was a grim indication of the extreme danger facing UN forces. Throughout the genocide, the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) faced numerous challenges, with several peacekeepers

killed and injured while trying to protect civilians and maintain some semblance of order in a rapidly deteriorating situation.

During the East Timor Crisis in 1999, UN peacekeepers faced extreme danger as they worked to restore order and protect civilians in the wake of widespread violence following the territory's vote for independence from Indonesia. The crisis was marked by brutal clashes, mass displacement and atrocities committed by Pro-Indonesian militias. Despite the overwhelming risks, UN peacekeepers, particularly those from the Australian-led International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), demonstrated immense courage and commitment. Tragically, several peacekeepers lost their lives in the line of duty, underscoring the supreme sacrifices made to uphold peace and protect the people of East Timor. Their bravery played a crucial role in stabilizing the region and paving the way for East Timor's eventual independence as a sovereign nation.

The Haiti earthquake in 2010 was a devastating disaster that not only claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Haitians but also resulted in significant loss among UN peacekeepers. When the earthquake struck on January 12, 2010, it caused widespread destruction, including the collapse of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) headquarters in Port-au-Prince. Tragically, 102 UN personnel, including peacekeepers, lost their lives in the disaster, marking one of the deadliest days in the history of UN peacekeeping.⁶ These brave men and women were in Haiti to help stabilize the country, support its government and assist in humanitarian efforts. Their sacrifice underscores the dangers UN peacekeepers face, not only from conflict but also from natural disasters, as they work to protect and aid vulnerable populations in some of the most challenging environments in the world.

The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, known as MINUSMA (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), has been one of the most dangerous assignments for UN forces, with a significant number of peacekeepers sacrificing their lives since its establishment in 2013. The mission was deployed following the 2012 insurgency, where militants and separatist rebels took control of northern Mali. Despite a 2015 peace agreement, the situation remains volatile, with militant groups continuing to launch deadly attacks. Peacekeepers have faced ambushes, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and direct assaults from insurgent groups, leading to over 300 fatalities as of 2023.⁷ These sacrifices underscore the immense risks peacekeepers endure while trying to stabilize the region and protect civilians in one of the most complex and dangerous environments in the world.

In 2018, the world witnessed a profound sacrifice as UN peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) paid the ultimate price for their commitment to peace and stability. On December 7, rebels attacked a United Nations base in Beni, North Kivu, leading to the tragic deaths of 15 Tanzanian peacekeepers serving with the MONUSCO mission.⁸ This brutal assault, which also resulted in numerous injuries, underscored the grave risks faced by peacekeepers operating in conflict zones. These courageous individuals were dedicated to protect civilians and support the DRC's recovery from years of violence and their sacrifice highlighted both the dangerous nature of their work and the ongoing need for international support and resilience in the pursuit of global peace and security.

The United Nations and Bangladesh

Bangladesh joined the United Nations on September 17, 1974, three years after gaining independence in 1971. Since then, Bangladesh has been an active member of the UN, contributing significantly to its various initiatives, particularly in peacekeeping operations. The country has been recognized for its dedication to global peace and stability and its peacekeepers have earned international respect for their professionalism and commitment. Beyond peacekeeping, Bangladesh actively engages with the UN on issues such as sustainable development, climate change and human rights. The country has also played a key role in advancing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing the challenges of climate change, given its vulnerability to environmental impacts. The involvement of Bangladesh with the UN reflects its broader commitment to multilateralism and its pursuit of a peaceful and prosperous world order.

Bangladesh has established itself as a leading contributor to United Nations peacekeeping missions, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to global peace and stability. Since its first involvement in 1988, the country has become one of the largest suppliers of troops, police officers, and civilian staff to UN missions worldwide. Currently, Bangladesh has 6,924 peacekeepers deployed in 12 countries.⁹ Bangladeshi peacekeepers have been deployed in various high-profile missions, such as those in Haiti, South Sudan and Mali, where they have played crucial roles in maintaining security, supporting humanitarian efforts and facilitating post-conflict recovery. Known for their professionalism and dedication, Bangladeshi personnel have earned international recognition and respect. Their substantial contributions underscore the broader commitment of Bangladesh to foster global peace and address complex international challenges.

Sacrifice of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers

Bangladesh made its first UN peacekeeping deployments in 1988, participating in two operations, UNIIMOG in Iran-Iraq and UNTAG in Namibia. The deployment began with the UNIIMOG mission, where 15 Bangladeshi military observers were sent to monitor the ceasefire. According to the Armed Forces Division of Bangladesh, Bangladesh has successfully completed 63 peacekeeping missions across approximately 40 countries, involving 167,274 personnel from the Bangladesh Armed Forces.¹⁰ In the process of contributions to various UN peacekeeping operations, Bangladesh has tragically lost 168 brave-hearted Peacekeepers with 272 injuries in the last 36 years. A detailed breakdown is shown in the following table:-

Table 1: Summary of Deceased and Injured Bangladeshi Peacekeepers

Service/Organization	Deceased	Injured
Bangladesh Army	131	241
Bangladesh Navy	04	09
Bangladesh Air Force	09	06
Bangladesh Police	24	12
Total	168	272

Source: Website of Bangladesh Armed Forces Division and Bangladesh Police

Among the Bangladeshi UN Peacekeepers, Bangladesh Army played a crucial role in maintaining global peace and security. In the course of these peace initiatives, a total of 131 Bangladesh Army personnel have made the ultimate sacrifice, while 232 have been injured which reflected the high risks and challenges associated with peacekeeping operations.¹¹ In 1989, Lieutenant Colonel Md. Faizul Karim, the commander of the Bangladesh contingent to Namibia (UNTAG), tragically passed away in Windhoek, Namibia, marking him as the first Bangladeshi officer to dedicate his life while serving on a peacekeeping mission abroad. His sacrifice set a sombre precedent and since then, many other brave Bangladeshi peacekeepers have laid down their lives in the line of duty, embodying the spirit of courage, dedication and selflessness. These valiant heroes have continued to honourably serve in some of the most volatile and conflict-ridden regions, steadfast in their resolve to uphold the ideals of peace and security. Their legacy is a testament to Bangladesh's strong commitment to foster global harmony and their significant contributions have earned respect and recognition on the international stage.

Bangladesh Navy personnel have been participating in UN peacekeeping missions since 1993, showcasing their commitment to global

peace and security. The first independent Bangladesh Navy contingent was deployed in 1997 with the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) following the Gulf War- I,¹² where they were tasked with patrolling the waterways along the Iraq-Kuwait border as part of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) enforcement.¹³ Building on this success, in 2005, the Bangladesh Navy deployed the first independent Force Riverine Unit to the UN Mission in Sudan, a mission that continued until 2012. That same year, the Navy also established a Boat Detachment in Ivory Coast, which operated for 11 years in the lagoons of Abidjan. Both of these deployments concluded successfully with the restoration of peace and the fulfilment of the UN Mandate. There was a great deal of sacrifice and dedication from the peacekeepers throughout the process of these deployments. Four naval personnel died in the line of duty and 09 were severely injured to ensure world peace. The most tragic incident was the death of Lieutenant Commander Ashraf Siddiqui, who was killed when an aid convoy was ambushed in the west of the country.

The contribution of Bangladesh Air Force to the UN peacekeeping mission started in 1993 by sending 26 peacekeepers in UNPROFOR, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Currently, 406 Bangladesh Air Force personnel are deployed in UN peacekeeping mission.¹⁴ In the noble pursuit of peacekeeping missions under the United Nations, Bangladesh Air Force personnel have exhibited remarkable dedication and bravery. Tragically, these courageous individuals, embodying selflessness and sacrifice, have lost their lives while carrying out their duties with steadfast commitment. Nine brave souls have sacrificed their lives for the sake of promoting peace in the foreign land. Their unwavering dedication to global peace and security serves as a profound inspiration. The fallen members of the Bangladesh Air Force, who gave their lives in service of the UN peacekeeping mission, stand as a testament to exceptional bravery and heroism.

Soon after the deployment of the Bangladesh Army in the UN Peacekeeping mission, Bangladesh Police marked a significant milestone by participating in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. Since then, the success of Bangladesh Police in peacekeeping has grown with 21,444 personnel serving in 23 UN missions. A total of 23 Bangladeshi policemen sacrificed their lives and 12 were fatally injured during the deployment in the UN mission.¹⁵ The first Bangladeshi police officer to die while serving in a UN peacekeeping mission was Sub-Inspector Abdul Sattar. He lost his life in 1989 during the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) mission. Even in the year 2023 constable Md Moniruzzaman sacrificed his life during serving with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission

in Mali (MINUSMA). The sacrifice of the deceased and injured Bangladeshi police personnel in the UN mission signifies the commitment of Bangladeshi police personnel to UN peacekeeping operations.

Conclusion

The UN peacekeepers demonstrate extraordinary courage, unwavering dedication and a willingness to make the supreme sacrifice. These brave heroes, hailing from various corners of the globe, unite under the banner of the United Nations with a singular mission: to foster peace in some of the world's most turbulent regions. Their contributions are not just about maintaining peace; they represent the collective hope of humanity for a better and more harmonious world. They operate in environments where the distinction between friend and foe can be blurred and where the very presence of peacekeepers can be a target. Despite these challenges, they remain steadfast, guided by the conviction that their efforts can bring about change, save lives and lay the groundwork for sustainable peace.

The sacrifices made by the Bangladeshi peacekeepers, including those from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Police are a testament to the nation's dedication to uphold the principles of international peace and cooperation. From the scorching deserts of the Middle East to the dense jungles of Africa, Bangladeshi peacekeepers have stood firm in the face of danger, often at the cost of their own lives. The loss of 168 Bangladeshi peacekeepers, the injuries sustained by 272 others and the tragic death of Lieutenant Colonel Md. Faizul Karim in 1989 are poignant reminder of the high price of peace. These sacrifices underscore the perilous nature of peacekeeping operations and the immense personal risks undertaken by those who serve.

As a tribute to the sacrifice of these dedicated peacekeepers, it is crucial to remember that their mission is far from complete. Conflicts continue to erupt around the world, posing new challenges and necessitating continued international cooperation and commitment. The legacy of the peacekeepers who have fallen in the line of duty serves as a powerful reminder of the need for sustained efforts toward conflict resolution and the prevention of violence.

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Brief Biography



Lieutenant Commander M M Azmolur Rahman, (Edn), BN was commissioned in Bangladesh Navy in the Education Branch on 01 January 2019. He completed his B.A. (Hon's) and M.A. in English Literature from Khulna University. After joining Bangladesh Navy, the officer completed his basic training from Bangladesh Naval Academy. He also completed Junior Staff Course (JSC) from Junior Staff Training Institute (JSTI), BNA. He served at Bangladesh Naval Academy as Instructor English. At present the officer is serving in BNS TITUMIR as Wardroom Mess Secy.

Socio-Economic Development by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers: A Case of Conflict Resolution in the Democratic Republic of Congo Through the Lens of the Iceberg Theory

Lieutenant Colonel Md Humaoun Kabir, afwc, psc

Introduction

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the largest country in Central Africa. The country achieved her independence on 30 June 1960 from Belgium. DRC, the only country in Africa, shares borders with nine countries.¹ DRC possesses abundant mineral resources and stores some of the greatest reserves of cobalt, lithium, copper, diamonds and gold globally.² The DRC has suffered from a persistent history of chaotic and brutal armed conflicts since its independence.³ DRC has experienced recurrent armed conflicts, Rwandan Genocide and two Congo Wars, which have exacerbated ethnic tensions, violent confrontations and competition for mineral ownership.⁴

The dynamic geopolitical scenario of DRC has severely impacted on the stability of the country. The economic interest of regional and international power has instigated the armed race and push the country to a journey of uncertainty.⁵ Following the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 1999, United Nations (UN) troops were deployed in DRC.⁶ However, the armed conflict continued and the armed conflicts adversely affected social, economic, political and security aspects of DRC.⁷ Bangladeshi peacekeepers have been deployed in DRC since 1999 and contributing substantially to peace and socio-economic development of DRC.⁸

The Iceberg Theory of conflict is one of the famous study models which is used to analyse armed conflict of different countries by peacekeepers, security analysts and researchers. This Theory could be utilized to understand the conflict dynamic of DRC and perform the role of peacekeepers effectively for long-term conflict resolution. Considering the importance of the Theory, this paper first described the different aspects of Iceberg Theory of conflict. Thereafter, it analysed the conflict of DRC in the lens of Iceberg Theory. Finally, the paper explained the socio-economic development approach by Bangladeshi peacekeepers for conflict resolution of DRC.

Literature Review

The famous Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung⁹ first introduced Iceberg Theory of conflict to analyse armed conflict in 1969. The Iceberg Theory helps to conceptualize the dynamics of conflicts in societies including the conflict resolution.¹⁰ According to Johan Galtung, the visible conflicts are only the small portion and beneath it lies the major portion of iceberg that symbolizes root causes of the conflict. This Theory also offers a tool for analysing not only just visible conflicts but more on the role of economic, social and political factors leading to a conflict. According to Lederach,¹¹ the deeper aspect of the causes of the conflict needs to be addressed to foster a long-lasting stable peace and conflict resolution.¹²

The conflict in the DRC provides an ideal example of how the iceberg theory of conflict can be used to analyse a dynamic and prolonged conflict. The conflict of DRC is characterized by visible ethnic division, human rights violations, mass killing, political instability and poor economic condition.¹³ The resource curse of DRC is critical in perpetuating the conflict. The international and regional power is trying to control the mineral resources by patronizing different armed groups.¹⁴ Furthermore, political instability and fragile government institutions are reasons for underlying factors that sustaining conflict.¹⁵ Besides, the ethnic divisions and intra-ethnic violence played a significant role in the conflict of DRC. The impact of Rwandan Genocide and fighting between Tutsis and Hutus ethnic people created a humanitarian situation in DRC.

In DRC, the role of Bangladeshi peacekeepers is instrumental in the UN peacekeeping efforts. Apart from primary mandated task, Bangladeshi peacekeepers are contributing to the socio-economic development of DRC. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are contributing to the infrastructural development by constructing road, bridges, school and medical facilities in conflict prone areas. These developments have cumulative impact in creating employment opportunities contributing directly to the livelihood of the locals.¹⁶ Furthermore, the development initiatives not only provide immediate dividend but also provide sustainable long-term benefits by enabling economic growth and facilitating basic services.¹⁷ Besides, the Bangladeshi peacekeepers have involved in community reconciliation and social cohesion. They have adopted an approach of dialogue and cooperation to conflict resolution of DRC. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are active in humanitarian efforts by providing healthcare, food distribution and education to the DRC citizens.¹⁸

Methodology

This study utilised a qualitative research approach to analyse the conflict of DRC through the lens of Iceberg Theory of conflict and socio-economic development by Bangladeshi peacekeepers in addition to their classical peacekeeping role with a view to conflict resolution of DRC. A descriptive research design was employed to identify the interconnection between these phenomena. Descriptive research investigates the exploratory nature of the questions to discover the varieties and aspects of a particular phenomenon.¹⁹ Moreover, the authors adopted a narrative review as a suitable approach²⁰ for subjects that demand an informative and thorough synthesis of existing literature.

Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with the former and present Bangladeshi peacekeepers serving in DRC. All the interviewees were interviewed by the author with both standard open-ended structured and unstructured questionnaires. The data collected from interview was analysed to identify socio-economic development by Bangladeshi peacekeepers to conflict resolution. Secondary data was planned to follow a search strategy to identify and retrieve available documents. The search was conducted in open-access databases such as DOAJ and Google Scholar using combinations of keywords related to conflict, peacekeeping, Iceberg conflict theory and socio-economic development. The returned results were screened based on relevance, publication date, keywords and abstracts. Finally, selected papers were studied to identify appropriate themes and organised for discussion.

Discussion

Iceberg Theory of Conflict

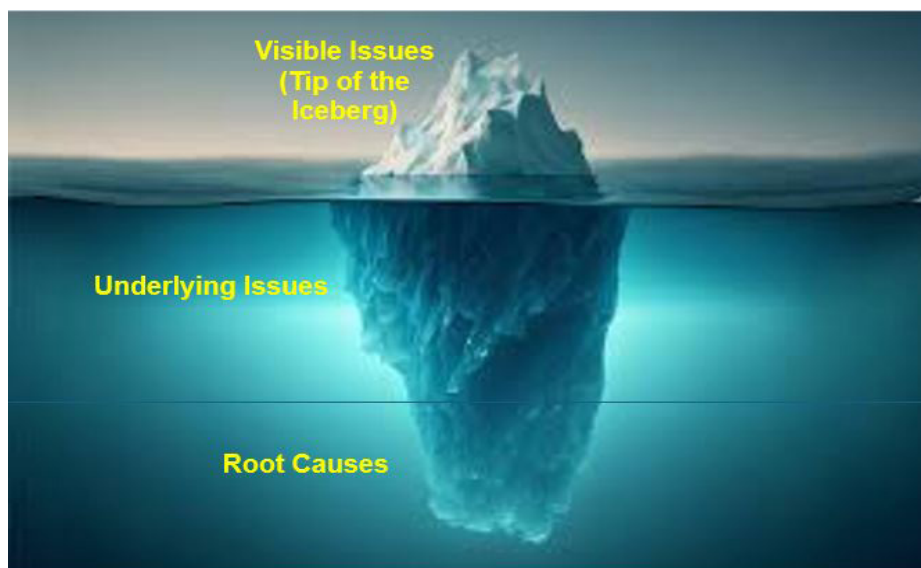
The Iceberg Theory is a cognitive framework that uses the metaphor of an iceberg. The Theory elucidates how surface phenomena are influenced by understanding issues, structures and beliefs. In 1976, anthropologist Edward Hall created the Iceberg Theory, which he later adapted for use in organisational culture.²¹ Researchers have also used the Iceberg Theory to analyse conflicts from their perspectives. The famous Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung first introduced Iceberg Theory to analyse armed conflict in 1969 to comprehend the intricacies of conflicts and root causes.²² Researchers like John Paul Lederach analysed the dynamic of violent conflict using the Iceberg Theory and applied it to peacebuilding. Another researcher Ruth B. M. Kauffmann analyse conflict in organizational context using Iceberg Theory

where he emphasized the hidden interests, culture and interpersonal dynamic directly influencing conflict.²³

Johan Galtung, in his Iceberg Theory of conflict, highlighted that visible features of conflict are only a small percentage of the whole problem also known as tip of iceberg and rest of the iceberg lying beneath the surface. The iceberg has three layers. These are briefly highlighted below:-²⁴

Visible Issues (Tip of the Iceberg): The physical violence, armed fighting, killing, raping, military engagement, displacement, insurgency and so on are few visible or surface manifestations which can grab the attention of international community. This is also termed as tip of iceberg.

Figure-1: Iceberg Theory of Conflict



Source: Author's self-construct

Underlying Issues: The inequality in wealth, access to basic needs, or amenities drives affected groups to rebel, ethnic oppression, or long-term land disputes spark war. Political injustice and poor governance in autocratic regimes spread hate and lead to armed conflict. Corruption and socio-economic injustice fuel violent conflict. An important factor preserving the conflict is the lack of justice and rule of law. The freedom to criminals and weak institutional approach inspires criminals to continue armed activities.

Root Causes: The root causes are characterized by the suppression of colonial powers and cultural divisions. The need for minerals and economic

dominance plays a significant role behind all armed conflict. Lack of ethnic, cultural, or religious identities are among the factors that contribute to violence. Besides, external interference and power thirst by superpower is a root cause almost in all armed conflicts.

Why is Iceberg Theory useful for Conflict Analysis?

The Iceberg Theory is an effective tool that advocates both visible and deeper factors to conflict resolution. For sustainable peace, the underlying and root causes need to be addressed and continue dialogue with all relevant stakeholders.²⁵ The application of this Theory in different conflicts is the testimony that it gives a comprehensive understanding of a particular conflict and conflict resolution.

Case Study-1: In the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, the demonstrated violence predominantly represented the surface of deeper factors, such as ethnic rivalry between Hutu and Tutsi groups. The underlying reasons were a century of ethnic tension, colonial suppression, economic disparity and political instability.²⁶

Case Study-2: The Iceberg Theory can be also applied in Northern Ireland conflict. The conflict manifested as a religious or political contention between Catholic nationalists advocating for unification with the Republic of Ireland and Protestant unionists desiring to remain within the United Kingdom. However, roots causes reveal factors, such as historical colonial tension, economic suppression and lack of cultural identity.²⁷

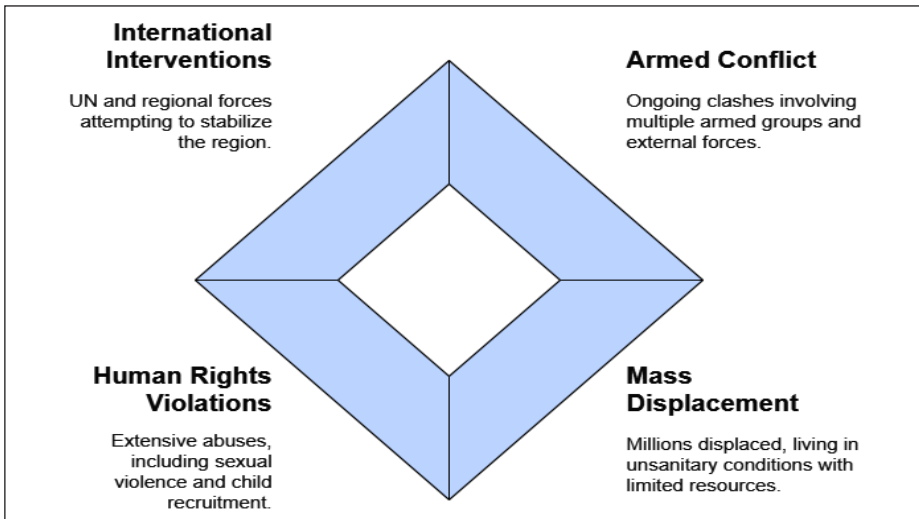
Analysing the Conflict of DRC in the Lens of Iceberg Theory

The conflict in the DRC constitutes a multifaceted challenge which cannot be analysed from a single perspective. The Iceberg Theory illustrates the intricacies of historical, structural and cultural elements that constitute enduring instability of DRC.

Visible Issues (Tip of the Iceberg)

Armed Conflict: DRC has been experiencing persistent armed conflict since independence. According to Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, there are more than 120 active armed groups operating in eastern provinces.²⁸ The clashes between government forces and multiple armed groups have resulted in death and displacement of innocent people. The involvement of external forces striving to control territory to seize the rich mineral areas has further fuelled the tension in this region.²⁹

Figure-2: Visible Issues (Tip of the Iceberg)



Source: Author's self-construct

Mass Displacement: The armed conflict of DRC has displaced 7.2 million people which is the second largest in African continent.³⁰ The displaced people are living below standard unsanitary accommodations and have limited access to food, education, water and healthcare. The violence has led to a refugee crisis, with several Congolese seeking asylum in neighbouring nations such as Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania.³¹

Human Rights Violation: DRC has seen catastrophic human rights violations that have fragmented the social fabric of nation and extensive abuses by numerous armed groups. Innocent people are being targeted considering their ethnic identity or political affiliations. They have used sexual violence particularly rape as a weapon of war.³² Besides, armed groups have forcefully recruited children as young as eight-year-old to be used as combatants, porters, sexual slaves and shield against government forces.³³

International Interventions: The history of UN involvement in peace and security in DRC dates to 1960. The present peacekeeping role of UN mission is to ensure protection of civilians, aid workers and advocates for human rights who are currently facing physical threats and to back the DRC government's initiatives to stabilize and consolidate peace.³⁴ The East African Community Regional Force (EACRF) which is a multinational force deployed in the Eastern DRC in November 2022 to support in peace and security stabilization in the eastern province of DRC. However, EACRF left DRC in 2023 due to the non-acceptance by government and people. Following

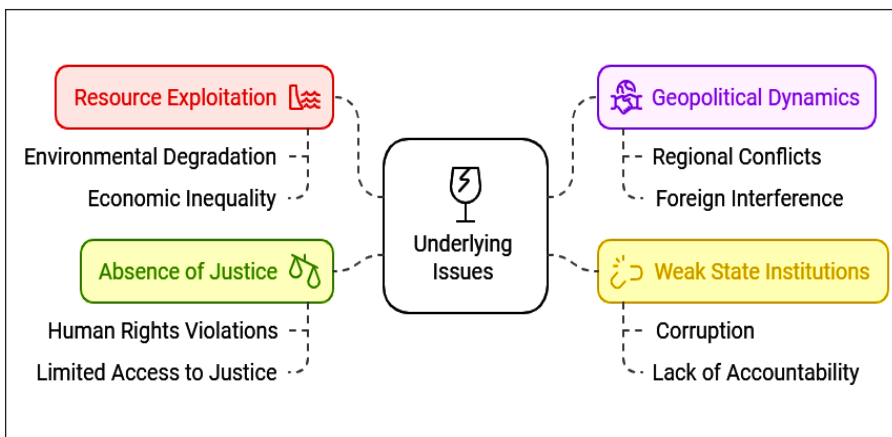
EACRF, Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC) was mandated in December 2023 to assist DRC army in negating M23 and other armed groups to sustain peace and security.³⁵

Underlying Issues

Resource Exploitation: The DRC is rich in minerals such as cobalt, coltan, diamonds and gold. However, the government has very little control over all the mining areas due to the presence of various armed groups. The foreign actors patronize armed groups to control the rich mineral area to allow smooth extraction and smuggle abroad. People are compelled to work under dangerous conditions without proper safety, resulting in poverty and social injustice. Besides, illegal trade of minerals and other natural resources remain as a major source of funding the armed groups.³⁶

Geopolitical Dynamics: DRC is tormented by a prolonged conflict caused by different geopolitical dynamics. The battle to secure country's rich mineral resources and funding of armed groups by neighbouring countries and regional and international actors resulting millions of displaced and death of innocent people.³⁷ The role of Rwanda and Uganda has been severely controversial in the conflict to secure their economic and military benefits. The failure of Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement-1999 and Nairobi Peace Process have made the security environment of DRC more complex than ever. The presence of foreign mercenaries and sponsored armed groups backed by superpowers turned DRC into an ideal ground for proxy war.³⁸

Figure-3: Underlying Issues



Source: Author's self-construct

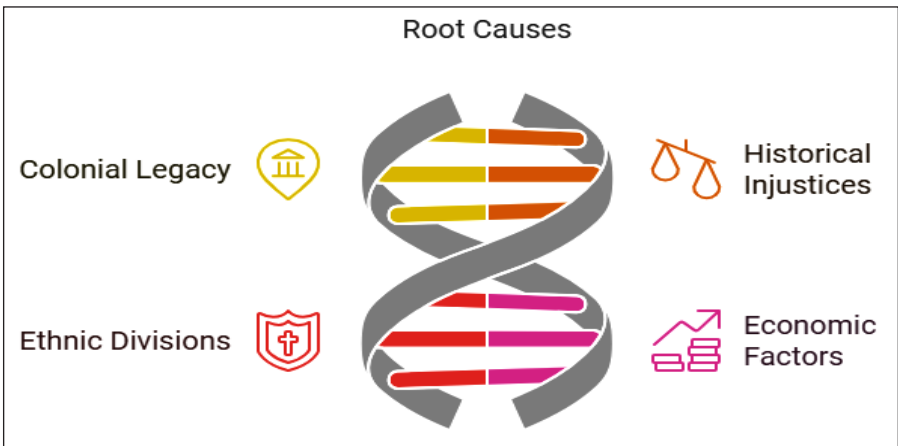
Weak State Institutions and Poor Governance: The DRC has been facing a deep crisis of poor governance described by corruption, fragile institutions and insecurity. Moreover, the political masters have prioritized their individual gain over national development. The lack of accountability for government and military created disorder in the state mechanism. The political instability, failure to ensure essential service to citizens and armed conflicts have further aggravated the situation.³⁹

Absence of Justice and Rule of Law: Absence of proper justice for committing crime is a key underlying factor aiding the conflict. Corrupt political leaders, military and armed groups know that they will not be convicted of any crime and violence. The judicial system is fragile and less capable of ensuring proper procedures to ensure justice.⁴⁰ Besides, corruption by judiciary remains a hindrance in the rule of law. Moreover, in many cases police is reluctant to detain a criminal as the government is also unable to feed the criminal in the jail according to the need.

Root Causes

Colonial Legacy and Long-Term Effects: This history of DRC symbolizes a savage colonial legacy by European imperialism in Africa. Belgium colonized DRC from year 1885 to 1960. DRC has experienced tragic atrocities, forced labour, mass killing and slavery.⁴¹ Belgium maintained an exploitative economic system and racial discrimination, subduing rights to education, healthcare, basic needs and denial of political rights. After independence, neo-colonial legacy continued in the form of influence of Western Powers, fighting for mineral resources, political unrest and poor institutional apparatus.⁴²

Figure-4: Root Causes



Source: Author's self-construct

Historical Injustices and Impunity: DRC has endured a cycle of brutality and impunity, beginning with ruthlessness of King Leopold II, where millions died from forced labor, mutilation and starvation in the rubber trade. The 32 years of dictatorship of Mobutu, the government system became weakened, prosecutions of human rights violation and institutionalized corruption. The lack of national reconciliation, widespread human rights violations by armed groups including killing, rape, child soldier recruitment went largely without any judicial trial which created a culture of impunity.⁴³

Ethnic Divisions and Social Fragmentation: DRC has over 200 ethnic groups who are affected and divided by colonial regime. The spillover effects of the 1994 Rwandan Geocide have suffered DRC with recurring ethnic conflicts particularly in the eastern regions. The influx of Hutu tribe into DRC intensified the communal tension and changed the geopolitics in this region.⁴⁴ The migration of Rwandan refugees has tormented the social cohesion and led the formation of different armed groups. Armed conflict, displacement, economic instability and political corruption have fragmented the social fabric, creating an uncertainty of traditional inter and intra-ethnic relations.⁴⁵

Economic Factors: DRC has been always a centre of economic attention of international powers to acquire rich minerals for their industrialization. They have patronized armed groups and kept an unstable security situation in DRC. Due to corruption, security issues and lack of vision, government of DRC could not utilize these minerals for the development of the citizen and for the country. 22% of total population live under multidimensionally poverty.⁴⁶ Besides, unemployment of young people forcing them to join armed group for their survival. The economic disparity and suppression to poor remain a major reason to the armed conflict of DRC.

Socio-Economic Development by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers for Conflict Resolution of DRC

Healthcare: Bangladeshi peacekeepers are playing a key role in providing humanitarian support to the distressed population of DRC. Bangladeshi contingents are providing free medical support and medicine to the local population.⁴⁷ Each contingent of Bangladesh is treating in an average of 200 local patients every month by contingent medical officer. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are also providing routine healthcare service to the internally displaced people. The operation patrols while dominating different villages provide medicine for common diseases, such as diarrhea, cough, fever and common infections.

Education: Armed conflicts of DRC have destroyed majority of the educational infrastructures and many children are now being deprived from basic education opportunity. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are playing a key role in supporting to education of local children, constructing school and providing textbooks, bags, stationary and sports materials to the schools. The aim of this initiative is to provide opportunities to vulnerable young affected by conflict.⁴⁸

Infrastructural Development: Bangladeshi contingents work as development partners with the local government in DRC. Bangladesh Engineering Company (BANENGR) and Bangladesh Rapid Deployment Battalion (BANRDB) are constructing and repairing road, culvert, school and camps for security forces of DRC. BANENGR works as the primary assets to construct roads and bridges which are being used for trade and commerce, humanitarian support and connected remote places with the city contributing directly to the economy of DRC.⁴⁹

Capacity Building of Local Population: Bangladeshi contingents, deployed in DRC are focused on the capacity building of the population of DRC. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are imparting skill development training on English language, Computer learning, Modern agricultural technique and process, bakery and excavator operator training. The purpose of this training is to make them efficient and help them to use these skills in the job market. People will be able to earn their livelihood and become economically self-sustained which is restraining them to take part in the conflict.

Employment: In all the Bangladeshi contingents in DRC, local population are given employment opportunity in the camps and in the development projects. A good number of locals are working in different capacities in the camps and earning their livelihood. The aim is to refrain people from engaging in illegal activities and conflict. Besides, the skill development training given to local population by Bangladeshi contingents help them to compete in the employment sector.

Social Awareness: Bangladeshi peacekeepers are actively participating in social awareness programmes with a view to making people aware on the health hazards, negative outcome of conflict and importance of societal responsibilities.⁵⁰ Besides, awareness programmes are routinely conducted on HIV, women health and child nutrition. Bangladeshi contingents are distributing sanitary items, nutritious food for children and items related to women health and hygiene.⁵¹

Conclusion

The Iceberg Theory of conflict is an effective tool to analyse the conflict anatomy of DRC. The conflict in the DRC suggests that the visible issues, armed conflict, mass displacement, international intervention and human rights violations are only the tip of iceberg. Beneath the visible issues, the underlying issues like resource exploitation, geographical dynamic, absence of justice, and weak state institutions play a critical role in perpetuating the conflict. Finally, the root causes are highlighted like colonial legacy, historical injustices, ethnic division and economic factors. The underlying and root causes are key segments which largely remain unaddressed. The Iceberg Theory propagates the necessity to address these issues for a long-term conflict resolution.

Peacekeeping is not merely peace support activities anymore, rather, collaborating socio-economic and bilateral relations. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are contributing to healthcare, education, infrastructural development, providing employment opportunity, capacity building of local population and social awareness aspects. The purpose behind is to keep population engaged, develop their skills and make them ready for the job market with a view to refraining from current conflict. Hence, Bangladeshi peacekeepers are performing not only the traditional peacekeeping roles, but also engage in socio-economic development approach as a tool for conflict resolution of DRC.

Scope for Future Research

The descriptive study has sufficient scope for further research and exploration. Future research initiatives could employ empirical approaches with primary data collection and quantitative analysis to provide more in-depth insights into the problems and opportunities for trade and commerce with DRC capitalizing positive image of Bangladeshi peacekeepers.

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Brief Biography



Lieutenant Colonel Md Humaoun Kabir, afwc, psc was commissioned with 48th BMA Long Course in the Corps of Infantry on 2 July 2003. He commanded 12 Bangladesh Infantry Regiment. As Instructor he served as Directing Staff in Tactics Wing in School of Infantry and Tactics, Sylhet and Platoon/Term Commander in Bangladesh Military Academy, Bhatiary. As staff, he served as General Staff Officer-3 (Operations) at Armed Forces Division, General Staff Officer-2 (Coordination) at National Defence College and Brigade Major of 203 Infantry Brigade. He is a graduate of Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur and completed his Armed Forces War Course from National Defence College, Mirpur. He participated in UN Peace Operation in Democratic Republic of Congo in 2009-10 and in 2023-24 as a contingent member and military observer/staff respectively. Presently, the officer is serving as Personal Secretary to Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Professionals, Mirpur.

Paradox of Protection of Civilians in Contemporary UN Peacekeeping Operation: Challenges and Key Strategies for Addressing the Complexities

Lieutenant Colonel Md Rakibul Hasan, SUP, afwc, psc

Introduction

Since its establishment in 1945, the United Nations (UN) has been at the forefront of global efforts to maintain peace and security. Its peacekeeping operations, which began in 1948, have evolved significantly over the decades. Initially, it focused on monitoring ceasefires and facilitating political dialogue. However, these missions now address a wide range of challenges, including governance restoration, electoral support and the protection of civilians (POC). Despite these efforts, civilians in conflict zones such as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), Sudan and reality in Gaza continue to endure the devastating impacts of violence. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized in 2023, "Civilians have suffered the deadly effects of armed conflict for too long. It is time we live up to our promise to protect them."¹ This statement underscores the moral imperative of POC as a priority mandate for UN peacekeeping, even as its implementation remains fraught with challenges.

The evolution of the POC mandate reflects the UN's response to past failures, such as the Rwandan Genocide and the Srebrenica massacre, which exposed the limitations of traditional peacekeeping in protecting civilians. In 1999, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1265, formally recognizing POC as a core component of peacekeeping missions.² POC is now a core element of most UN operations, built on three main pillars: engagement and dialogue, physical protection and fostering a secure environment. However, the dynamic and multifaceted nature of modern conflicts continues to hinder the effective implementation of POC. Challenges such as geopolitical rivalries, resource constraints, and the rise of non-state armed groups (AGs) complicate peacekeepers' ability to fulfill their mandates, leaving civilians vulnerable in many conflict zones.

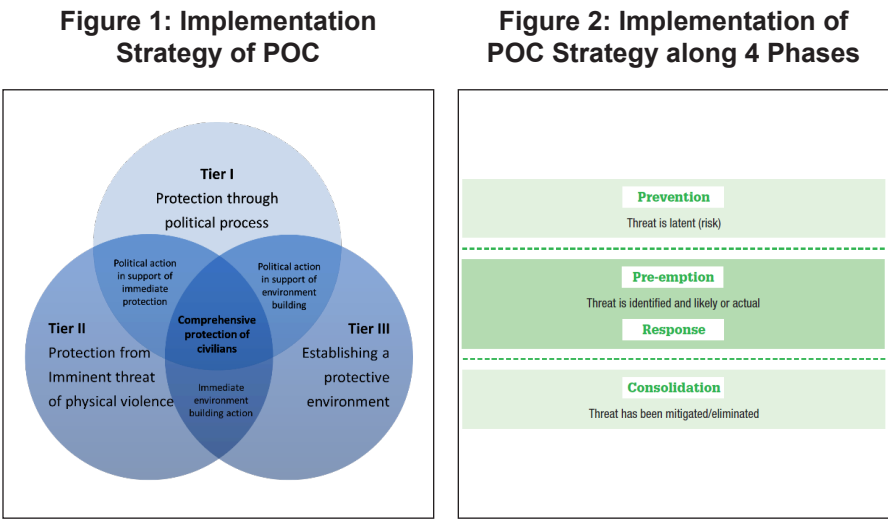
In view of the above, an endeavour has been made in this paper to analyze the genesis of POC in UN peacekeeping. Focusing on both strategic and operational dimensions of UN Peacekeeping, key challenges of POC are also examined. Finally, it explores plausible strategies to strengthen POC enabling UN to fulfill its obligations in protecting civilians within an increasingly complex global landscape.

Evolution of POC: A Critical Reflection

Over the decades, UN has become a cornerstone of international peace efforts, addressing diverse challenges. Currently, 11 active missions deploy over 70,000 militaries, police and civilian personnel to stabilize regions, protect civilians and restore governance.³ UN peacekeeping has evolved significantly, shifting from ceasefire monitoring to using force for civilian protection. The POC mandate, formally recognized in 1999 through Resolution 1265,currently remains a top priority in most UN peacekeeping operations.

POC in UN Peacekeeping- Theoretical Context: The Department of Peace Operation (DPO) POC Policy published in 2023 and Handbook published in 2020 provide the conceptual framework, and key elements critical for the POC. The POC mandate in UN peacekeeping is defined as: “without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the host state, integrated and coordinated activities by all civilian and uniformed mission components to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians, within the mission’s capabilities and areas of deployment, through the use of all necessary means, up to and including deadly force.”⁴

The operational concept of POC in UN peacekeeping is outlined in the DPO POC Policy. According to this policy, POC is implemented through three tiers which is further applied across 4 phases:-⁵



Source: Presentation at Force Headquarter (FHQ), MINUSCA, 2025

Source: *The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Handbook*, 2020

Genesis of POC in UN Peacekeeping: The concept of POC within UN peacekeeping has evolved through a series of lessons learned from major conflicts. In the early 1960s, the Congo crisis marked a pivotal moment for the UN Peacekeeping. During the Katanga crisis, mission leadership instructed UN troops to assemble civilians in designated areas and invoked the principle of self defence to protect people from violence. However, United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) struggled due to vague mandates and insufficient resources, revealing the limitations of the UN's capacity to protect civilians effectively.⁶

The failure to prevent the 1994 Rwandan genocide marked a critical moment in the evolution of POC mandates. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), deployed in 1993 to oversee the Arusha Accords, lacked the resources and authority to intervene as over 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were massacred.⁷ This failure drew widespread criticism of the UN's role as a peacekeeper. Similarly, during the Bosnian War (1992-1995), the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) failed to protect civilians in designated "safe areas," culminating in the Srebrenica massacre of over 8,000 Bosniaks.⁸ These tragedies prompted the UN to introduce its first explicit POC mandate in 1999 with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The 2000 Brahimi Report emphasised the need for robust mandates and the use of force to protect civilians.⁹ Concurrently, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine emerged, reinforcing the centrality of civilian protection in peacekeeping.¹⁰

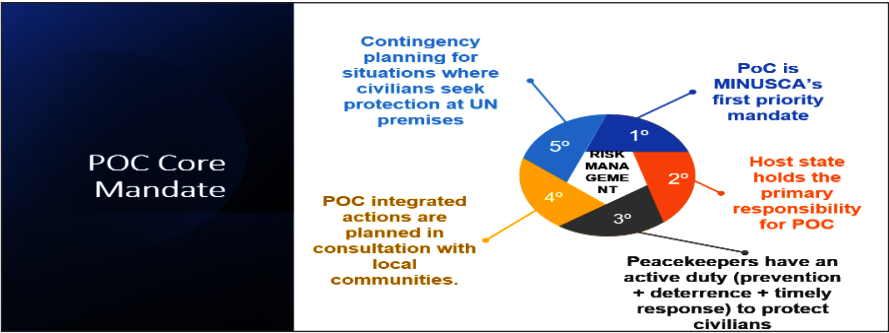
The premature closure of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in Mali in 2023 exposed critical gaps in the UN's capacity to ensure sustainable civilian protection in fragile states.¹¹ The Malian government's withdrawal request further strained relations, leaving a security vacuum that heightened civilian risks. Moreover, UN efforts in the Israel-Palestine conflict, particularly regarding the Gaza Strip, have been criticised. Despite the UN's foundational commitment to maintaining international peace and protecting human rights, structural power imbalances within its system have hindered its capacity to effectively address and halt ongoing hostilities and humanitarian crises in the region.¹² The recent escalation of violence in the DRChas intensified scrutiny of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo(MONUSCO) and its ability to fulfill its POC mandate. AGs, including M23 and CODECO, have unleashed widespread violence in the eastern regions, displacing thousands and committing severe human rights abuses.¹³ Despite MONUSCO's robust POC mandate, the mission has struggled to adapt to the evolving conflict dynamics, with civilians left vulnerable to attacks.

The experiences of these all UN peacekeeping missions pushed the limits of the POC mandate. Now,POC has become both ‘the most visible moral standard to judge the credibility of any UN peacekeeping mission’ and ‘a central means by which to judge the overall effectiveness of peacekeeping’.¹⁴ Presently, many Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operation like United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), MINUSMA, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and MONUSCO has approved POC as the core mandate under Chapter VII for enhancing the imperative of protecting the civilians from the conflict.

POC as the Core Mandate of UN Peacekeeping: Over 96% of peacekeepers operate in missions with POC mandates, which have been the core mandate of UN peacekeeping.¹⁵ By putting civilian safety first, the UN upholds international humanitarian norms and fosters long-term peace and stability. In the Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict on 1999, Secretary General states that “The plight of civilians is no longer something which can be neglected, or made secondary because it complicates political negotiations or interests. It is fundamental to the central mandate of the Organization. The responsibility for the protection of civilians cannot be transferred to others. The United Nations is the only international organisation with the reach and authority to end these practices”¹⁶

A prominent example of this prioritisation of POC is MINUSCA. In its most recent resolution (S/RES/2759, 2024), the UN Security Council explicitly identified POC as the mission’s primary mandate.¹⁷ As such, with POC at its heart, the UN demonstrates its commitment to upholding international norms, protecting human dignity, and addressing the multifaceted challenges of modern conflicts.

Figure-3: POC as a Core Mandate in MINUSCA



Source: Presentation of POC Advisor in MINUSCA FHQ, 2025

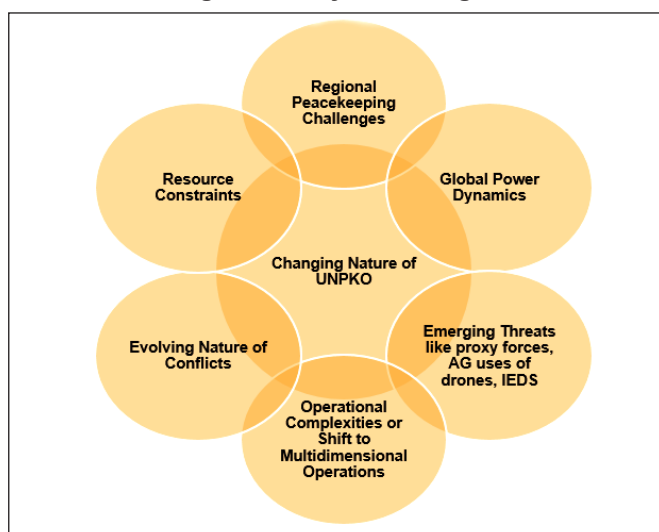
Critical Challenges with Respect to POC in Cotemporary UN Environment

The field of POC as a core UN mandate faces many challenges at both strategic and field mission level. While there is significant evidence showing that UN peacekeepers help reduce violence against civilians, it is imperative to identify the obstacles to POC.

Higher/ Strategic-Level Challenges: At the higher/ strategic level, the concern of POC is more prominent. Global political dynamics, host state limitations and structural weaknesses of the UN significantly hinder the effective implementation of POC mandates.

Complexity of Conflict Dynamics in Terms of POC: Modern peacekeeping has shifted from traditional monitoring to multidimensional operations, encompassing tasks like protecting civilians, supporting elections, and restoring governance. Civilians now contribute significantly in areas like human rights and logistics, while women serve as troops, police and military observers, enhancing mission effectiveness. Emerging challenges such as cyber conflict, the presence of proxy forces like Wagner and the advancement of terrorist groups equipped with modern technology, including drones and IEDs, have added complexity to peacekeeping mandates. Global power shifts, the rise of intrastate conflicts and increased competition for great power is reflected in certain matters, such as Ukraine, Syria and Israel-Gaza issues. Few key challenges faced by UNPKO in present days is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure-4: Key Challenges



Source: Author's self-construct

Concern of POC in Gray Zone and Hybrid Conflicts: A significant challenge for peace operations may be an increase in the number and sophistication of hybrid and gray-zone conflicts that involve powerful states competing with each other while seeking to avoid full-scale (potentially nuclear) war.¹⁸ These conflicts allow states to cause harm or disruption with little physical presence while avoiding responsibility. The undeclared nature of gray-zone warfare also blurs the line between military and civilian targets. This leaves civilians at risk and makes it harder to enforce international humanitarian law. Many cease-fire missions in these areas do not have strong POC mandates. They often rely only on political dialogue.

The Veto Power of Security Council P5 and Its Impact on POC: The veto power of the UN Security Council's five permanent members (P5) often paralyzes decision-making, as resolutions addressing crises or authorizing peacekeeping missions are blocked when against national interests.¹⁹ This practice, driven by geopolitical priorities over humanitarian needs, undermines the UN's primary responsibilities. For instance, Russia and China repeatedly vetoed resolutions for Syrian humanitarian aid, while Russia's vetoes hindered civilian protection efforts in Ukraine. Similarly, US vetoes in the Israel-Gaza conflict limited UN interventions to humanitarian aid, failing to prevent civilian casualties.

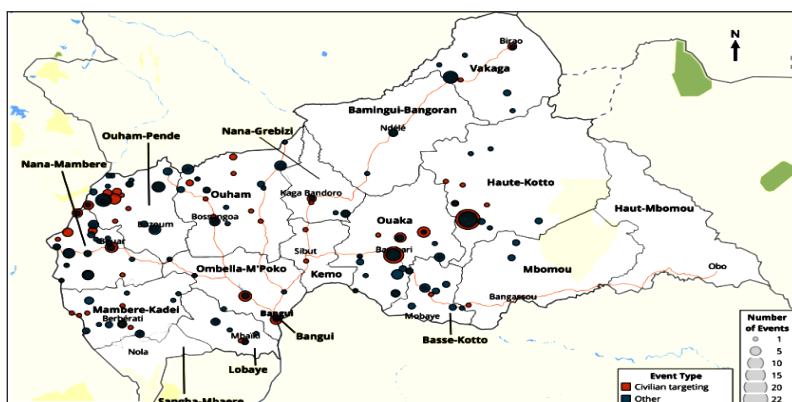
Paradox of Host-State Ownership in POC: The primary responsibility for protecting civilians always lies with the host state.²⁰ In situations where the host state has a history of failing to protect civilians or pose a direct threat to their safety can cause significant damage to the civil population. For example, in 2023, the Malian government demanded the immediate removal of MINUSMA personnel due to the growing tensions between MINUSMA and the Malian government. The security situation worsened when MINUSMA left, exposing the civilian populace to extremist organisations. This situation highlighted the UN's limitations in actively protecting civilians, regardless of the host government's actions.

Lack of Clarity in Peacekeeping Mandate: Many UN Peacekeeping mandates lack specificity, particularly concerning the use of force. This leaves peacekeepers unclear about the scope of their authority and how to respond in critical situations. In the 1994 Rwanda genocide, UNAMIR's mandate barred forceful intervention, leaving peacekeepers unable to prevent atrocities that claimed around 800,000 lives in weeks.²¹ A 2003 report (Relief Web) criticised MONUC's peacekeeping mission in the DRC for its unclear rules on using force. This ambiguity weakened peacekeepers' response to attacks, leaving civilians vulnerable and highlighting the need for a clear mandate.

Criticality of Dis-Misinformation Campaign: Technological innovations that improve situational awareness and mission planning, such as drones, sophisticated communication systems and data analytics, improve peacekeeping operations. However, they also present certain difficulties, such as disinformation and misinformation operations that undermine confidence in peacekeepers and encourage violence. In 2025, the Force Commander brought up the issue of misinformation and disinformation as one of the primary challenges in MINUSCA.²² The ICRC identifies four escalating digital threats to civilians in conflict zones: cyberattacks disrupting critical infrastructure like hospitals and power grids, weaponisation of data for surveillance or targeting, AI-driven misinformation eroding trust in humanitarian aid and gaps in international law failing to address hybrid warfare tactics.²³ These trends underscore the urgent need for updated legal frameworks and proactive measures to safeguard civilians in the digital age.

Proxy Forces and Their Impact on POC: The involvement of proxy forces like the Wagner Group poses significant challenges to UN peacekeeping missions, particularly in POC. Wagner, a Russian Private Military Company (PMC), operates in conflict zones such as Mali, Sudan, Libya and CAR, often under government contracts. Their focus on state security and counterinsurgency frequently sidelines POC, increasing risks for civilians. For instance, in CAR, Wagner's collaboration with local forces like FACA has resulted in civilian casualties, exemplified by the December 2021 Bèzèrè village massacre, where civilians, including pregnant women, were tortured and killed.²⁴ Despite MINUSCA's POC mandate, its ability to intervene is constrained by Wagner's government-backed operations, underscoring how proxy forces undermine UN missions' effectiveness in safeguarding civilians.

Figure-5: Political Violence involving Wagner Group in CAR (December 2020- June 2023)



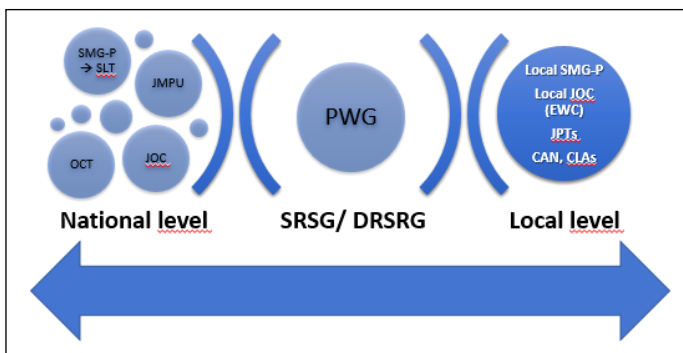
Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2023

Filed Mission Level Challenges: Mission Headquarters and all deployed stakeholders face significant challenges in implementing the POC mandate. The evolving tactics of AGs and field mission complexities further complicate efforts to safeguard civilians in complex operational environments.

New Posture of AGs- A Challenge to POC: The evolving strategies, coalitions and technological advancements of AGs pose significant challenges to the POC. AGs frequently adapt their tactics, form new alliances and leverage advanced technologies such as drones and IEDs. These developments often expand their influence, destabilizing regions and increasing risks for civilians. For instance, in the CAR, six major rebel groups united in 2021 under the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), led by the 3R group, aiming to disrupt President Touadéra's re-election.²⁵ The CPC's advance toward the capital, Bangui, was eventually repelled by MINUSCA forces, but the conflict displaced over 200,000 civilians, with 92,000 fleeing to the DRC and others to neighboring countries.²⁶ This highlights how AGs' evolving tactics and coalitions exacerbate civilian vulnerability, even in the presence of peacekeeping missions.

Challenges in Coordination and Cohesion Among UN Actors and Local Forces for POC: UN peacekeepers often struggle to work with local forces, especially when these local forces are poorly trained or lack the commitment to prioritize civilian safety. Furthermore, poor internal coordination among the civil, military and police units within UN missions weakens their ability to protect civilians. In MINUSCA, lack of cooperation between different units remains limited, diminishing the mission's effectiveness in safeguarding civilians. In contrast, groups like Wagner have demonstrated stronger coordination with local forces, such as FACA, enabling more efficient operations. The inability of UN forces to coordinate effectively directly compromises their core mandate of civilian protection.

Figure- 6: Coordination & Integration Mechanisms

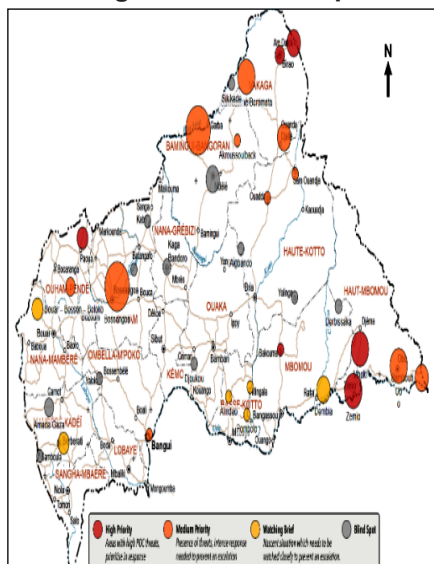


Source: Presentation of POC Advisor in MINUSCA FHQ, 2025

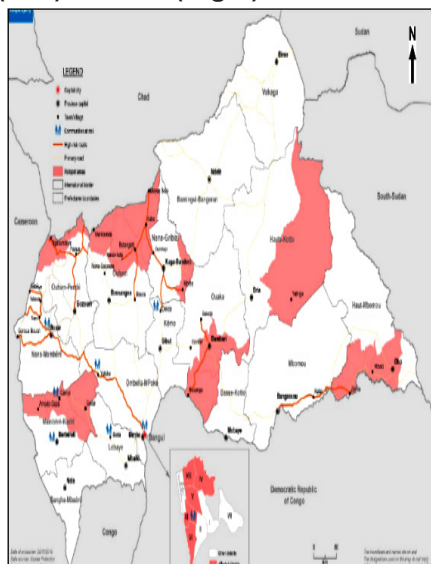
Concern of Leadership and Host-Government Relations in Ensuring POC: Effective UN leadership at the field level is crucial for maintaining strong ties with host governments, as failures in this area can significantly undermine the POC. For instance, in Mali, MINUSMA's withdrawal in 2023-due to deteriorating relations with the Malian government-marked a major setback in UN peacekeeping history. To avoid such outcomes, mission leaders must adopt proactive and inclusive approaches, balancing government relations with a focus on civilian safety. Without strong leadership, long-term POC strategies, including post-conflict reconstruction, are unlikely to succeed. This challenge is particularly acute for civilian UN actors whose effectiveness depends heavily on positive government collaboration.

Challenge of POC in Remote or Inaccessible Areas: Protecting civilians in remote or inaccessible areas remains a major challenge for peacekeeping missions. Poor infrastructure, security risks and logistical issues often prevent peacekeepers from establishing a presence in all conflict zones. This limits their ability to monitor and safeguard vulnerable populations, especially during active violence or emergencies. For example, improved peacekeeper access in 2024 led to a notable decline in violence compared to 2016. However, when peacekeepers cannot reach critical areas quickly, civilians face greater risks and AGs operate unchecked, committing atrocities without consequences.²⁷

Figure 7: POC Hotspot- 2024(Left) vs 2016 (Right) in CAR

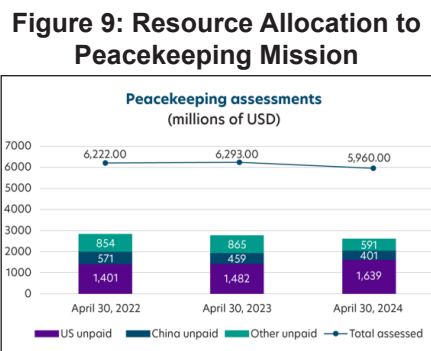
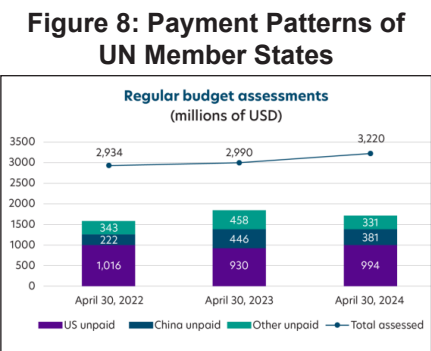


Source: Presentation of POC Advisor in MINUSCA FHQ, 2025



Source: UNHCR Regional Update 04, January 2016

Impact of Limited Situational Awareness and Resource Constraints in POC: Limited intelligence and situational awareness remain critical challenges for peacekeepers in POC. Without timely data on AGs movements or violence risks, peacekeepers struggle to anticipate or mitigate attacks, leaving civilians increasingly vulnerable. Again, resource shortages remain a major challenge in UN peacekeeping, undermining POC. Limited funding, personnel, and equipment often hinder effective mandate implementation. The UN's liquidity crisis, worsened by delayed member state contributions, further strains under-resourced missions.²⁸ These constraints weaken patrols, monitoring, and deployments to high-risk areas, leaving civilians vulnerable. Figure 8 highlights funding gaps, while figure 9 shows their impact on resource allocation.²⁹ Addressing these financial shortfalls is crucial for effective POC.

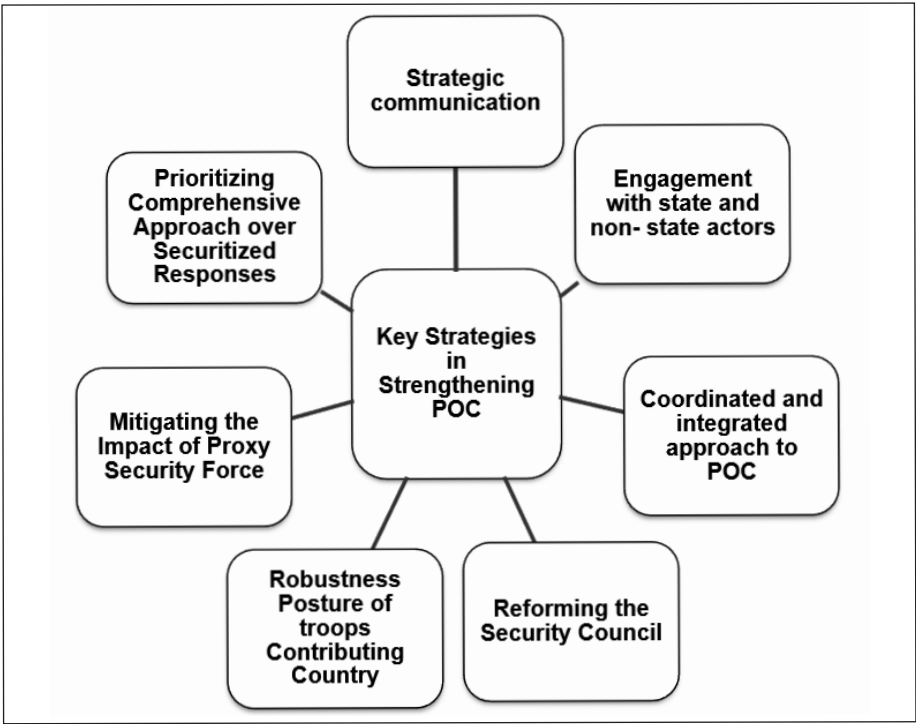


Source : Center on International Cooperation, *The Liquidity Crisis at the United Nations: How We Got Here and Possible Ways Out*, 2024.

Charting a Path Forward: Key Strategies in Strengthening POC in Contemporary Environment

To effectively protect civilians in modern UN peacekeeping, a comprehensive and adaptive strategy is critical. Contemporary conflicts are marked by intertwined structural, political, and operational hurdles, necessitating transformative reforms and creative solutions. Leveraging lessons from past missteps and aligning with shifting global realities will strengthen peacekeeping's ability to safeguard vulnerable populations. Key approaches, as illustrated in Figure 10, are amplified in the following analysis:-

Figure 10: Key Strategies in Strengthening POC



Source: Author's self-construct

Security Council Reform- A Crucial Step in Strengthening POC:

To improve the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping in protecting civilians, reforms in the Security Council are essential and remain a key discussion point. The agenda for Security Council reform was addressed in the General Assembly on November 21, 2024.³⁰ Measures such as limiting the use of veto power in cases of mass atrocities and civilian protection, as well as establishing a POC-focused “code of conduct” for Security Council members to encourage collective responsibility, are critical to overcoming political stalemates. The POC in armed conflicts can also be improved by giving regional groups like the European Union, African Union and SAARC additional authority to participate more actively in Security Council deadlocks. This will guarantee prompt and decisive action in times of crisis.

Strengthening Host-State Capacity and Accountability for POC:

Strengthening host states’ capacity and accountability for POC is vital for UN peacekeeping success, especially in post-conflict recovery. Efforts should focus on governance, economic development, security reform and national protection strategies, aligned with frameworks like the Human Rights Due

Diligence Policy (HRDDP) to ensure human rights compliance.³¹ Host states must be held accountable for civilian safety through monitoring, addressing gaps and establishing mechanisms. The UN Security Council can enforce this by setting standards, imposing sanctions and authorizing interventions when host states fail, ensuring protection for vulnerable populations and mission legitimacy.

Mitigating the Impact of Proxy/ Private Security Forces: Addressing the threats posed by proxy/ private military organisations, such as the Wagner Group, requires advocating for international regulations to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and accountability for their actions.³² Diplomatic pressure, particularly from influential UN Security Council members, can help curb their operations. However, this is complicated by the current geopolitical climate, especially given Russia's involvement in conflicts like Ukraine. To mitigate the adverse effects of such external forces on civilian protection, UN peacekeeping missions must strengthen engagement with host governments. Continuous monitoring and reporting of human rights violations by these groups are essential to raise awareness, counter misinformation and lay the groundwork for future accountability.³³

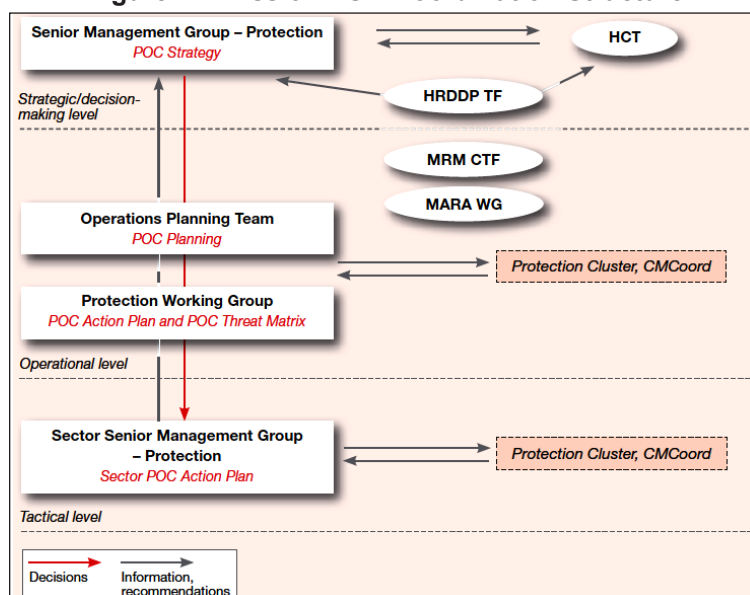
Prioritizing Comprehensive Approaches over Securitized Responses: Addressing violence by non-state AGs demands a holistic strategy combining humanitarian, developmental and peacebuilding efforts under the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN).³⁴ Excessive military focus risks fueling resentment and undermining long-term peace, whereas UN peacekeeping must align military actions with political and developmental strategies under international law. Strong political strategies are essential for lasting peace, bolstering POC. Operationally, POC initiatives should prioritize mediation, negotiation and trust-building through the HDPN framework to address root causes and transition from peacekeeping to sustainable governance.³⁵

Managing Expectations in POC: Effectively managing expectations is a critical yet challenging aspect of UN peacekeeping missions, particularly concerning the POC. Expectations arise from diverse stakeholders, including the international community, host governments and local populations. A common misconception is that peacekeepers can provide universal protection within their areas of operation, which is often unattainable. To mitigate this, missions must adopt transparent and honest communication strategies, clarifying the limitations and capabilities of peacekeeping forces. Additionally, local populations should be educated about the distinct roles of military, civilian,

and observer components within missions. By setting realistic expectations and fostering clear communication, peacekeeping missions can reduce frustration, enhance cooperation and improve the overall effectiveness of POC initiatives.

Enhancing Coordination with Local and UN Actors: Effective coordination among UN peacekeeping components-military, police and civilian and agencies like UNICEF, UNHCR, and WFP is key to implementing POC mandates. These entities share a unified objective of establishing peace in conflict zones. Beyond mere meetings or conferences, joint training initiatives involving military, police and civilian personnel, alongside UN agencies are essential for skill development and fostering a common understanding of protection objectives. Consistent communications among these stakeholders is critical to ensuring seamless collaboration and effective civilian protection which has been as illustrated in Figure 11 below as described in *UNDPKO POC Handbook*.³⁶

Figure 11: Mission POC Coordination Structure



Source: *The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Handbook*, 2020

Robust Posture and Extending Reach to Remote Areas: UN peacekeeping must prioritize preparedness in remote areas by equipping Troops/ Police-Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) with advanced tools like mine-resistant vehicles, drones and surveillance systems to address security and logistical challenges.³⁷ Specialised training for difficult terrains, combined with satellite imagery, early warning systems and local community partnerships, can enhance adaptability and intelligence. Ensuring T/PCCs commitments to

deploy capable forces and integrating technology with ground level collaboration will enhance POC.

POC through Community Engagement: Community engagement plays a pivotal role in enhancing the POC in UN peacekeeping missions. Each conflict zone presents unique socio-cultural, political and economic challenges that directly impact civilian safety and well-being. By actively involving local communities, peacekeepers can gain valuable insights into these challenges, identify potential threats and tailor strategies to address specific needs. Building trust through consistent communication and collaboration is fundamental to the success of POC initiatives. Additionally, community engagement facilitates the creation of early warning systems, enabling peacekeepers to respond proactively to emerging threats. Including diverse community voices-such as women, youth and ethnic minorities-ensures that POC strategies are inclusive and effective, fostering long-term peace and stability.³⁸

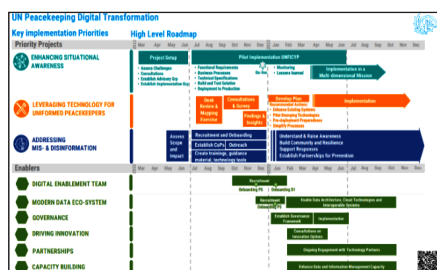
Figure 12: T/PCCs Engagement with Communities



Source: BANLQRF-5 Photo Archive, 2021

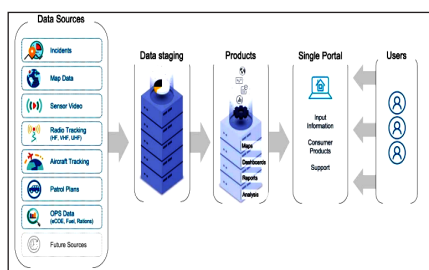
Enhancing Protection of Civilians through Technology: Leveraging technology is crucial for enhancing the POC in UN peacekeeping missions. In 2021, the UN launched its *Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping Strategy* to improve mandate implementation, with POC as a key priority for the Security Council.³⁹ Advanced tools like real-time data analytics, artificial intelligence, and surveillance systems-including satellite imagery and unarmed aerial vehicles (UAVs)-can significantly boost situational awareness and intelligence gathering. Platforms such as Study on Global Ageing and Adult Health (SAGE) and Unite Aware, piloted in MINUSCA, have strengthened early-warning systems, enabling peacekeepers to detect and respond to threats against civilians more effectively.⁴⁰ Monitoring social media and communication platforms can provide valuable insights into public sentiment and emerging threats, enabling proactive responses.

Figure 13: Unite Aware System in MINUSCA



Source: Unite Aware Implementation Project, MINUSCA, October 2019

Figure 14: Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping Strategy



Source: UN Peacekeeping Digital Transformation Strategy, 2021

Conclusion

The POC mandate remains priority to UN peacekeeping, reflecting its moral and operational commitment to safeguarding conflict-affected populations. While the UN has evolved from ceasefire monitoring to robust, multidimensional mandates, contemporary challenges-geopolitical rivalries, non-state AGs, hybrid warfare and resource constraints-expose critical gaps in POC implementation. Missions like MINUSMA in Mali and MONUSCO in the DRC illustrate this paradox: despite universal endorsement of POC, structural, political and operational hurdles undermine its execution. The 2023 withdrawal of MINUSMA, driven by strained host-state relations and ambiguous mandates, underscores the fragility of peacekeeping in fragile states. Similarly, Security Council gridlock over Gaza and Ukraine highlights how veto politics paralyse POC efforts. These realities demand urgent systemic reforms, innovative strategies and political will to align the UN's aspirations with on-ground realities.

To strengthen POC, the UN must adopt a holistic approach. Reforming the Security Council to limit veto abuse and empowering regional bodies like the African Union may bring significant impact in strengthening POC. Moreover, enhancing host-state governance, leveraging technology and countering proxy forces like the Wagner Group through international accountability mechanisms would definitely pay dividend with respect to POC. Grounded in the HDPN, these strategies must balance immediate security responses with long-term peacebuilding, ensuring military actions align with political and developmental strategies/ goals.

The future of POC depends on UN's adaptability to emerging threats-cyberattacks, drone warfare, misinformation-and intrastate conflicts. Mandates must prioritize flexibility, rapid deployment and context-specific solutions,

while addressing chronic underfunding and T/PCCs gaps. Above all, the UN must transcend geopolitical interests to reenter humanitarian imperatives. As Secretary-General Guterres emphasized, the UN's legitimacy as a global peace guardian obligates prioritising civilian safety. By embracing innovation, collaboration and foundational principles, the UN can transform POC from a paradox into reality, ensuring its pledge to protect civilians endures amid 21st century complexities.

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Brief Biography



Lieutenant Colonel Md Rakibul Hasan, SUP, afwc, psc was commissioned in 2003 in the Corps of infantry. In his military career, he served in four Infantry Regiments and Para Commando Battalion. He served as an Instructor in Special Warfare Wing, SI&T. He was Brigade Major of 305 Infantry Brigade in Rangamati. He commanded 25 BIR (Support Battalion). Apart from mandatory courses, he did SCUBA diving, Basic para, Army Commando, Jump Master and Free Fall Course. He did Airborne and Pathfinder courses in Fort Benning, USA. He is a graduate of Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur and Defence Services Command and Staff College, Sri Lanka. He is also a graduate of Armed Forces War Course from National Defence College. He served as the Directing Staff of Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur. He served under the blue helmet in MONUSCO as a contingent member in 2009/10 and also as Contingent Commander of Bangladesh Special Force Contingent/5 in MINUSCA in 2020/21. Presently, he is serving as the contingent commander of Bangladesh Light Quick Reaction Force Contingent/ 5 in MINUSCA, Central African Republic.

Lessons Learnt by The United Nations in MONUSCO and MINUSMA for Future UN Missions

Lieutenant Colonel Moidul Haider Chowdhury, psc

Introduction

The United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) have been critical to preserving global peace and security since 1948. The establishment and preservation of worldwide peace hold immense importance. In countries where global peace and security are at risk, this international organization works to restore stability. It also works to create a safe and stable environment. The United Nations (UN) has carried out more than 70 missions to date, with 12 currently in progress. Two peacekeeping missions stand out due to their considerable challenges and potential impacts. Those are the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).¹

MONUSCO has been active since 2010. It replaced the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Congo (MONUC). The mission focuses strongly on protecting civilians in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). At its peak, the mission deployed over 20,000 personnel; however, it encountered numerous challenges that were primarily inherited from its predecessor. These included vast geographical coverage, a variety of conflict types and inconsistent support from the Congolese government.²

MINUSMA was established in 2013 to assist in restoring peace and stability after a violent insurgency and a military intervention by France. The objective was to support Mali in attaining several essential political objectives, to ensure the safety of Mali's civilian population and to facilitate humanitarian efforts in the region. Despite a decrease in the number of military missions globally, MINUSMA has emerged as one of the most perilous peacekeeping operations within the UN's current portfolio.³

There is an attempt in this paper to discuss the significant factors that contributed to the effectiveness and challenges that hindered the conduct of missions in MONUSCO and MINUSMA, with a special emphasis on important operational, strategic and political lessons. Finally, it will put forward some recommendations to improve future UN peacekeeping operations for enhancing the effectiveness of future missions. With this, the aim of this paper is to provide guidance to support policymakers, peacekeeping personnel and

international organizations in improving strategies, optimizing resources and promoting sustainable peace in ongoing and future conflict-affected regions.⁴

Methodology

This study is based on qualitative analysis. It includes a review of secondary sources, case studies and UN reports. MONUSCO and MINUSMA are assessed using a comparative method. Charts and graphs are examples of data visualization tools that demonstrate the missions' impact and efficacy.

Challenges Faced by MONUSCO and MINUSMA

a. Host-State Consent and Cooperation: Securing host-state consent is crucial for the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Both MONUSCO and MINUSMA encountered significant variability in government support, which resulted in adverse operational consequences for the two missions.⁵ MONUSCO faced a decline in its relationship with the Congolese government. The ongoing tensions between the two parties often resulted in daily calls to withdraw more MONUSCO troops.⁶ Local authorities have repeatedly expressed concerns about MONUSCO's effectiveness in bringing stability to the DRC.⁷

MINUSMA also struggled to get support from the host state.⁸ The political situation in Mali has been unstable, marked by two military coups in 2020 and 2021. These events changed the focus of governance.⁹ The transitional government often debated mission-related issues and clashed over security policies and foreign intervention. Consequently, MINUSMA struggled to operate effectively. This limited its impact on ongoing stabilization efforts.¹⁰

b. Resource Constraints: Both missions faced big challenges due to limited personnel and resources. This remained the case even when resources were used to their fullest potential. This was especially apparent in instances of inadequate funding or when logistics and personnel faced excessive demands, hindering their ability to effectively carry out their responsibilities. The aviation unit of Ukraine withdrew from the mission in 2022.¹¹ Consequently, the mission encountered a notable decrease in air mobility and aerial surveillance capabilities. This holds particular importance considering the vast scale and challenging landscape of the DRC.¹²

Conversely, MINUSMA is operated in a vast desert characterized by severely underdeveloped infrastructure. This indicated that there were tangible constraints on the speed and distance the mission could achieve in deploying troops to address threats, as well as the promptness with which it could

supply those troops once they were stationed. Navigating the desert presents challenges comparable to those encountered in other regions; aircraft play a vital role universally, and in this case, they were indispensable to the mission's success.¹³ The ground forces were unable to reach the issue promptly to effect change; however, air support had the capability to cover any location in Mali within a day, yet the aerial resources were inadequate. MINUSMA experienced a persistent deficiency in helicopters and transport aircraft, resulting in the inability to deploy available air power effectively in the most critical areas. The logistical constraints hindered the capacity of both missions to project force effectively and respond promptly to security threats.¹⁴

The multifaceted resource constraints that both MONUSCO and MINUSMA faced, impacting their ability to effectively carry out their mandates up to 2024 is highlighted in Table-1 below:-

Table-1: Resource Constraints of MONUSCO and MINUSMA up to 2024

Resource Aspect	MONUSCO	MINUSMA
Logistics and Manpower	Withdrawal Challenges: In June 2024, MONUSCO concluded the withdrawal of its forces from South Kivu. This process faced challenges, including inadequate logistics and manpower, compounded by a deteriorating security situation. ¹⁵	Operational Struggles: MINUSMA faced difficulties adapting to asymmetric threats due to resource constraints, which impacted its operational effectiveness. ¹⁸
Financial Resources	Budgetary Adjustments: The proposed budget for MONUSCO for the fiscal year 2024-2025 was \$1.04 billion, reflecting ongoing financial constraints and the need for careful resource management. ¹⁶	Significant Budget Reduction: For the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, the proposed budget for MINUSMA was \$207 million, a 76.1% decrease compared to the previous period's \$866.8 million. This substantial reduction posed challenges to the mission's capacity to fulfill its mandate effectively. ¹⁹

Security Conditions	Escalating Conflicts: The resurgence of the M23 rebel group in eastern DRC led to increased violence, further straining MONUSCO's resources and complicating its operations. ¹⁷	Host-State Consent Issues: MINUSMA struggled with obtaining host-state consent, which, along with resource constraints and asymmetric threats, hindered its operational effectiveness. ²⁰
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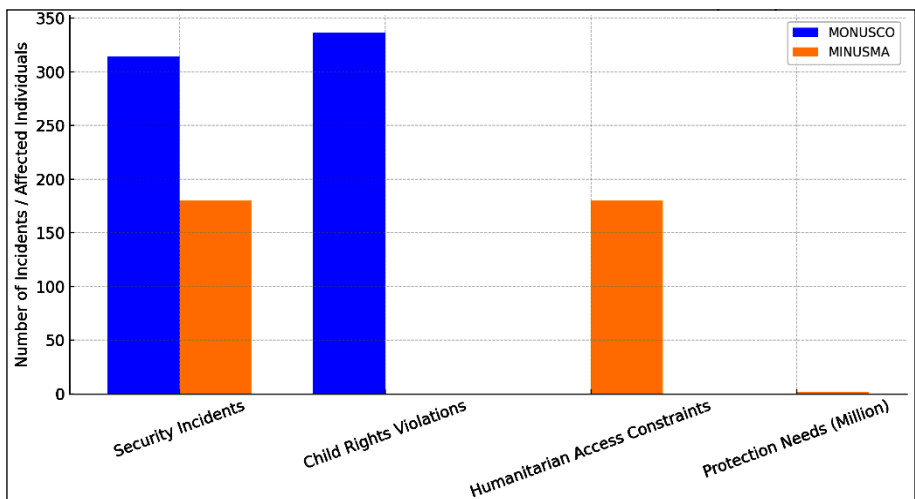
Source: Author's self-construct

c. **Protection of Civilians:** Protecting civilians is a key job for UN peacekeeping operations.²¹ However, both missions faced big challenges in this area. MONUSCO faced constant attacks from armed groups like M23. These attacks threatened stability in eastern DRC, even with peacekeeping efforts.²² As the conflict grew, more people were displaced.²³ In January 2025, over 400,000 individuals had to leave their homes because of M23's ongoing offensives. MONUSCO encountered ongoing difficulties in sustaining a sufficient presence in the conflict zones. Civilians remained exposed to considerable risks of violence.²⁴

MINUSMA faced significant challenges in safeguarding human lives due to the diverse asymmetric threats present in Mali.²⁵ Insurgent jihadists employed improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombers and ambush tactics in their attacks on various targets.²⁶ The methods of attack have significantly diminished the effectiveness and precision of traditional peacekeeping strategies.²⁷ Patrols that appeared to be proactive and provided direct protection to at-risk populations have become increasingly restricted.²⁸ By late 2024, the mission reported over 310 fatalities, with 174 deaths attributed to direct attacks by armed groups.²⁹ Despite its efforts, the mission could not prevent the ongoing civilian massacres in Mali's northern and central regions, underscoring the difficulties of functioning in an active insurgency environment.³⁰

Figure-1 below highlights key metrics, including security incidents, child rights violations, humanitarian access constraints and protection needs in millions:-

Figure-1: Protection of Civilians in MONUSCO and MINUSMA 2024



Source: Author’s self-construct

d. **Political Instability:** The unpredictability in the political landscape amplifies the numerous challenges faced by both MONUSCO and MINUSMA.³¹ Over the years, the Congolese government has increasingly expressed criticism towards MONUSCO.³² Congolese leaders assert that, despite the mission’s long-standing presence, it has not delivered adequate peace and security for the Congolese populace.³³ In December 2024, the UN Security Council was necessitated to adopt Resolution 2765, mandating a strategy for the gradual withdrawal of UN troops.³⁴

MINUSMA found itself in a particularly challenging position due to the coups in Mali, which disrupted diplomatic relations and altered the country’s security priorities.³⁵ The ruling military junta exhibited increasing hostility and indifference towards the UN mission, opting instead to enhance its non-UN security measures through the engagement of private military contractors.³⁶ The alteration in security policy rendered MINUSMA’s presence in the country progressively illogical and unsustainable, culminating in the mission’s phased withdrawal in late 2023.³⁷ The instability and lack of commitment from the Malian government significantly hindered the ability of peacekeepers to effectively execute their mandate.³⁸

Successes and Best Practices

a. **Integrated Mission Approach:** A coordinated effort with the military, police and civilians has proved effective in the UN’s complex peacekeeping settings.³⁹ This unique “three-component” system is rare within the UN and

helps with Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) in unstable areas with active armed groups.⁴⁰ The UN engaged in challenging discussions with armed groups to maintain stability and ensure that various political and security governance initiatives essential for restoring state authority are implemented in a coordinated manner.⁴¹ In a similar vein, MINUSMA executed a comprehensive strategy, merging security initiatives with governance support to aid in maintaining delicate peace agreements in Mali.⁴² These missions showed that strategies blending security, political and humanitarian efforts lead to better, lasting results.⁴³

b. Community Engagement: Building local trust is key to successful peacekeeping.⁴⁴ MONUSCO used an innovative strategy by employing community liaison assistants. These individuals served as intermediaries between peacekeepers and the local community. The UN operation collected intelligence from the communities it served. This improved their confidence in its protective abilities. In the meantime, political mediation efforts linked to the 2015 Algiers Accord,⁴⁵ received strong support from MINUSMA. The initiative fostered an atmosphere that encouraged constructive dialogue among the conflicting factions. It delivered the vital technical support that was needed for their peace talks to succeed. Working closely with local communities strengthens our mission's legitimacy. It also boosts our awareness and effectiveness in preventing conflicts.⁴⁶

c. Adaptation to Asymmetric Threats: Today's peacekeeping missions deal with tough challenges from asymmetric threats like terrorism and insurgency.⁴⁷ MINUSMA developed special counter-terrorism strategies. These strategies included sharing intelligence and using technology, like drones, to detect threats better.⁴⁸ The mission also partnered with regional security forces, such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force, to strengthen counter-insurgency efforts.⁴⁹ This flexibility allowed MINUSMA to lower risks and work more efficiently, even in high-security zones. The insights gained from these changes indicate that future peacekeeping missions must incorporate security measures grounded in intelligence while maintaining operational flexibility in rapidly evolving high- threat environments.⁵⁰

Lessons Learnt

a. Importance of Political Solutions: Strong political dialogue is essential for lasting peace. Military interventions alone won't lead to stability.⁵¹ Both MONUSCO and MINUSMA have shown that sustainable peace comes from fixing the root causes of conflict. This means making governance better, promoting national unity and building strong state institutions.⁵² In the effort to

implement the 2015 Algiers Accord, MINUSMA sought to engage marginalized ethnic groups within the wider political framework of Mali.⁵³ Political participation ensures that peacekeeping initiatives will strengthen authentic and inclusive state structures, consequently reducing the chances of renewed violence.⁵⁴

b. Realistic Mandates: The objectives of peacekeeping operations must align with the available resources and the actual circumstances in the designated area.⁵⁵ Excessive optimism regarding mandates that do not have adequate logistical and financial support often undermines mission objectives and diminishes credibility.⁵⁶ Given its extensive mandate and limited resources, MONUSCO was unable to mitigate the ongoing armed violence despite having significant existing assets.⁵⁷ Future UN operations should establish clear and achievable objectives grounded in a thorough evaluation of the challenges to guarantee successful and efficient outcomes.⁵⁸

c. Robust Engagement Rules: Peacekeepers should be equipped with well-defined and universally applicable rules of engagement that empower them to address emerging threats and safeguard the civilian population.⁵⁹ However, strict engagement rules limited MINUSMA's ability to operate in dangerous situations with asymmetric threats.⁶⁰ To follow international humanitarian law, missions must create clear policies on using force.⁶¹ This helps peacekeepers react quickly to security issues.⁶² Consequently, these measures not only optimize operational efficiency but also bolster personal safety.⁶³

d. Comprehensive Transition Planning: To prevent instability after withdrawal, a solid transition plan is essential.⁶⁴ This is crucial in areas like security sector reform and governance enhancement, where it is crucial to maintain capacity-building initiatives even as peacekeeping forces withdraw.⁶⁵ MONUSCO's new strategy suggests a slow shift to Congolese forces. However, worries persist about their ability to sustain stability on their own.⁶⁶ To achieve real peace and stability, future plans must include strong, long-term support systems.⁶⁷

Case Study 1: MONUSCO

MONUSCO has played a key role in stabilizing the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has seen big successes and tough challenges.⁶⁸ One key success was the formation of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in 2013. This unit successfully dismantled the M23 rebel group, which had seized large parts of eastern DRC. This marked a big change in the UN's peacekeeping strategy. It focused more on active disarmament and counterinsurgency efforts. Additionally,

MONUSCO offered vital support for national elections, providing logistical and technical assistance to help guarantee the credibility of the democratic processes.⁶⁹

MONUSCO had many successes, yet it faced big challenges. The local population questioned its legitimacy. Many Congolese citizens raised concerns. They believe that the mission was not meeting expectations due to the presence of armed groups and the ongoing instability in the region. In 2023 and 2024, protests against MONUSCO escalated, accompanied by increasing demands for its withdrawal. Furthermore, the Congolese government has intensified its efforts to urge the UN to conclude the mission, asserting that national security forces are prepared to address internal threats independently.⁷⁰

Case Study 2: MINUSMA

MINUSMA was established to support Mali's fragile security situation after the 2012 crisis and the 2015 Algiers Accord. The mission played a crucial role in advancing peace negotiations. It united the Malian government and armed groups to reach an agreement.⁷¹ MINUSMA also played an important role in security reform. It also supported governance to improve stability by training local forces. The initiatives have helped political reconciliation, even with ongoing challenges.

MINUSMA started with good goals but faced major challenges. It struggled to handle the growing threat from jihadist insurgencies.⁷² By the end of 2024, the mission had recorded over 310 deaths, making it the deadliest UN peacekeeping operation in recent history. The mission often faced big challenges. Threats like improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and suicide attacks hurt its effectiveness. Political instability made things worse. Military coups in 2020 and 2021 hurt cooperation between MINUSMA and the Malian authorities. In early 2023, the situation had worsened. As a result, the Malian government asked for MINUSMA to leave. This led to the mission's closure in December 2023.⁷³

Recommendations for Future Peacekeeping Missions

a. **Adaptive Mandates:** Future UN peacekeeping missions require flexible mandates. This helps them to tackle changing conflict situations.⁷⁴ Strict mandates often miss practical needs, which can lower mission success rates. Peacekeeping missions should regularly assess their mandates. This ensures they stay relevant and practical.⁷⁵

b. **Enhanced Training and Equipment:** Peacekeepers require comprehensive training to deal with asymmetric warfare. This means understanding guerrilla tactics and IEDs.⁷⁶ Hence, investing in specialized training enhances force protection and operational effectiveness. This comes with improved intelligence and new technologies, like drones and mine-resistant vehicles.⁷⁷

c. **Strengthened Regional Partnerships:** Working with regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) enhances peacekeeping efforts.⁷⁸ These collaborations help in sharing resources, improving intelligence coordination and launching local peace initiatives. This partnership creates a more sustainable security environment.⁷⁹

d. **Community Engagement Strategies:** Involving local communities enhances the credibility and success of peacekeeping missions⁸⁰ Active participation builds trust and improves intelligence sharing. This leads to long-term stability through transparency and cultural sensitivity.⁸¹

e. **Clear Exit Strategies:** When peacekeeping missions hand over responsibilities to host governments, they need clear benchmarks to measure success.⁸² Exit strategies require capacity-building programs. These programs will support governance and security institutions, ensuring they are sustainable after the mission departs.⁸³

Adopting these recommendations will enhance the operational efficiency of upcoming peacekeeping missions, foster stakeholder engagement and ensure lasting peace in regions affected by conflict.⁸⁴

Conclusion

UNPKOs play a vital role in fostering peace and stability in conflict-affected regions. For instance, MONUSCO and MINUSMA represent such operations. They contribute significantly to enhancing the safety and stability of these locations. Peacekeeping operations assist local communities and governments in addressing their challenges and strive for enduring peace in the region.⁸⁵ The missions faced many difficulties, but they offered important lessons for future efforts. In 2013, MONUSCO took out the M23 rebel group. They did this by using the FIB. This represented a novel methodology in peacekeeping, emphasizing proactive strategies. The strategies combined military action, political talks and humanitarian aid. This shows how important it is to take a complete approach to establishing peace. Nonetheless, MONUSCO encountered challenges in securing acceptance from the local population. Protests and local resistance

were evident, and the support from the Congolese government was not consistently reliable. This illustrates the challenges involved in maintaining peace in regions marked by political instability.

MINUSMA played a crucial role in furthering the 2015 Algiers Accord, while also facilitating security sector reforms and encouraging political reconciliation in Mali. Jihadist insurgencies created serious operational challenges. They also led to higher fatality rates. These issues overshadowed the mission's overall success. The situation was exacerbated by political instability, characterized by two military coups. The events posed significant challenges for MINUSMA in effectively collaborating with the government. Consequently, MINUSMA made the decision to withdraw from Mali in 2023.⁸⁶

The lessons from both missions highlight how crucial flexibility is in peacekeeping operations. This flexibility helps them adapt to changing situations. Tasks should be modified in response to changes in political, security, or humanitarian conditions. In the future, peacekeeping operations should focus on better training. They also need to use advanced technology like drones and AI. This will help them tackle unconventional warfare more effectively. Working with organizations like the AU and ECOWAS is key for lasting peace efforts. It's important for community members to share their thoughts. The process should be straightforward and open to everyone. This transparency builds trust and credibility in peace missions. It helps to connect with affected communities and makes peace efforts more effective and reliable.

Making clear and measurable withdrawal plans is crucial. Peacekeeping missions help create lasting peace and stability, even after their conclusion. Strengthen local capacity by improving institutions, government systems, and security forces in host countries. This approach helps keep stability after the mission ends. Using these insights and recommendations can make future UN peacekeeping missions more effective. This strategy meets the changing challenges of modern conflict. It also helps to maintain global peace and security.

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Brief Biography



Lieutenant Colonel Moidul Haider Chowdhury, psc was commissioned on 24 December 2003 with 49th BMA Long Course in the Corps of Infantry. He served in different infantry regiments and also as Staff Officer of Army Headquarters and Armed Forces Division. He has commanded 38 East Bengal Regiment. The officer has served three years in Operation Kuwait Punargothan (OKP)-6. He has successfully completed PIRAP-JABIRU Thailand-Australia Peacekeeping 2024 Exercise hosted by the Peace Operations Centre, Directorate of Joint Operation, Royal Thai Armed Forces and the Australia Defence Force held at Pattaya, Thailand from 15-26 July 2024. He also served as General Staff Officer, Grade-2 of Overseas Operations Directorate, Bangladesh Army Headquarters. He is a graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College. He has completed Master of Science in Military Studies from Bangladesh University of Professionals. At present, he is serving as General Staff Officer, Grade-1 (Protocol and Ceremony), Civil Military Relations Directorate in Armed Forces Division. He has to his credit some articles published in recognised research journals.

The Role of Technological Innovations in Enhancing Peacekeeping Operations

Captain Zillol Based

Introduction

Peacekeeping missions have undergone significant modifications, which include the supervision of ceasefires, as well as the execution of complex responsibilities such as state-building, humanitarian assistance and civilian protection. This expansion has heightened the demand for cutting-edge technologies, such as drones, satellite surveillance and artificial intelligence, to enhance operational efficiency, safety and efficacy in some of the most challenging environments on Earth.

Artificial intelligence, satellite surveillance and drones have become increasingly significant in modern peacekeeping as a result of technological advancements. These instruments facilitate decision-making, mitigate employee hazards and enhance situational awareness. For example, drones can offer real-time intelligence across vast areas, while AI-driven data analysis facilitates the identification of conflict tendencies and the implementation of preventative measures.¹ However, the utilization of such sophisticated tools is not without its drawbacks, such as unequal access to resources, insufficient infrastructure in host countries and moral quandaries regarding autonomy and data privacy.²

Technology-assisted peacekeeping can address issues like the contemporary society. However, in order to combine such technologies, thorough research, collaboration as well as facilities and education has to be done. These barriers will be set aside for improving the readiness of peacekeeping operations to the requirements of the evolving nature of international security.

This paper looks into the feasibility, challenges and use of technology within modern peacekeeping operations and how this technology can be used ethically and sustainably as part of a wider strategy aimed at ensuring that peacekeeping efforts deal with the challenging nature of modern conflicts.

The Evolution of Technology in Peacekeeping

Aside from monitoring ceasefires, UN peacekeeping has also had to broaden its scope of activities in addressing global concerns including terrorism, cyberthreats and humanitarian crises which is issue since 1948. Along this

development, there has been a parallel evolution in the use of technology to augment peacekeeping tasks.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is a prime example. In this instance, technology has had a substantial impact on the administration of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Despite the fact that real-time communication systems have facilitated the efficient coordination of humanitarian supplies in crisis zones, tools such as GIS mapping have provided precise data on the locations of IDP sites.³

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has deployed advanced surveillance systems to keep an eye on key border regions. These technologies have greatly improved situational awareness, allowing peacekeepers to quickly address any threats and uphold security in dangerous areas.⁴

The following revolutionary benefits have been realized through the integration of technology into peacekeeping missions:-

a. Real-Time Data Acquisition: Technologies like drones, Internet of Things (IoT) sensors and Geographic Information System (GIS) provide live data from conflict zones, enabling quick decision-making and timely assessments. For example, drones offer real-time aerial imagery, allowing peacekeepers to swiftly respond to evolving crises and mitigate risks.⁵

b. Enhanced Collaboration Among Various Stakeholders: Secure networks, GIS platforms and mobile tools promote smooth communication among humanitarian organizations, host governments and peacekeepers. This ensures coordinated action during missions, avoids duplication of efforts and improves resource allocation.

c. Increased Situational Awareness: Tools such as data analytics, drones and satellite imagery deliver valuable insights into conflict dynamics, changes in terrain and potential dangers. These technologies help peacekeepers anticipate risks, make proactive decisions and better prepare for unpredictable situations.⁶

The growing complexity of modern conflicts highlights the importance of advanced technology in ensuring the effectiveness and safety of peacekeeping missions. As these missions evolve, the use of cutting-edge tools will only increase, making technology a crucial component of contemporary peace operations.

Significant Technological Advancements Transforming Peacekeeping Operations

Drones, or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have become vital tools in peacekeeping operations. Their ability to conduct aerial surveillance and reconnaissance has greatly improved situational awareness. UAVs can monitor large areas remotely, detect potential threats and evaluate conditions without endangering human lives, thanks to their high-resolution cameras, infrared imaging and advanced sensors. The following proposals are to be particularly significant:-

a. **Conflict monitoring:** Peacekeepers can analyze conflict dynamics and oversee military movements with the help of UAVs. For example, the United Nations mission (MONUSCO) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has used drones to keep track of armed group activities.⁷

b. **Humanitarian aid:** Drones play a crucial role in delivering medical supplies to hard-to-reach areas and locating displaced individuals. During the West African Ebola outbreak, UAVs were employed to transport medical supplies to remote locations.

c. **Environmental protection:** UAVs are key for monitoring environmental impacts in conflict zones. They provide real-time oversight of activities like illegal resource extraction and deforestation. For instance, UAVs have been deployed in the Amazon basin to detect illegal logging activities, helping to protect natural resources and reduce ecological damage in sensitive areas.⁸

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

GIS in the purpose of mapping and evaluating operational environments are essential. The planning and decision making process is improved through the integration and visualization of geographical data by GIS to enhance the knowledge of conflict locations, population distribution, terrain and infrastructure. The following are some noteworthy proposals:-

a. **Evaluation of potential hazards:** GIS helps in resource allocation by identifying at-risk locations. For example: we could deploy GIS to help prioritize relief operations and show the effects of the Haitian earthquake by region.

b. **Coordination:** GIS enables local government, humanitarian organizations and peacekeepers to work together seamlessly. To

ensure the coordination of local administrations with the NGOs, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) used Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

c. **Post-conflict reconstruction:** GIS helps in providing priorities of the different projects for reconstruction and mapping out damaged infrastructure. Iraq thus adopted GIS mapping as a basis to reconstruct areas that suffered severely during the ISIS conflict.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT, or information and communications technology, has transformed the exchange of data and communication in peacekeeping operations. The transmission of real-time information is facilitated by secure networks, mobile devices and cloud platforms, which in turn improve operational coordination and responsiveness. The subsequent proposals are noteworthy:-

a. **Crisis management:** ICT systems enable the implementation of opportune interventions by ensuring the rapid transmission of critical information. For example, the dissemination of urgent notifications through the use of ICT tools facilitated the UN Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA).

b. **Public Engagement:** By disseminating accurate information and refuting false information, social media platforms and mobile applications encourage engagement with local communities. In order to foster trust among the local populace, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) implements social media.

c. **Data Acquisition:** Mobile technologies facilitate the efficient collection of field data regarding environmental conditions, humanitarian requirements and conflict dynamics. We found this method highly advantageous in monitoring Syrian refugee centres.

Biometric technology

Peacekeeping operations now extensively utilize biometric technology, such as fingerprinting and facial recognition, for identity verification. These devices enhance the surveillance of individuals, monitor the movement of weapons and deter armed organizations from infiltrating. The subsequent proposals are remarkable:-

a. **The protection of citizens:** To protect citizens and ensure equitable aid distribution, biometric systems have been deployed, as seen during

the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh. While effective for managing refugee registrations, these systems raise concerns about privacy, data security, and potential misuse. Balancing technological efficiency with individual rights is crucial.

b. **Security verification:** To enhance security, peacekeepers use biometric technologies to authenticate individuals in restricted areas, as implemented at PoC locations in South Sudan. While effective, this raises concerns about privacy, consent and potential misuse. Careful consideration is essential to balance safety with individual rights.

c. **Programs for the Disarmament of Arms:** Biometric databases facilitate the monitoring of reintegration and disarmament programs. The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) supervised the reintegration of former combatants using biometrics.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics

Robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) are revolutionizing peacekeeping operations by automating tasks and improving decision-making. These technologies enhance operational efficiency and reduce the risk of human injury in a variety of applications, including demining and logistics. The subsequent proposals are notable:-

a. **Demining:** Robots equipped with advanced sensors can safely detect and neutralize landmines. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) implements autonomous systems in heavily mined regions like Afghanistan.

b. **Monitoring:** Robots that are equipped with sophisticated sensors are essential for the safe detection and neutralization of landmines, thereby substantially reducing the risk of human life. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) employs these robotic systems in heavily mined regions, such as Afghanistan, to guarantee the efficient and secure demining operations, thereby contributing to safer environments for local populations and peacekeepers.

c. **Predictive analysis:** Artificial intelligence systems are essential for the assessment of conflict patterns and the provision of tactical recommendations for conflict mitigation. AI is capable of predicting potential flashpoints and identifying trends by analyzing extensive datasets. For instance, predictive analytics have been effectively employed to predict resource-driven conflicts in Sudan, enabling

peacekeepers and policymakers to implement proactive measures to guarantee stability and prevent escalation.

Blockchain technology

The adoption of blockchain technology in peacekeeping is on the rise due to its capacity to improve the efficacy, security and transparency of mission operations. The most significant applications are:-

a. **Resource Allocation:** Blockchain ensures transparent management of resources and funds by creating immutable records of transactions. This minimizes the risk of corruption in procurement processes and enhances accountability in mission operations.

b. **Supply chain management:** The technology provides a secure and unalterable record of logistics, ensuring that essential supplies, such as medical kits and humanitarian aid are efficiently delivered to conflict zones. This reduces delays and prevents mismanagement of critical resources.

c. **Verification of Identity:** Researchers are exploring blockchain-based systems for the verification of identity. These innovative systems provide reliable, tamper-proof records, allowing peacekeepers to verify identities and ensure equitable distribution of aid to vulnerable populations. Although the potential is vast, challenges remain in the implementation of such technologies.

Solutions for Renewable Energy

In an effort to promote sustainability and mitigate operational risks associated with petroleum supply chains, renewable energy technologies are gaining popularity in peacekeeping operations. Following are the exceptional applications:-

a. **Energy independence:** Renewable energy systems-such as solar and wind-which provide sustainable alternatives to traditional fuel sources. Peacekeeping missions can (and often do) power remote bases using these systems; this eliminates the need for petroleum convoys, frequently targeted in conflict zones. By reducing dependency on vulnerable supply chains, renewable energy ensures operational continuity; however, it also enhances mission resilience in hostile environments.

b. **Impact on the environment:** The utilization of renewable energy significantly reduces carbon footprint of peacekeeping missions. By integrating solar and wind energy, missions not only contribute to global environmental goals; however, they also set an example of sustainable practices in regions impacted by climate change and conflict. Although this environmentally conscious approach strengthens UN's commitment to sustainability, it fosters long-term ecological balance because it encourages adaptive strategies.

c. **Cost savings:** Renewable energy solutions offer substantial cost savings in the long term. By reducing reliance on fossil fuels, missions can lower operational costs associated with transportation, fuel storage and logistics. The reduced expenditure on fuel logistics allows resources to be redirected toward other mission-critical areas, such as training, equipment and humanitarian aid.

Internet of Things (IoT)

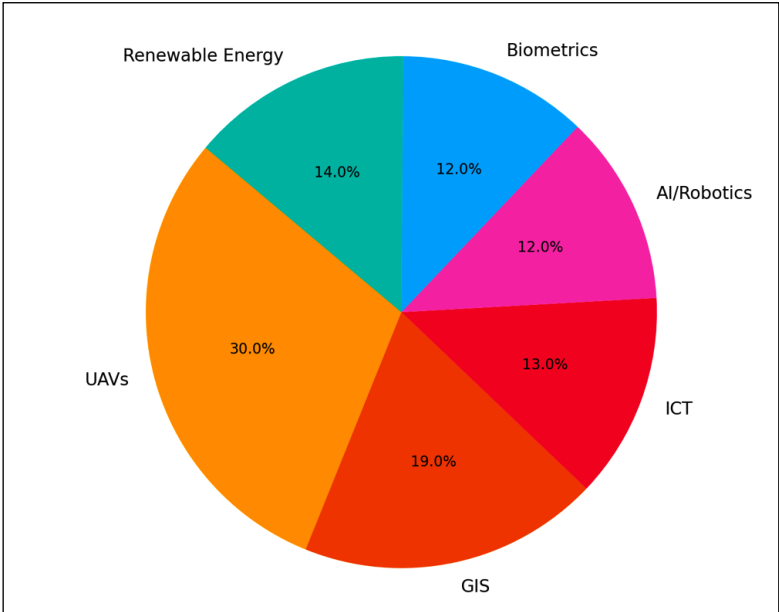
Real-time monitoring and data collection capabilities are provided by IoT devices, which enhance operational efficiency in challenging environments. The following are significant applications:-

a. **Monitoring of infrastructure:** IoT sensors provide real-time updates on the structural integrity of roads, bridges and supply routes, helping peacekeepers detect hazards or damages caused by natural disasters or conflicts. Early detection prioritizes repairs, prevents failures and ensures uninterrupted logistics. For example, bridge sensors monitor stress levels to prevent collapses, while road sensors track conditions for safer transport in conflict zones.

b. **Environmental Conditions:** IoT sensors ensure safe living conditions in refugee camps by monitoring air and water quality in real time. These devices detect contamination or unsafe conditions, enabling immediate intervention to prevent health risks. For example, water sensors ensure a clean supply for drinking, while air quality sensors monitor pollution levels to safeguard camp residents' health.

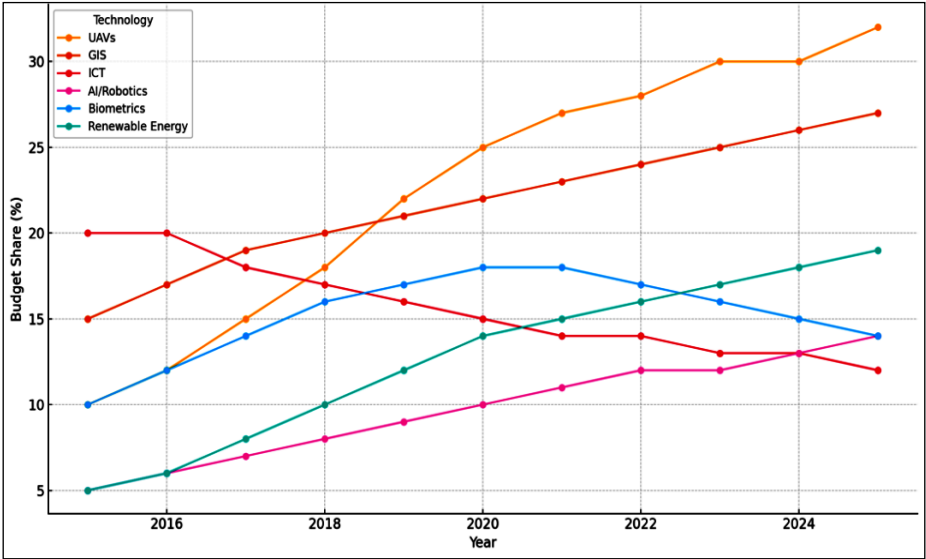
c. **Asset tracking:** IoT devices enable real-time tracking of mission-critical assets like vehicles, medical supplies and humanitarian aid. This ensures efficient resource utilization, minimizes losses and reduces delays. For instance, GPS-enabled devices track vehicles for optimal fleet management, while smart tags on supplies ensure timely replenishment and prevent shortages.

Figure 1: Budget Allocation for Technology in Peacekeeping Mission (2025)



Source: Author's self-construct

Figure 1: Budget Allocation for Peacekeeping Technologies (2015-2025)



Source: Author's self-construct

Challenges and Considerations

Data Privacy and Security: The extensive use of technology in peacekeeping has raised concerns regarding data privacy and cybersecurity. Unauthorized access to private data may endanger staff and operations. In order to mitigate these hazards, it is imperative to implement robust encryption and security protocols.

Ethical Issues: Employing advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and biometrics requires adherence to international regulations and ethical standards. For instance, biases in AI algorithms could lead to discriminatory practices, and the improper use of biometric data may violate human rights. Resolving these ethical challenges is crucial to ensure the fair and responsible use of technology in peacekeeping.⁹

Accessibility and Cost: Modern technologies often come with high costs, making them inaccessible to resource-constrained peacekeeping missions. Logistical challenges, including the transport and maintenance of equipment in conflict zones, further compound this issue. Collaborative funding models and cost-effective technological innovations are needed to ensure equitable access.¹⁰

Capacity Development and Training: In order to effectively utilize advanced technology, it is essential to undergo specialized training. In order to ensure that peacekeepers can effectively operate and sustain these instruments, it is imperative to implement programs that enhance capacity.

Local system integration: Conflict zones often lack the infrastructure needed to support advanced technologies. Ensuring compatibility with local systems and incorporating the involvement of local communities in implementation plans is essential for long-term sustainability.¹¹

Future Prospects of Technology in Peacekeeping

The future of peacekeeping closely relates to the incorporation of new technology. Notable patterns and opportunities consist of the following:-

a. **Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR):** These technologies are revolutionizing training programs by offering realistic simulations of complex conflict scenarios. They provide peacekeepers with the chance to practice crisis response techniques in secure environments.

b. **Blockchain technology:** Blockchain enhances accountability and transparency in financial transactions, procurement, and supply chain

management while on mission. For instance, smart contracts have the capacity to enhance logistics and prevent corruption in resource distribution.

c. **Quantum computing:** We anticipate quantum systems to enable unparalleled progress in predictive modeling, cryptographic security and data analysis. Advanced computing systems hold the potential for unprecedented progress in predictive modeling, cryptographic security and data analysis. This could significantly enhance intelligence-gathering and risk assessment in peacekeeping missions.¹²

d. **Systems that operate independently:** Researchers are exploring autonomous systems, such as self-driving vehicles and drones, for logistics, surveillance and aid distribution in high-risk areas. These technologies enhance efficiency by navigating challenging terrains and delivering supplies while reducing risks to personnel, marking a significant advancement in safer, more effective peacekeeping operations.

e. **Synthetic biology:** Synthetic biology provides innovative solutions to medical challenges in conflict zones. Notable progress includes the creation of synthetic blood, which can fill in for lost blood during emergencies and on-demand immunizations, which allow quick responses to disease outbreaks in remote or high-risk areas. These technologies have the potential to significantly enhance the quality of healthcare in peacekeeping missions.

f. **Renewable Energy Systems of the Future:** Beyond solar and wind energy, emerging technologies such as hydrogen fuel cells and biofuels can further reduce the environmental impact of peacekeeping missions while enhancing energy independence.¹³

g. **Solutions for cybersecurity:** As digital tools become increasingly central to peacekeeping, robust cybersecurity measures will be critical. Real-time threat detection systems, advanced encryption and secure networks can protect sensitive mission data and ensure operational integrity.¹⁴

Conclusion

Technological advancements have become a fundamental component of contemporary peacekeeping operations, allowing peacekeepers to more effectively and adaptably navigate the intricacies of modern conflicts. Situational

awareness, operational planning and decision-making processes have been transformed by the use of tools such as drones, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), artificial intelligence and biometrics. These advancements enable peacekeepers to operate more efficiently, even in high-risk and volatile environments, thereby enhancing their capacity to execute mission mandates and safeguard civilians.

Nevertheless, the integration of technology into peacekeeping operations presents its own set of obstacles. Ethical concerns, particularly those related to data privacy and misuse, continue to be critical issues that require attention. Furthermore, there are substantial obstacles to guaranteeing data security in conflict zones and equitable access to advanced technologies for all troop-contributing countries. Failure to address these constraints in a comprehensive manner may compromise the efficacy of technology-driven solutions.

In order to address these obstacles, peacekeeping missions must implement a strategic and balanced approach. This includes making sure that safe data management systems are created, that peacekeepers get the right training and that technological solutions are used in a way that follows moral standards and mission goals. It is essential to prioritize sustainability and accessibility to ensure that everyone, irrespective of income, can reap the benefits of these advancements.¹⁵

In summary, the strategic and responsible application of technology will be essential for peacekeeping missions to adjust to the changing nature of conflicts. By confronting the difficulties of integration and maintaining a commitment to ethical and equitable practices, peacekeeping operations can improve their ability to protect civilians, resolve conflicts and cultivate sustainable peace in even the most challenging environments.¹⁶

Recommendations

In response to emerging trends, following are the recommendations to enhance the efficacy of peacekeeping operations:-

- a. **Establish a Global Centre for Peacekeeping Technology:** The research, development and deployment of AI, drone and GIS should be coordinated by a global peacekeeping technology centre. Member states should fund and advise the UN Secretariat in its establishment process. Collaboration with academic institutions and private technology companies is essential for peacekeeping innovation and cutting-edge technology.

b. Establish protocols for ethical behavior and cybersecurity:

International cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), biometrics and data analytics ethics are essential components of peacekeeping. The UN OICT should spearhead this endeavor in order to safeguard mission data and resolve ethical challenges. Private technology firms enhance data integrity with secure systems and technical capabilities, while member governments enforce compliance.

c. Enhance the caliber of pre-deployment training: In order to adequately equip peacekeepers for high-risk scenarios, integrate VR/AR simulations into their pre-deployment training. Experience in UAV, IoT and GIS equips you with the necessary skills to conduct multidimensional operations. While member nations train their forces, the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) should organize and oversee mission-related training programs at BIPSOT.

Collectively, these recommendations aim to enhance the adaptability, efficacy, and sustainability of modern peacekeeping initiatives.

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Brief Biography



Captain Zilloi Based was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers in 2019. During his military career, he served with the 27 Riverine Engineer Battalion. In addition to completing mandatory courses, he did SCUBA diving and the Army Commando Course. Notably, he completed the Commando Young Officers' Course in Belgaum, India. Currently, he is serving as a contingent member of the Bangladesh Light Quick Reaction Force/5 under MINUSCA.

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