

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS JOURNAL

Issue 5, May 2019



Father of The Nation



"I want to reiterate our full confidence on the human being winning impossible and overcoming difficulties."

*Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
in the United Nations, General Assembly
29th session on 25 September, 1974*

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS

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Journey of Bangladesh in UN Peacekeeping Operations began in August 1988 with the deployment of pioneer team consisting 15 peacekeepers from Bangladesh Army in 'United Nations Iran Iraq Military Observer Group' (UNIIMOG). Subsequently, in 1989 Bangladesh Police and in 1993 Bangladesh Navy, Bangladesh Air Force joined the peacekeeping operations. This year Bangladesh commemorates 31 years of dedication, glory and sacrifice in peacekeeping operations duly acknowledged by UN for upholding world peace and security. This pride came at a cost of 146 brave souls who laid their lives while 227 suffered major injuries. Bangladesh now is a leading contributor of UN peacekeepers, having participated in 54 missions in 40 countries. Bangladeshi peacekeepers have earned the credentials of a 'Role Model' in global peacekeeping by sheer professionalism, impartiality, integrity and humane attitude in their approach.

29 May is observed as 'International Day of UN Peacekeepers' in every year around the globe. To mark the contribution of our peacekeepers and pay tribute to our deceased/injured peacekeepers, Armed Forces Division (AFD) is presenting the 5th issue of *International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers Journal* in coordination with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladesh Police. Articles of the journal primarily focused on the contributions of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers deployed in various United Nations Missions. Few of the articles reflect achievements of our peacekeepers including ways to manage new challenges in multi-dimensional mission environment. Gender mainstreaming and women in blue helmet have also been highlighted in this issue. "Protecting Civilians, Protecting Peace" being the theme for International Day of UN Peacekeepers 2019, one of the articles has also focused on contribution of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in this issue. Most of the articles are expressions of author's inner mind coined from personal experiences and review of narrative from books. We believe this issue will help unleashing untold happenings of peacekeeping operations and enrich our perception in this realm.

Finally, we would like to thank the Board of Editors for their relentless support and assistance to scrutinize the articles and manage publishing the journal in time. We convey our sincere gratitude to all the authors for their innovative and thought-provoking contribution despite their busy schedule. We are happy to receive a good number of articles this time. However, all couldn't be housed due to scarcity of space. Nevertheless we hope that future issues will be more resourceful and innovative to cover new horizon of UN peacekeeping to meet the expectations of our esteemed readers. We are hopeful to receiving similar response, support and cooperation from all concerned in future too.

AT A GLANCE CONTRIBUTION OF BANGLADESH FOR WORLD PEACE

Country	Name of Mission	Total
Afghanistan	UNAMA	11
Afghanistan-Pakistan	UNSM/UNGOMAP	
Angola	UNAVEM & UNAVEM III	635
Bosnia	UNMIBH	177
Burundi	BINUB	06
Cambodia	UNAMIC / UNTAC/UNMLT	1301
Congo	MONUC, MONUSCO	31379
Croatia/East Slovenia	UNTAES	76
East Timor	UNAMET/UNTAET/UNMISSET	2718
Ethiopia / Eritrea	UNMEE	1108
Georgia	UNOMIG	131
Haiti	UNMIH / MNF/MINUSTAH	5378
Iraq	UNGCI/UNMOVIC	124
Iran	UNIIMOG	31
Ivory Coast	MINUCI/ONUCI/UNOCI	32850
Kosovo	UNMIK	539
Kuwait	UNIKOM	8239
Liberia	UNOMIL/UNMIL	23793
Macedonia	UNPREDEP	07
Mozambique	ONUMOZ	2622
Namibia	UNTAG	85
Rwanda	UNAMIR	1012
Sierra Leone	UNAMSIL/ UNIOSIL	11981
Somalia	UNOSOM-I –II/AMISOM	1975
Sudan	UNMIS	9023
South Sudan	UNMISS	4633
Tajikistan	UNMOT	40
Uganda / Rwanda	UNOMUR	30
Western Sahara	MINURSO	332
Yugoslavia (Former)	UNPROFOR/UNMOP	1584
CAR & Chad	MINURCAT	59
Darfur	UNAMID	8640
Lebanon	UNIFIL	2487
West Africa	UNOWA	02
UNSOA (Nairobi)	UNSOA	01
Syria	UNSMIS	18
Mali	MINUSMA	6800
CAR	MINUSCA	4017
Somalia	UNSOM	05
Office of the African Union	UNOAU	01
UNHQ	UNDPKO	33
Cyprus	UNFICYP	04
Total Country : 40	Mission : 54	163,887

CURRENT DEPLOYMENT OF BANGLADESHI PEACEKEEPERS
AROUND THE GLOBE



Total Deployment : 6582

Forcewise Total Completed Deployment

Bangladesh Army	Bangladesh Navy	Bangladesh Air Force	Bangladesh Police	Total
132837	5428	6608	19014	163887

Supreme Sacrifices for World Peace (From April 1989 to April 2019)

Bangladesh Army	Bangladesh Navy	Bangladesh Air Force	Bangladesh Police	Total
117	04	05	20	146

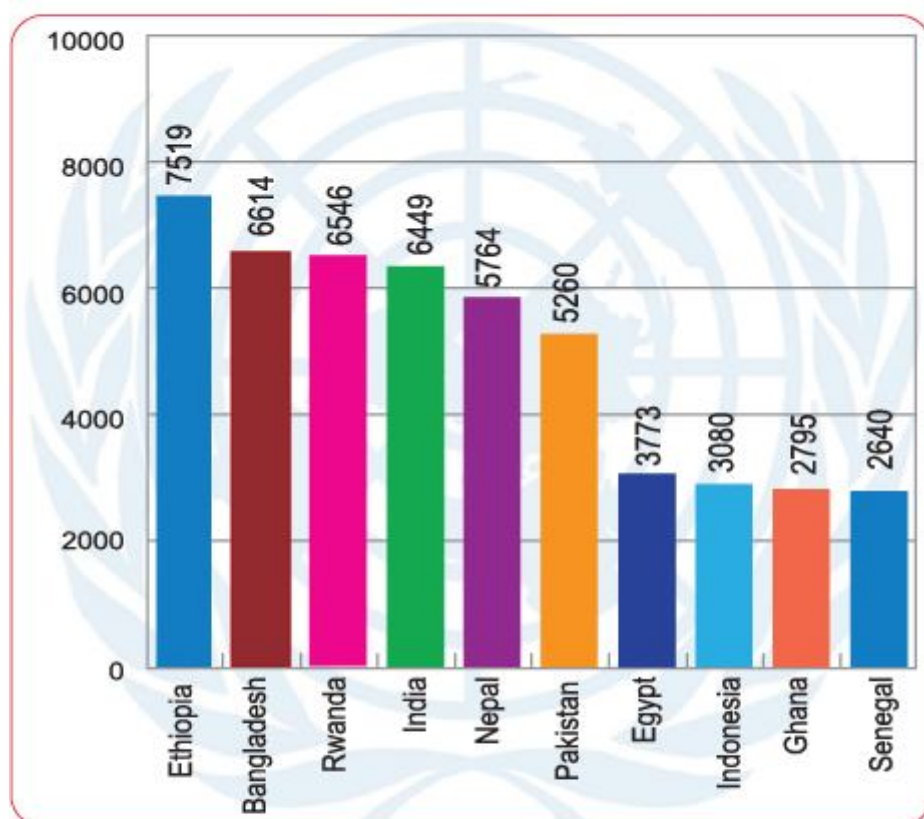
Summary of Injured Peacekeepers (From April 1989 to April 2019)

Bangladesh Army	Bangladesh Navy	Bangladesh Air Force	Bangladesh Police	Total
209	01	05	12	227

Participation of Female Peacekeepers in UN Mission

Forces	Participated	Currently Deployed
Army	311	68
Navy	14	04
Air Force	80	16
Police	1204	126
Grand Total	1609	214

CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN OPERATIONS (May 2018 to April 2019)



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Contribution of Bangladesh in UN Peacekeeping Operations vis-a-vis Recognition

Brigadier General Md Aftab Hossain, BSP, afwc, psc

"Though Bangladesh has graduated from Least Developed Country to Developing Country this year, but they graduated in Peacekeeping much before."

- Mr Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General

(During Thematic Display on '30 Years of Bangladesh in UNPKOs' in New York on 25 April 2018)

Introduction

Bangladesh has participated significantly in almost all the challenging and troublesome United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) since 1988. Bangladesh is the leading troops/police contributing country (T/PCC) for about last one decade. UNPKOs normally take place in the most physically and politically difficult environments. Therefore, success in UNPKOs is never granted. Despite, the devoted and committed peacekeepers of Bangladesh have left their footprint in establishing peace in many troublesome areas and sacrificed many invaluable lives. Bangladesh has earned very positive image around the world for this remarkable contribution for peace, security and stability of the world. It still seems Bangladeshi peacekeepers may deserve more recognition. Due to many reasons few T/PCCs are coming up vividly shadowing the contribution of Bangladesh. To make the contribution more tangible, documented and permanent, Bangladesh should take drive to get international award highlighting the contribution and sacrifice in UNPKOs.

In this paper, an endeavour has been made to highlight the contribution of Bangladesh in UNPKOs. The paper also attempts to justify the recognition in relation to the contribution and sacrifice made by Bangladesh in global peace effort under the umbrella of UN. Finally, the paper has concluded with few recommendations to have better recognition for its contribution in global peace effort that may be pursued.

Contribution of UN Peacekeeping for World Peace

Historical Perspective of UNPKOs. Maintaining worldwide peace and security was the main purpose of establishing UN in 1945 just after the World War II (1939-45). Thereafter, peacekeeping operations became one of the focused areas of UN activities with a view to make the world a safer place for everyone's living. Peacekeeping is "a unique and dynamic instrument developed by Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as a way to help countries torn by conflict to create the conditions for lasting peace."¹ The first peacekeeping mission was sent to the Middle East in 1948 and in last 70 years on an average in every year a new mission has started in different parts of the world.

Success of UN in Peace Operations. UN peacekeeping operations are conducted in the most dangerous and difficult environment away from the countries of the peacekeepers. The UN peacekeepers are dealing with the conflicts and trying to establish peace in the different troublesome parts of the world but in all cases the success is not guaranteed. UN has huge achievements in the field of peacekeeping over last 70 years. Winning of Nobel Peace Prize in 2001 is the testimony of its contribution for world peace and security. UN has helped to end conflicts and foster reconciliation by conducting successful peacekeeping operations in many countries, including Guatemala, Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Namibia, Tajikistan etc. In recently completed peace operations also UN has made a real difference in the war-torn regions such as Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Haiti and Kosovo. Thus UNPKOs helped the countries to end conflict and make progress towards development.

Involvement of Bangladesh in UNPKOs. Bangladesh is contributing in UNPKOs for last 30 years since 1988 and participated in 54 different missions in 40 countries. As the leading T/PCC presently 28 contingents from Bangladesh are deployed in UN peace operations and rotate every year.² Rotation of contingent, Observers, Staff Officers altogether about 13,000 personnel including 1100 officers of Bangladesh Armed Forces and Police at any point of time remain involved in peacekeeping affairs. They are either deployed or taking preparation for deployment to any UNPKOs. The completed and current UN missions in different countries are shown in Figure 1 below :-

Figure 1: Current and Completed Deployment of Bangladesh in Different Countries



Source: Prepared by the author with data from Fact Sheet of UNPKOs and OO Dte, AHQ

The relevant statistics of UNPKOs and contribution of Bangladesh are shown in Table 1:-

Table 1 : Comparative Study of Contribution (as on 31 January 2019)

UN-led Global Peacekeeping data
Peacekeeping Operations since 1948: 71
Currently Deployed Uniformed personnel in 14 UNPKOs: 88,946
Total fatalities in all UNPKOs: 3,780

Bangladesh's Contribution (As of February 2019)			
Participation in UNPKOs since 1988: 54 missions in 40 countries			
Personnel Participated in UNPKOs: 1,61,418			
Currently Deployed Female: 206			
Currently Deployed Bangladeshi Peacekeepers in 8 UNPKOs: 6,689 (7.52% of total globally deployed force)			
Leadership: 13 FC/DFC including 15 Female Contingent Commanders			
Total fatalities in all UNPKOs: 146, Injured: 225			
Bangladesh Army Contingents			
102 x BANBAT (Large Contingents), 13 x Artillery Regiment, 15 x Special Force/ Reserve Company, 27 x HQ & Support Signals Company, 69 x Engineer (Construction) Company, 13 x Engineer Multi Role Company, 15 x Logistics Company, 13 x Transportation Company,		20 x Signals Company, 1 x Signals Platoon, 17 x Military Police Contingent, 14 x Military Police Detachment, 36 x Level II Hospital, 9 x Level I (+) Hospital, 6 x Patrol Platoon	
Bangladesh Navy Contingents	Bangladesh Air Force Contingents		Bangladesh Police Contingents
6 x Force Riverine Unit, 4 x Force Maritime Unit, 9 x Contingent, 2 x Riverine Unit	16 x Utility Aviation Unit, 16 x Airfield Support Unit, 5 x Airfield Support and Maintenance Unit, 9 x Air Transport Unit, 19 x Bangladesh Air (Helicopter Contingent)		90 x Formed Police Unit (Male), 13 x Formed Police Unit (Female)

Source: Author's self-construct with data from Armed Forces Division (AFD) and OO Dte, AHQ

Achievements and Sacrifice of Bangladesh in Different UNPKOs

The statistics of Table 1 shows how much Bangladesh is involved in UNPKOs and she had a successful track record. Bangladesh is one of the countries who always abides by the rules and regulations of UN and shows due respect to the diversity of population irrespective of their religion, race, colour, and social status. Bangladeshi peacekeepers have the unique quality to share their food, feelings, sorrows and happiness with locals. It enabled them to win hearts and minds of the locals which is one of the very effective instrument for establishing peace and stability among the warring parties to the conflict. In that count Bangladesh stand much ahead of other T/PCCs in establishing peace

around the globe. There are many incidents when Bangladeshi contingents had to intervene between firing of two parties when they are involved in communal clash. In many occasions Bangladeshi contingents had to rescue peacekeepers of other T/PCCs from encirclement of rebels when other stakeholders of UN refused or failed to do so. All these remarkable achievements and positive contribution form glorious history of Bangladeshi peacekeepers. Few of the significant achievements of Bangladeshi peacekeepers are highlighted in Table 2 below:-

Table 2 : Significant Contribution of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers in Different UN Missions

Missions and Country	Achievements
In almost all Missions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significantly contributed to conduct election including transportation of election materials. 2. Constructed/ repaired roads/ bridges. 3. Constructed/ repaired educational institution and distributed reading materials. 4. Provided free treatment and distribution of medicine and food among needy people. 5. Conducted various CIMIC activities.
UNAMSIL, Sierra Leone	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Successfully repaired and ensured maintenance of a huge numbers of roads, bridges and culverts. 2. Repaired demolished airport control/administer tower and office buildings. It had very positive effect on economy of Sierra Leone. 3. 'Food for Education' project was introduced by Bangladesh contingents. 4. By their activities Bangladesh Peacekeepers won the heart of local people. Thereby to recognize contribution the government of Sierra Leone declared 'Bangla' as their 2nd language. (see Figure - 5)
UNMIL, Liberia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduced Agro-farm in different parts of the country that assisted enhanced socio-economic condition of the people.
UNMIS, Sudan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provided support to UN Integrated Referendum & Electoral Division in pre-referendum action. 2. Conducted complex operation to provide security to World Food Programme (WFP) convoy in a high risk area. 3. Successfully demined several areas and destructed thousands of Explosives and Unexploded bombs. 4. Constructed various buildings, sheds, walk way, water points, playground, schools, utility roads, various earth works, repair and maintenance of various airport, taxiway, air field etc.

UNMISS, South Sudan	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provided complete support for construction, renovation and development of three Referendum support Base.2. Extension and repair work of various airport, air field and heli-landing sites.3. Construction of various soft and hard wall accommodations, buildings, hall-hangers etc.
UNMIH, Haiti	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Had noticeable contribution in 'Operation Uphold Democracy.'2. Taken part for construction of several roads, bridges, culverts, play grounds etc.3. Provided support to local police and UN Police.
ONUSOM, Somalia	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conducted training of Somali police successfully.2. Secured key installation and censoring of small arms.3. Controlled heavy weapon before finally destroying those.4. Security of Main Supply Route, keep the Area of Responsibility free from outbreak of any major hostility.
MINUSMA, Mali	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Assisted transportation of ex combatant for "Mécanisme Opérationnel de Coordination (MOC)" to Gao from different parts of Mali under the extreme threat of rebel and different terrorists group.2. Assisted transportation of food and daily commodities for UN personnel and locals of Mali.
MINUSCA, Central African Republic (CAR)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensuring transportation of food and daily commodities of UN personnel and locals.2. Preparation of playground for the locals.3. Establishing markets for the locals.4. Introduction of Agro based farm.
MONUSCO, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Construction of roads, bridges and educational institution.2. Distribution of reading material.

Source: Author's self-construct on the basis of information collected from AHQ (OO Dte) and different missions

Supreme Sacrifice Made by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers. Though Bangladesh has earned positive image and laurels but had to sacrifice many lives. Total 146 valiant peacekeepers of Bangladesh have died in different missions while serving under the UN and 225 have sustained injury of different levels. Statistics of deceased peacekeepers are shown in Table 3 below:-

Table 3: Statistics of Deceased and Injured Bangladeshi Peacekeepers

Name of Mission	Number of Deceased
UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)	27
UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)	25
UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Ivory Coast	22
UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)	20
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)	14
African Union UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), Sudan	06
UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)	04
UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), Iraq-Kuwait	04
UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS)	03
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA)	03
UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)	03
UN Transition Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)	03
UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR), Bosnia and Herzegovina	02
UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)	02
UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), Namibia	01
UN Operation in Mozambique (UNUMOZ)	01
UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM)	01
UN Guard Contingent in Iraq (UNGCI)	01
UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)	01
UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH)	01
UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)	01
UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)	01
Total Deceased	146
Summary of Injured Peacekeepers	
Service/ Organization	Number of Injured
Bangladesh Army	209
Bangladesh Navy	01
Bangladesh Air Force	05
Bangladesh Police	10
Total Injured	225

Source: Author's self-construct based on information collected from AFD, OO Dte and Internet

Desired International Recognition/ Nobel Peace Prize for Bangladesh and Justifications

General. It may be mentioned that UN was awarded with Nobel Peace Prize in 2001 for its outstanding contribution for world peace. Bangladesh is one of the countries that has recognized world peace and stability in its constitution. Bangladesh's contribution to UN mission is a story of glory and success that has earned very positive images around the world. Therefore, effort may be taken to get nomination for international awards/Nobel Peace prize for its outstanding contribution to establish peace around the world. The overriding factors of Bangladesh in this connection are Bangladesh is loyal to T/PCCs, very responsive and her peacekeepers are much disciplined. The justification for recognition of Bangladesh is stated in subsequent paragraphs.

Huge Troops/ Police Contribution. Bangladesh has so far deployed 1,61,418 personnel including 1,616 female for UNPKOs. These remarkable contributions from Bangladesh has been achieved just only in 30 years since 1988. The contribution deserves a special recognition from the international forum.

Providing Required COE. Bangladesh is one of the T/PCCs who always provides required COE to equip the contingents so that they can carry out their responsibilities as desired by the UN. Being one of the Least Developing Countries (LDC) this gesture is a matter of appreciation and deserves special recognition. This unique contribution of Bangladesh should be highlighted to attract world leadership.

Deployment of Female Contingents and Female Engagement Team (FET). Bangladesh is one of the pioneers to provide Female Formed Police Unit (FPU) which is a milestone in the history of peacekeeping operations. So far 13 Female FPU have participated in UNPKOs and assisted in taking care of the female and children. To meet the requirement of UN, Bangladesh Army has started deploying FET with the major and minor contingents in different missions. The FET assist contingents in conducting duties related to female and children smoothly which is one of the focused areas of peacekeeping. Bangladesh also deploy female Observers and Staffs (UNMO & SO) in different missions. This visionary step of Bangladesh has been highly appreciated all over the world. Statistics of female participants is shown in Table 4 below:-

Table 4: Contribution of Female Peacekeepers from Bangladesh

Type	Current Deployment	Completed
UNMO/SO	17	141
Contingent Members of Military and Police	191	1475
Total	208	1616

Source: Author's self-construct based on information collected from AFD

Providing Leaderships for UN Field Missions and Staffs in UN Secretariat. Not only Bangladesh has provided troops and police but also provided leadership as Force Commander (FC)/ Deputy Force Commander (DFC) to command the troops for implementation of mission mandate. Besides, holding many important appointments at different level Bangladesh has provided 13 FC/DFCs. In addition, Bangladesh has provided about 22 SOs in UN Secretariat, New York, USA.

Female Leadership. Bangladesh has also provided Female Contingent Commander which is rare in case of other T/PCCs. It is one of the focused areas of UN. In addition, two Bangladeshi female pilots were also deployed in MONUSCO, DRC.

Abiding the Core Values of UN. Professionalism of Bangladeshi peacekeepers are admirable to most of the UN staffs and deployed contingents from different nations. Bangladeshi peacekeepers always work with impartiality and are respected by people of different religions, cultures and different walks of life. They are well-known for their respect for the diversity and respect for the rules and regulations set by UN.

Zero Tolerance for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). Despite providing huge number of peacekeepers there is no/very negligible SEA case reported against Bangladeshi peacekeepers. In comparison to the number of peacekeepers this is really very remarkable achievement which deserves a special recognition in comparison to the other T/PCCs.

Sacrificing Lives for the Cause of World Peace and Security. Bangladesh has sacrificed 146 (One hundred and forty six) invaluable lives and another 225 (Two hundred and twenty five) have sustained injury at different levels. The families specially the children of the deceased peacekeepers are suffering and deprived of their parental support/guidance which cannot be compensated up by anything else. Many of the injured peacekeepers are leading their lives with lot of difficulties and suffering. This is a unique sacrifice for a nation for the noble cause of world peace and security. In comparison to other T/PCCs this is the highest sacrifice for UNPKOs. Comparisons are shown in Table 5 below :-

Table 5: Summary of Deceased from other T/PCCs

Name of Country with Duration	Number of Deceased	Started Contributing in UNPKOs
Bangladesh (in 30 years)	146	1988
India (in 58 years)	164	1960
Nigeria (in 58 years)	153	1960
Pakistan (in 58 years)	150	1960

Source: Author's self-construct based on information collected from DPKO Website

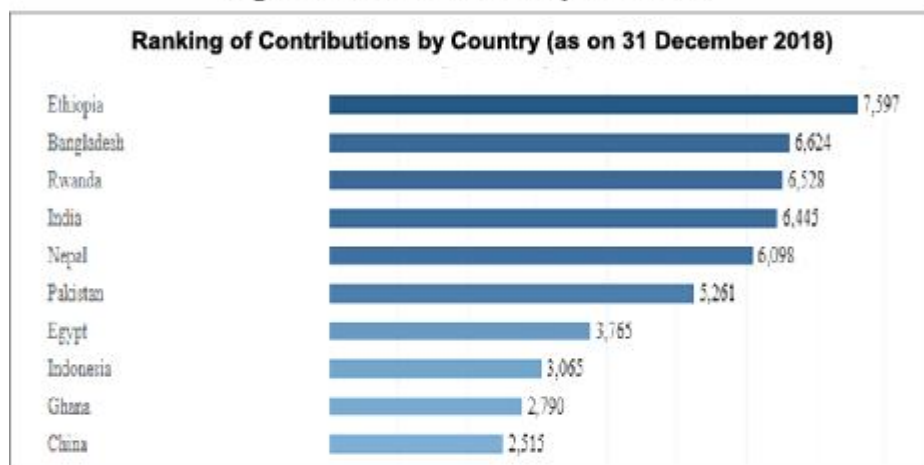
Quickest Deployment. There was a crisis situation when some T/PCCs had withdrawn from UNMISS, South Sudan in November 2017 which created an immediate vacuum and UN had been trying to fill up the gap immediately. It was Bangladesh who was able to deploy the contingent (an infantry battalion) within 15 days of the request received from DPKO. This is one of the rare successes of UN deploying troops so quickly and Bangladesh was the main actor here.

Acceptance of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are accepted by the people of host nation and also by the UN staff. There are many incidents when Bangladeshi peacekeepers were preferred by other T/PCCs to go for joint patrolling due to the preference and acceptance of locals towards the former. Besides, there are many occasions when the Bangladeshi peacekeepers were employed to rescue the peacekeepers of other nations which prevented humiliation of UN and also those T/PCCs.

Why Should it be Pursued Now ?

Contribution of Regional Organisations. Due to the involvement of regional organizations to pursue the interest of their T/PCCs the scopes for contribution by Bangladeshi peacekeepers are reducing day by day. From Figure 2, it is clear that the contributions of African countries are dominating over Asian countries. Therefore, it will be difficult for Bangladesh to maintain as Top/Leading T/PCCs which is prevailing now. Hence, this is the appropriate time for any such movement before fading away the image of Bangladesh as top T/PCCs.

Figure 2: Contribution of Top 10 T/PCCs



Source: Author's self-construct based on information collected from UN DPKO Website

Persuasion as Member of UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). At the moment being first five contributors, Bangladesh is the member of PBC, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding work parallel. Therefore, being a member of PBC Bangladesh can raise her voice to highlight the contribution which will be instrumental for getting international recognition.

Graduation of Bangladesh from Least Developing Country (LDC). Due to graduation of Bangladesh from LDC to Developing Country, it has created a huge impact all over the world. It is the favourable situation for proposal to get adequate attention from world body.

Thematic Display on 30 Years of Bangladesh in UNPKOs at New York, USA. Bangladesh had arranged a thematic display for 7 days in UN Secretariat, New York from 26 April to 01 May 2018 to highlight the contribution Bangladesh has kept for 30 years in UNPKOs. UN Secretary General and Hon'ble Ministers from Bangladesh inaugurated the occasion and it had huge impact in the mind of UN Leadership and Foreign dignitaries. The feeling is still fresh in the mind of world leadership which should be capitalized to pursue the desire for recognition. The inauguration ceremony is focused in the picture given below :-

Figure 3: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres Speaking to the audience in the Thematic Display on '30 years of Bangladesh in UNPKOs'



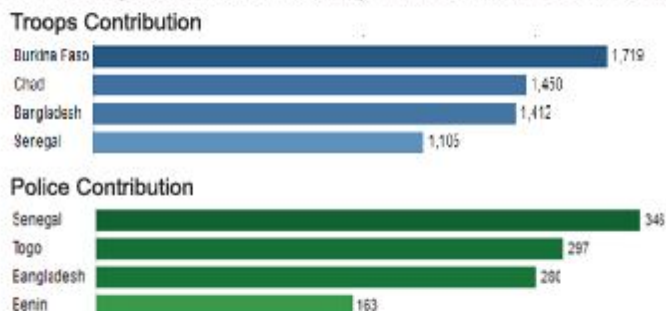
Source : Author's collection

Deploying Contingents in MINUSMA, Mali. MINUSMA is the most deadly mission of the world, where the deployed peacekeepers face multidimensional asymmetric threat including Improvised Explosive Device (IED). No leading Asian T/PCCs have contributed battalions and large troops in MINUSMA for the security purpose. But Bangladesh has shown bravery and has different type of contingents deployed as shown below:-

a. Infantry Battalion	b. Signal Company	c. Transport Company
d. Engineer Construction Company	e. Utility Helicopter Unit	f. Formed Police Unit

In both military and police contribution Bangladesh is leading as shown in Figure 4 below :-

Figure 4: Bangladesh as a Leading T/PCCs in MINUSMA, Mali

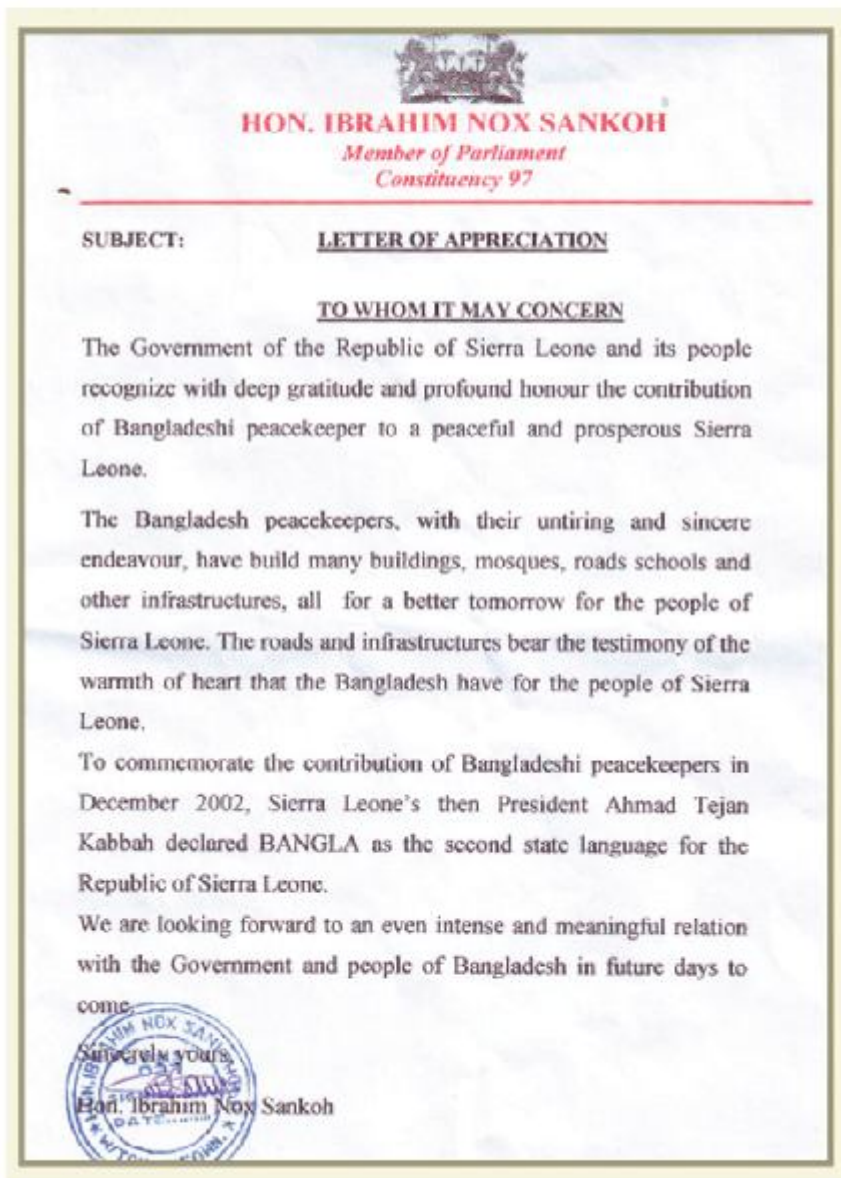


Source: Author's self-construct based on information collected from DPKO Website

Providing troops and police in such conditions really speaks about the commitment and involvement of Bangladesh for world peace and security. There are many T/PCCs those who compete to contribute more troops in other missions but the case is different for Mali. Many countries have withdrawn their troops for the security purpose whereas Bangladesh has maintained the momentum and kept providing troops which should be highlighted and taken into consideration.

Honouring of 'Bangla' as Second Language in Sierra Leone. Due to their contribution the Bangladeshi peacekeepers have been highly honoured by the people of Sierra Leone. Therefore, as a mark of respect for Bangladeshi peacekeepers the government of Sierra Leone has declared 'Bangla' as a second language in the Parliament which is very exceptional achievement. Figure 5 given below shows the document:-

Figure 5: 'Bangla' is Recognized as the Second State Language of Sierra Leone



Source: Author's self-construct based on information is collected from OO Dte, AHQ

Recommendations

Recognition for Bangladesh and its Peacekeepers. Bangladesh may try to get nomination for Nobel Peace Prize for its outstanding contribution in world peace. The matter may be proposed during General Assembly session of UN.

Diplomatic Move. Bangladesh should take all necessary steps to get support of all like-minded friendly countries for the recognition of her contribution in UNPKOs. Permanent mission of Bangladesh to UN at New York may pursue the issue at UN Secretariat.

Publicity. Bangladesh should make endeavour to broadcast all the success story and contribution of Bangladesh in UNPKOs through electronic and print media.

Broadcast of the UNPKOs Activities of Bangladesh on TV and Radio Channels. Nowadays only on the special days few channels broadcast prepared programmes by Military/Police. To reach to the general mass and leadership of the world regular broadcast is essential. Assistance may be sought in this regard from government and private TV channels as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Conclusion

In last 30 years Bangladesh has kept huge contribution in UNPKOs where she deployed 1,61,418 peacekeepers including 1,616 female peacekeepers. At present Bangladesh is deploying 28 contingents and about 7,000 peacekeepers which rotates every year. The valiant peacekeepers of Bangladesh have sacrificed 146 invaluable lives and another 225 persons have sustained injuries at different levels. This is a huge contribution from a developing country like Bangladesh within last 31 years since 1988. Bangladesh has earned very positive image around the world. It has enabled Bangladesh to have good bilateral relation with other countries and regional organisations but it still seems that Bangladesh deserves more recognition in relation to the contribution made for world peace in comparison to other T/PCCs.

Due to many reasons like increased pressure of the new T/PCCs to contribute more to UNPKOs, involvement of regional organisation and budget cut of UN it is getting tough for Bangladesh to increase number of Military/Police deployment in UNPKOs. So, the top position of Bangladesh in UNPKOs will fade away over the period of time. Therefore, it is the most appropriate time to raise the voice of Bangladesh for an International recognition/ Nobel Peace Prize for her outstanding contribution for world peace and security highlighting the justifications. As Bangladesh has graduated from LDC to Developing Country recently it is likely to facilitate the desire of Bangladesh for such recognition. Besides, contribution of Bangladesh to different missions especially in Sierra Leone, Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, and Central African Republic may be highlighted as the cause for such aspiration.

Bangladesh is one of the rare countries that have recognised world peace and security in its constitution. As a constitutional commitment

it would be appropriate on the part of Bangladesh to pursue for the international recognition for Nobel Peace Prize. Diplomatic approach by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to UN in New York, USA should be focused on the issue to gain more recognition. Massive publicity both by electronic and print media in home and abroad should be enhanced to highlight Bangladesh's contribution in UNPKOs. These steps might be instrumental to get appropriate international recognition.

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Brief Biography



Brigadier General Md Aftab Hossain, BSP, afwc, psc was commissioned in June 1993. He is a graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College and National Defence College. He served in different Infantry Regiments and commanded one Infantry Regiment. Besides he served as Staff Officer of both at Infantry Division and Infantry Brigade Headquarters. He also served as Colonel Staff of Overseas Operations Directorate, Army Headquarters (General Staff Branch). At present he is serving as Commander of 72 Infantry Brigade. In the field of UN peacekeeping he has served as Planning Officer in DPKO, UN Secretariat and in UNAMSIL. He was a contributor to *The Annual Review of Global Peace Operations* 2013 published from Center on International Cooperation by Lynne Rienner publisher, London. He can be reached at aftab4538@yahoo.com.

Hema-Lendu Crisis in Ituri: An age-old Ethnic Violence Since Colonial Era and Role of Bangladesh Rapidly Deployable Battalion, MONUSCO

Colonel A B M Nowroj Ehsan, BSP, psc

Introduction

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), known as Congo, a country of Central Africa had always been suffering from ethnic clashes filled up with anguish and human rights violation. The colonial era ended in 1960 when Patrice Lumumba took over as the Prime Minister of the country. Since then the country had witnessed the worst ethnic killings and most heinous human rights violation. DRC, the 2nd largest country in Africa as regards to the geographical boundary and its demography is composed of more than 250 different ethnic groups.¹ Possessing enormous possibilities, but devastated by over 100 years of war, dictatorship and horror, the country now has suffered more than any other country on earth. The colonial masters had always exploited the different ethnic groups and played their own role to gain the stockpile of mineral resources by 'divide and rule' theory. Trading goods such as ivory, cloth, pottery and ironware, they made a contact with highly developed kingdom known as the Congo that was ruled over by a patriarchal monarch.²

The ethnic tension between the agriculturalist Lendu and pastoralist Hema is as old as the colonial period of Belgian Congo. Between these two ethnic groups, Hemas were always favoured by the Belgian colonial administrators. The disparity prevailed by the colonial power kept both Hema and Lendu confronting each other. This discrepancy continued until the independence and the problem persists in modern times as well. One of the very important issues that aggravated the relation is land dispute. Introduction of new land law in 1973 gave birth to further ethnic clashes. Using the law, some wealthy Hema people forced Lendu land owners off their lands, leading to a growing sense of resentment. The 1994 Rwandan genocide between Hutus and Tutsis caused death of 8,00,000 people, mostly the Tutsis and Hutu impunities led a flee of thousands of Hutu refugees to the Eastern DRC. The influx of Hutu refugees into the region led to the First Congo War. Later, the historical African War began in 1998, fuelled the level of regional conflict, the impact of which still prevails between Hema and Lendu.

Induction of Rapidly Deployable Battalion (RDB) is the new strategy of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) where it adopted a theme 'Protection through Projection'.³ Bangladesh provided the second RDB in MONUSCO which was

deployed under Northern Sector (NS) in February 2018. The main concept is to dislocate the static force from different Company Operating Bases (COBs) to deploy in the form of Static Combat Deployments (SCDs) for shorter duration with lesser force. The RDBs are expected to be more robust, agile, mobile, flexible and capable in implementing MONUSCO mandate.⁴ Bangladesh Rapidly Deployable Battalion-1 (BANRDB-1) was deployed in problematic Djugu Territory where Hema-Lendu crisis emerged in December 2017. The success of BANRDB-1 is a myth which has been recognized by MONUSCO and UN hierarchy. Within a very short span of time, BANRDB-1 could successfully contain the conflict bringing temporary peace to the territory.

This paper will first highlight the history of DRC in short, thereafter the genesis of Hema-Lendu crisis will be discussed that would include the recent outburst at Djugu Territory. Finally, the role of MONUSCO will be highlighted in which the success of BANRDB-1 will be focused.

History of DRC

Ancient History of DRC. The present DRC was first settled about 80,000 years ago. The Kingdom of Congo remained present in the region between the 14th and 19th centuries. A little more was heard of Congo until 1960, when Dr Livingstone began opening the African interior to European exploration.⁵ At that time, Henry Morton Stanley, a renowned explorer, ventured the interior Africa through Congo River. Leopold II, King of Belgium, was fascinated with obtaining along and focused upon claiming the interior Africa which was unclaimed geographical area. At the Berlin Conference in 1884, the European powers allocated the Congo basin region to private charitable organization run by Leopold II, who had long held ambitions for colonial expansion. He named the area as '**Congo Free State**'.⁶

Atrocities of Leopold II and Independence of Congo. Leopold II privately controlled 'Congo Free State' from 1885 to 1908 until the Belgium administration took control over the state. Leopold II used to control 'Congo Free State' to strip the country's vast count of wealth, largely in the form of ivory and rubber. Tyranny and horror of Leopold II reached its apex and many Christian missionaries and handful of human rights organization internationally publicized these atrocities. Finally, in 1908 the power was seized by Belgian administration naming the state as 'Belgian colony'.⁷ During 1940 and 1950 the Congo experienced an unprecedented level of urbanization and the colonial power wanted to make the territory as model colony. At that time, Patrice Lumumba, one of the very influential leaders formed a united front named as

'Movement National Congolese (MNC)' and got the independence on 30 July 1960.⁸

Post Independence Era. Upon achieving independence from Belgian colonial rule, the country was named Republic of the Congo. The state faced grave problems with a mutiny by its armed forces and a secessionist struggle from its Katanga province. Within weeks of the newly-elected government taking power, Lumumba was dismissed from office by the President. Thereafter Mobutu Sese Seko, Chief of Staff of the Army, took advantage of the political turmoil, seizing power in 1965.⁹ He soon renamed the country as Zaire. Until 1994 Mobutu ran the country as dictator with support of different foreign powers. In 1994, Rwandan genocide was the spark that lit the regional fire. During and after the genocide, an estimated 2 million refugees, mostly Hutu, poured over Rwanda's western border into the Congo. They terrorized and robbed the local population with impunity until October 1996 when eastern Congolese Tutsi led an uprising to force the Rwandans out of the Congo sparking the First Congo War. In response, Rwandan and Ugandan armies backing Laurent-Désiré Kabila invaded Congo. In May 1997, the combined effort, called the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL), overthrew Mobutu's government and took control of the country. The country was renamed as DRC and Laurent Kabila took over as President in September 1997.¹⁰

Regime of Kabila Family. Laurent Kabila could not rule the country for long time. Kabila alienated his Rwandan and Ugandan allies. This event was a major cause of the Second Congo War which began with a Rwandan - Ugandan joint invasion in 1998. Neighboring countries like Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe came to Kabila's rescue and temporarily halted the Rwandan and Ugandan troops. In January 2001, President Laurent Kabila was assassinated by his bodyguard, and his son, Joseph Kabila, took over. Joseph Kabila continued having no significant change in the luck of general mass. On 30 July 2006 and 28 November 2011, he was elected as the President of DRC with a lot of controversies. On 31 December 2018, a general election took place where a controversial result declared Felix Tshisekedi as the President, and he took oath on 24 January 2019. Thereby, Kabila family was likely to end their 22 years of regime.

Introduction of UN Mission in DRC. In July 1999, the seven countries (Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia) involved in Second Congo War signed the Lusaka Peace Accord. In November 1999, Security Council Resolution 1279 affirmed constitution of the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC).¹¹ The operation was authorized

under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which allows peacekeepers to use force, if necessary, to carry out their mandate.¹² Over the past decade, the Security Council passed a number of resolutions to strengthen MONUC's force and its mandate. Thereby MONUC became the largest peacekeeping operation deployed around the world. On 28 May 2010, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1925 and converted the name of the mission as United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) with effect from 01 July 2010.¹³

Hema-Lendu Crisis: Its History and Present Scenario

Genesis of Hema-Lendu Crisis. These two ethnic groups are minority ethnic population of DRC who live in north-eastern part of the country in particular in Ituri Province. Ethnic tension between Hema-Lendu can be traced to the colonial period, when the area was part of the Belgian Congo. The Belgian colonial administrators favoured the pastoralist Hema, resulting in education and wealth disparities between the two groups.¹⁵ Thus, the Hemas are more educated and dominating having control over the markets and land properties. On the contrary, Lendus are less educated and less dominating being the farmers who work under the Hemas mostly. This divergence continued into modern times as well.

a. Colonial Era. Hema-Lendu crisis first emerged during the colonial era. Before that, both the communities were living a peaceful life as neighbours. In the beginning of 1900, numbers of gold mines were discovered in Djugu territory, some are still functional. To evict the farmlands and to start mining, Belgian government pursued the 'Divide and rule' theory. To do so they injected grievance and mistrust among these two tribes. Thereby, both the communities started fighting each other which allowed the mining in colonial master's favour. This conflict continued decades after decades and inherited to even these days.

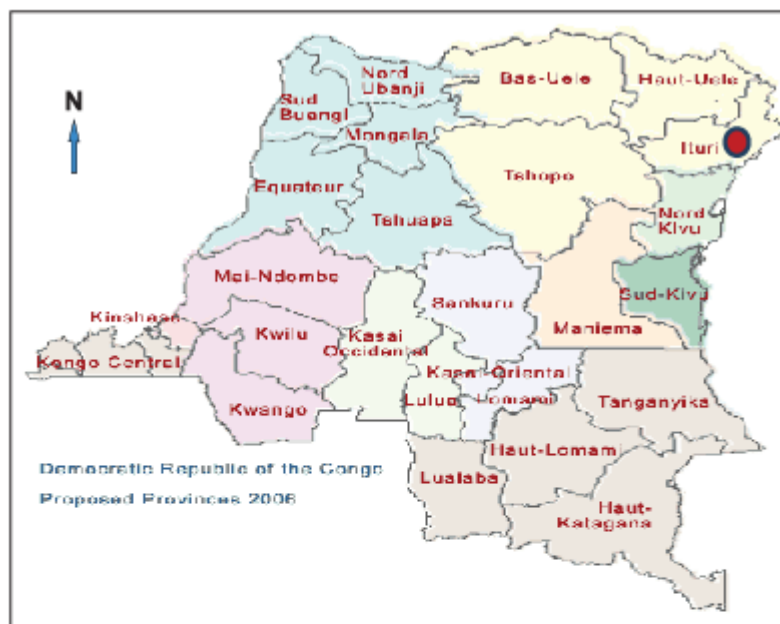
b. Hema-Lendu Conflicts in Different Regimes. The long standing grievances about land issues between Hema and Lendu had erupted into conflict on at least three previous occasions: 1972, 1985 and 1996. In 1973, a new law was introduced for the use of land, which allows people to buy land they do not inhabit and, if their ownership is not contested for two years, evict any residents from the land.¹⁶ Some wealthy Hema used this law to force Lendu off their land, leading to a growing sense of resentment. Later DRC has witnessed two violent wars which left thousands of lives and displaced more than millions of people as IDPs or refugees. In many cases the war affected the relation

between these two communities. From 1999 to 2003, during Ituri Conflict, land dispute, longstanding grievances and all other issues between Hema herders and Lendu farmers were reignited resulting more than 50,000 deaths and more than 5,00,000 refugees.¹⁷ In this period the Lendu (Engeti) community established the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI) in November 2002. On the other hand, the Hema ethnic group formed UPC (Union of Congolese Patriots).¹⁸ The later organization is taken to the normalcy after DDR process, but FRPI still operates in Ituri.

Djugu Territory, Recent Crisis and Reopening of Atrocities.

a. General Description of Djugu Territory. Djugu is one of the five territories in Ituri Province which is located on the north-eastern part of DRC. This area is mostly hilly with green panorama and blue lake shore on the eastern side. In comparison with other areas, Djugu is still living under poverty. People are mostly farmers who use fertile land of the province either to grow crops or for cattle farming. Schools and colleges are very nominal and mostly confined within the townships.

Figure-1: Location of Djugu (Red Dot)

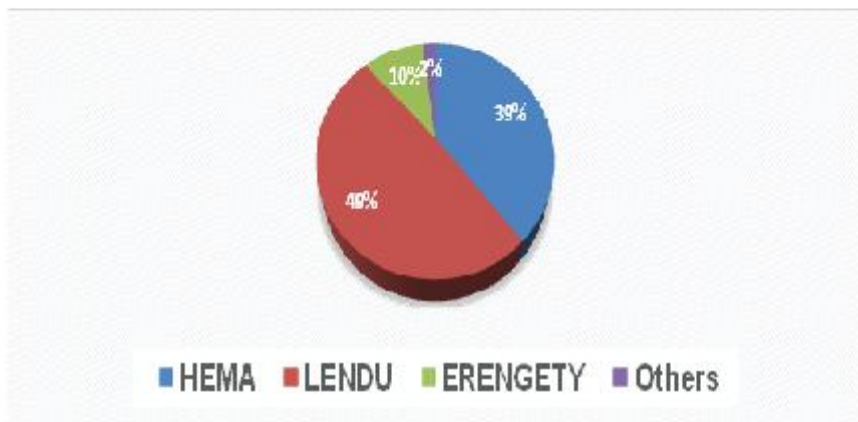


Source: World Atlas

b. Demography of Djugu Territory. In Djugu, major ethnicities are Hema, Lendu and Erengety. Most of the people are Catholic Christian. But many of the Lendu people perform their traditional religion. Whole Djugu area is divided into 11 collectivities; 04 are Hema (Bahema,

North, Badjere, Banywagi); 03 are Walendu (Pitsi, Tatsi, Djatsi) and 04 are others (Baniari De Kilo, Mabendi, Mambisa, Ndo- Okedo).

Figure-2: Djugu Territory: A graphical presentation of the demography



Source : Author's self-construct

c. Recent Crisis and Reopening of Atrocities. The conflict started on 15 December 2017, as described by many of the locals. The incident started with the harassment of a Hema lady by some Lendu people. As a result, Hema community showed rage towards the nearby Lendu people and burnt a few houses. This incident brought back the old ethnic clash in to play after 13 years. On that plea, the Lendus, known to be more aggressive, started attacking Hema villages. Their main objective was to avenge the insult and to prove the superiority over Hemas. It started at Blukwa and gradually spread over whole Djugu territory. Most of the affected places belonged to Bahema North Collectivity. During February 2018, unidentified (believed to be Lendu) miscreants killed about 19 persons, injured more than 12 and burnt 237 houses.¹⁹ Due to unstable situation, both the communities had fled from localities and stayed in IDP Camps or bushes. Gradually it spread in all neighboring collectivities.

Figure-3: Burnt Villages of Djugu



Source : Author's self-construct

Figure-4: Hotspots of Djugu territory (Red Dot)



Source : Author's self-construct

d. Devastation at Maze. Maze is a Hema village, under Bahema North Collectivity, located 25 km South-East from Djugu centre. The people here were quite peaceful. In Maze, there were deployments of Armed Forces of DRC (FARDC) and National Congolese Police (PNC). Thus, the area was also quite secured. But a disaster came up on 02 March 2018. It was a normal rainy day and the villagers were mostly staying in their houses idle. Suddenly, a group of Lendu assailants attacked the village with local guns, poison arrow, spears and machetes. They killed 43 people including children, women and elderly persons.²⁰ Getting the information, a patrol of BANRDB-1 rushed to Maze and took control over the situation. Before that the assailants left the location. This mass killing made the situation of Maze and overall Djugu more unstable.

Figure-5: Devastation at Maze



Source : Author's self-construct

e. Massacre at the Littorals of Lake Albert. Joo is a Hema village, under Bahema North Collectivity, located on the shore of Lake Albert which is about 48 km South-East from Djugu centre. The people in this village are very peaceful and live on fishing. On 12 March 2018, at the morning, a sudden incursion by Lendu assailants changed everything.

They victimized 41 innocent Hema villagers and set numerous numbers of houses ablaze.²¹ Most of the victims were women and children. This incident created a huge hue and cry in all the villages at the littorals of Lake Albert.

Figure 6: Burnt houses at the Littorals of Lake Albert



Source : Author's self-construct

BANRDB-1 : A Key Element to Stop the Massacre

A Dire need to call for Peace. The Political Affairs Section (PAS) and Civil Affairs Section (CAS) of MONUSCO could not find any headway to stabilize the situation. Head of Office (HoO) Bunia and NS Commander took the lead and tasked BANRDB-1 to establish Standing Combat Detachment (SCD) at Djugu Territory.²² SCD is a small group of elements that can hold a position temporarily and be used for Protection of Civilians (PoC). SCD is the outcome of the strategy 'Protection through Projection' of MONUSCO. CAS and BANRDB-1 started sensitization programs jointly. With the intensified patrolling of BANRDB-1 and sensitization approach, situation did not aggravate further. Lendu community leaders, who used to run away seeing Blue Helmets, started showing up to MONUSCO patrols and shown interest to talk to them in person. From the very beginning of Djugu crisis, numbers of efforts were taken to sit with both the community leaders. But Lendu community being aggressive in nature did not pay any heed to that. With the continuous effort from BANRDB, Lendu notables agreed to sit for peace talk. First ever meeting took place on 05 April 2018.²³ This is the first of its kind by any element of MONUSCO, be that military or civilian component. It is to be mentioned that, meeting started with only 10 people but ended up with 200 Lendu people and singing national anthem together as a symbol of solidarity. Later on, numbers of meetings were arranged by MONUSCO and other humanitarian organizations to take the peace talks to the next level and bring back normalcy in the region.

Figure-7: 1st Ever Meeting with Lendu



Source : Author's self-construct

SCD: A Real Tool to Stabilize Djugu. As part of very timely and decisive operational plan of NS, BANRDB-1 has successfully handled Djugu crisis by deploying number of SCDs in the epicenter of the crisis. BANRDB-1 carried out numerous joint operations, mass sensitization and escorting of almost every agency ranging from international media agencies to MONUSCO highest officials, UN envoys, relief and aid agencies to assessment entities from home and abroad. Just after the arrival of BANRDB's first flight, even before getting the checked in luggage, first SCD was deployed at Djugu on 10 February 2018. Subsequently, basing on the situation to ensure stabilization of Djugu, numbers of SCDs were deployed by BANRDB at Blukwa-Rikpa, Blukwa-Shunga, Fataki, Nioka, Libi and Loda. So far, BANRDB-1 has deployed total thirty five SCDs in Djugu territory in different

Figure-8: Bird's Eye View of SCD Blukwa



Source : Author's self-construct

Figure-9: Bird's Eye View of SCD Loda



Source : Author's self-construct

timeframe. At present total four SCDs are deployed at Djugu territory. The location of SCD was so realistic that on the very first night of deployment, around 3,000 people took shelter beside the SCD. In Blukwa, after detail reconnaissance, SCD was deployed in between two warring communities to create a buffer between those. Force projection in all surrounding hotspots were a priority for the SCDs to deter ethnic clash, ensure protection of civilians and sensitize locals.

Figure-10: Escort to different agencies



Source : Author's self-construct

Stabilization, Sensitization and Return of Normalcy. Situation started getting normal with dialogues and talks by NS and Bunia office by the first week of April. This was indeed instrumental to bring back normalcy at every walk of life of Blukwa where BANRDB-1 was one of the important stakeholders. Displaced people started falling back to their houses. Markets were reopened and people started farming. All MONUSCO civil agencies could do their

Figure 11: IDPs Falling Back



Source : Author's self-construct

Figure 12: Smiles are back



Source : Author's self-construct

assessment with the support of BANRDB-1. Numbers of humanitarian programs took place. At this stage, a mass sensitization projects were taken to bring normalcy at Djugu. On 31 May 2018, a historic sensitization program was launched at Fataki where Governor of Ituri, Force Commander, MONUSCO and all community leaders participated.²⁴ The sensitization programs are continued rigorously around Djugu with the active force by BANRDB-1.

Figure 13: Mid-April 2018: Busy Market at Blukwa



Source : Author's self-construct

Projection of Force by Patrolling. SCDs conducted intense patrolling by vehicle and on foot 24/7 to ensure dominance. It was learnt from local notables that at many places BANRDB-1 has established footprint of MONUSCO for the first time. SCDs could integrate a local intelligence network to get early warning. There were number of occasions where robust and timed response of SCDs ensured PoC. During the whole period, Quick Reaction Force (QRF) was kept ready to handle any situation. Despite having poor road and weather condition SCDs hard work entrusted people with the hope for peace and sanity.

Figure-14: Escorting various agencies Figure-15: Patrolling in Littoral areas



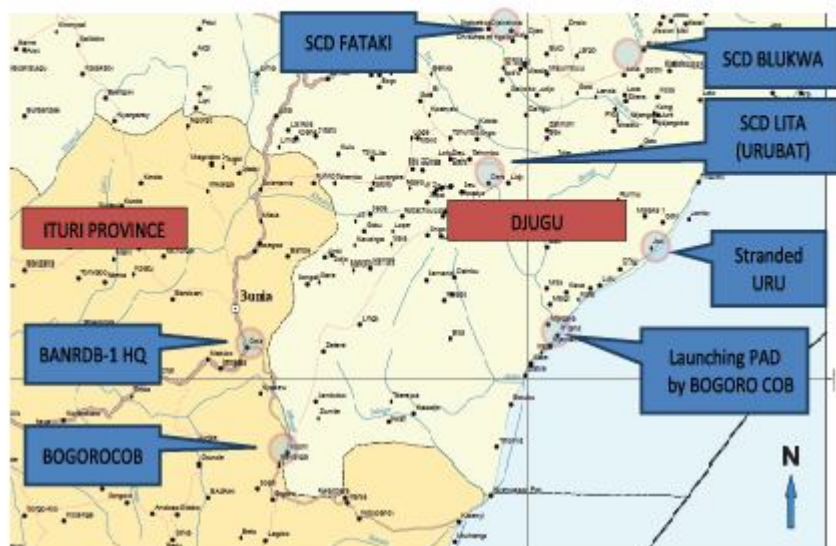
Source : Author's self-construct



Source : Author's self-construct

Joint Operation to Rescue Uruguay Troops from Joo. A Uruguay patrol was dispatched to littoral village Joo from their SCD located at LITA. After a strenuous patrolling, the team reached Joo after two nights and got stranded at Joo. A heliborne operation ANGES DE PAIX was launched on 18 March to rescue the stranded patrol which failed due to bad weather. On 19 March, rescue operation launched from BOGORO COB, led by commandos of BANRDB-1 along with members of Uruguay Battalion and FARDC, could successfully rescue the troops from the shore of Lake Albert.²⁵

Figure-16: Opération ANGES DE PAIX



Source : Author's self-construct

Early Warning by Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). The use of UAV was instrumental in many cases where it assisted SCD and patrols very effectively. There were many instances where UAV's live feed identified suspicious movement of assailants. The ground force commander could use those and take immediate measures to neutralize or assess the situation which paid a great dividend for BANRDB.

Figure-17: UAV Footage



Source : Author's self-construct

Supporting FARDC and PNC. Though a good number of FARDC and PNC troops were deployed at Djugu, they were confined within their posts due to shortage of vehicle. BANRDB-1 supported them with vehicle, medicine and food in different occasions. On 09 November 2018, BANRDB-1 rescued 14 FARDC injured troops from Laudjo to Blukwa and conducted heli evacuation to Bunia.²⁶

Figure-18: Evacuation of FARDC Injured Troops



Source : Author's self-construct

Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Activities. SCDs conducted number of CIMIC activities as part of Winning Hearts and Minds (WHAM). SCDs were welcomed by both the communities which allowed other agencies to work for peace. Regular visit at different IDP camps ensured the safety of those. SCDs had number of meetings with local notables regarding the reopening of schools, markets and hospitals to ensure the smooth transition to stability and peace. BANRDB-1 provided huge medical support to locals as well as to FARDC and PNC. BANRDB-1 also conducted number of friendly football matches between these two communities.

Figure-19: BOKO-LAOJO Friendly Football Match in BLUKWA



Source : Author's self-construct

A Success without Loss. From the very beginning of the deployment, BANRDB-1 has taken many diplomatic efforts to neutralize the crisis in Djugu and unrest in other places within the area of responsibility. At the same time, its robust and aggressive patrolling all over the areas was a sign of faith to the innocent locals. On the other hand, the gesture and movement of BANRDB-1 were so stubborn that the miscreants never dared to encounter them. A professional soldier of BANRDB-1 meant to be a friend to general mass and ghost to the assailants. Its a matter of pride that this unit could ensure peace and stabilization in this area without any loss of man and material.

Figure-20: Agile Soldiers of BANRDB-1



Source : Author's self-construct

Figure-21: Robust Patrolling by BANRDB-1



Source : Author's self-construct

Future of Djugu Crisis- History May Repeat

Though, at present Djugu is back to normalcy, history shows that it might deteriorate at any point of time. Continuous sensitization can overcome the crisis. Besides, taking the chance of the situation crime rate might increase. IDP camps are still functioning which could be a headache for the government to ensure adequate basic needs for them. Locating the affected schools and hospitals is a necessity in order to start rebuilding. A good number of FARDC troops are deployed in Djugu at present that were pulled up from South Irumu. Withdrawal of these forces might fuel up the miscreant activities.

Recommendations

In order to maintain the stability at Djugu following are recommended:

- a. The Armed group should be taken to the main stream by DDR process.
- b. MONUSCO should continue sensitization program in collaboration with Government and local authority for both the communities.
- c. FARDC and PNC should take control of the area and ensure Protection of Civilians.
- d. Humanitarian assistance can be provided to the affected population in affected areas.

Conclusion

Ethnic problems in Africa are built in within its history. Hema-Lendu conflicts are not exception to that. Since colonial era, these two ethnic groups had been fighting each other to establish their own mighty power. Clash between these two communities were the outcome of gold mine, land issues and hatred against each other. The colonial masters always favoured Hema which had also ignited the Lendus to become the rival of Hema. The newly introduced land law further aggravated the situation in 1973. Favouring Hema populations are still prevailing by the independent rulers of present DRC.

The First and Second Congo War that emerged from Eastern DRC fueled the Hema-Lendu crisis further. After the Second Congo War, both the communities made their own political parties with armed faction that led to the undeclared war between these two communities for unidentified period. The clash was again fueled during December 2017 when a Hema lady was abused by Lendu assailants. Later it became history and hundreds of Hema people were killed and thousands displaced.

BANRDB-1 was deployed in Djugu Territory to establish the situation to normalcy. The contingent could place itself in history where within 3 months the IDPs started falling back to their own location and started peaceful life. This unit with its will-power and dedication could take control of the situation and brought normalcy so quickly that has drawn the attention of MONUSCO and UN hierarchy. Synergy of military and civilian stakeholders of MONUSCO has made remarkable progress and thereby brought back peace at Djugu. In this regard on 10 April 2018 the Special Representative of Secretary General (SRSG) of MONUSCO, Ms Leile Zerogui observed, "Its difficult to believe that we could contain Djugu and its history of 2003 Hema- Lendu ethnic clash that resulted in a war and thousands died with millions displaced was not repeated." This was indeed a laudable feat achieved by BANRDB-1.

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Brief Biography



Colonel A B M Nowroj Ehsan, BSP, psc was commissioned with 26th BMA Long Course on 09 June 1992 in the East Bengal Regiment. He attended a number of courses and seminar at home and abroad. He is a graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur Dhaka. He also completed Masters of Business Studies from University of Dhaka. Besides serving in different regimental appointment in various Infantry regiments, he also served as General Staff Officer Grade-II in Training Directorate of Armed Forces Division, General Staff Officer Grade-1 in Overseas Operations Directorate in Army Headquarters, Commanding Officer in a Rapid Action Battalion and Director in Special Security Force. He completed his first mission as contingent member in UNIKOM in Iraq/Kuwait, second mission in MINURCAT as Military Liaison Officer in Central African Republic and Chad. He did his third mission as UNMO in UNMIS in Sudan. He also served as Contingent Commander of Bangladesh Rapidly Deployable Battalion (BANRDB) in MONUSCO in DRC. Presently he is serving as Deputy Commander of President's Guard Regiment (PGR).

MONUSCO Experience – The Success Story of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers at DRC

Lt Col Abu Hena Mohammad Razi Hasan, SUP, SPP, psc, acsc, AC

Introduction

Ravaged by wars, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been torn apart over and over again for the last 70 years. A former Belgian colony, DRC, has suffered over 5 million deaths,¹ almost 6,00,000 refugees and around 4.5 million internally displaced people over two major wars and constant conflict between various Armed Groups (AG). The history of DRC is overshadowed with civil wars, assassination of presidents, coups and counter coups with little or no government control. Every single conflict at DRC is centered around control of natural resources. Most of its neighbours fuel the instability in DRC just to gain economic benefit from its abundance natural resources.

The United Nations (UN) has been committed to the DRC for over last couple of decades trying to bring peace to one of the most troubled countries in the world. So far, three UN missions, United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC), United Nations Organization Mission in the DR Congo (MONUC) and United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO), had been deployed at DRC since 1960. Bangladeshi peacekeepers had been deployed at DRC under UN banner since September 2003. Currently, around 2000 Bangladeshi peacekeepers are serving at MONUSCO. Bangladeshi peacekeepers had always been lauded highly for their contribution to UN mandate implementation at DRC. Professionalism, commitment and dedication of Bangladeshi peacekeepers acted as key ingredients in achieving this reputation. So far, 22 Bangladeshi peacekeepers have made supreme sacrifice in the service of UN at DRC.

The paper will take a close look at security dynamics of DRC, highlight the success story of Bangladeshi peacekeepers and indicate the ingredients behind this success. It will focus on some challenges that the peacekeepers are going to face in the days to come. The success story of Bangladeshi peacekeepers deployed at MONUSCO will also be highlighted.

DRC – Atrophied by the Abundance of Natural Resources

DRC is considered as the wealthiest country in the world in terms of natural resources deposit with an estimated evaluation of 24 trillion dollars.² The nation is the second largest producer of diamonds, comprising 30% of worldwide diamond production. It produces 70% of the world's coltan. It also

UN Involvement at DRC

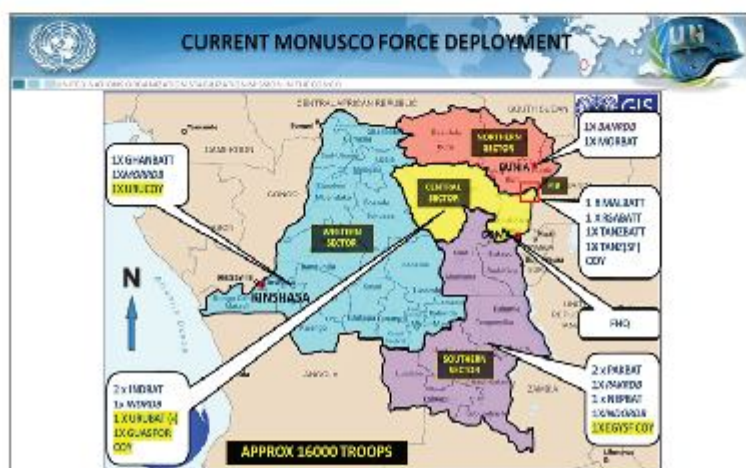
The independence of DRC from its colonial masters, Belgium, on 30 June 1960 was marked with widespread unrest, mutiny and secession attempt. An UN mission, ONUC, was deployed at DRC on July 1960 with three major purposes; assist smooth withdrawal of Belgian military, to ensure internal stability and security of foreign national. ONUC was withdrawn in 1964. However, suffering from continuous internal instability throughout 70-90s, DRC plunged into the First Congo War in 1996. One year after the end of First Congo War, in 1998, Second Congo War started where nine African countries and around twenty-five armed groups got involved.⁶ In 1999, UN went back to DRC following the signing of 'Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement' and established MONUC.

Ituri Province of DRC witnessed a massive conflict between Hema and Lendu tribes between 1999 to 2003. During this conflict more than 50,000 people were killed and hundreds of thousands were displaced.⁷ Under French initiative, on 12 June 2003, Operation ARTEMIS was launched by the Interim Multinational Emergency Force (IMEF). A MONUC force element, ITURI Brigade (IB), took over from IMEF in September 2003. Infantry Battalions from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Morocco, Uruguay, Guatemala were first to deploy under IB. MONUC continued its operation for about 11 years without much success. The security situation at DRC was evolving rapidly during 2009-10 and a different approach focusing root cause of the conflict was needed. Hence, on 01 Jul 2010 MONUC was transformed into MONUSCO. During September 2017 IB was transformed to Northern Sector (NS).

MONUSCO Deployment at a Glance

At present, approximately 4145 civilians, 16000 troops, 1364 police officers and 612 military observers and staff officers are deployed at

Figure 3: Current MONUSCO Force Deployment



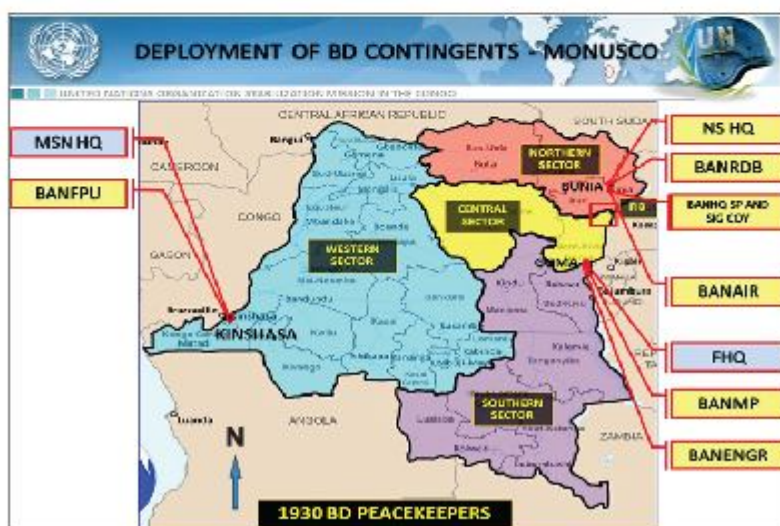
MONUSCO.⁸ The mission HQ is located at Kinshasa, the capital, with Force HQ at Goma. Entire area of responsibility of MONUSCO has been divided into four military sectors – Northern Sector (NS), Central sector (CS), Southern Sector (SS) and Western Sector (WS) as shown in the map of Figure 3. Additionally, there is a Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) deployed at North Kivu province. FIB, first of its kind, is the only force element mandated to undertake targeted offensive operation against AGs.

Bangladeshi Peacekeepers at MONUSCO

Participation by Bangladeshi contingents in UN peacekeeping operations at DRC dates back to 2003. As of today, twenty-one infantry battalions, thirteen HQ Support and Signal contingents, nine Engineer Contingents, thirteen Military Police contingents, forty-one Bangladesh Air Force contingents, twelve Bangladesh Police contingents and around 500 military staff and observers, making a total of 30,000 Bangladeshi peacekeepers, have contributed to building peace in DRC. So far, 21 Bangladeshi peacekeepers (3 Officers, 2 Junior Commissioned Officers and 16 Soldiers) made the supreme sacrifice in responding to their call of duty.⁹

Bangladeshi peacekeepers are deployed at MONUSCO in the form of contingents, military observers and staff officers. At present, Bangladesh Rapidly Deployable Battalion-1 (BANRDB-1), Bangladesh Headquarters Support and Signal Company-13 (BANHQ SP AND SIG COY-13), Bangladesh Military Police Contingent-13 (BANMP-13), Bangladesh Engineering Contingent 9 (BANENGR-9), Bangladesh Female Formed Police Unit-1 (BANFPU-1) and a number of military observers and staff officers are deployed at MONUSCO. The deployment of Bangladeshi peacekeepers is shown in Figure 4 below :-

Figure 4: Deployment of BD Contingents - MONUSCO

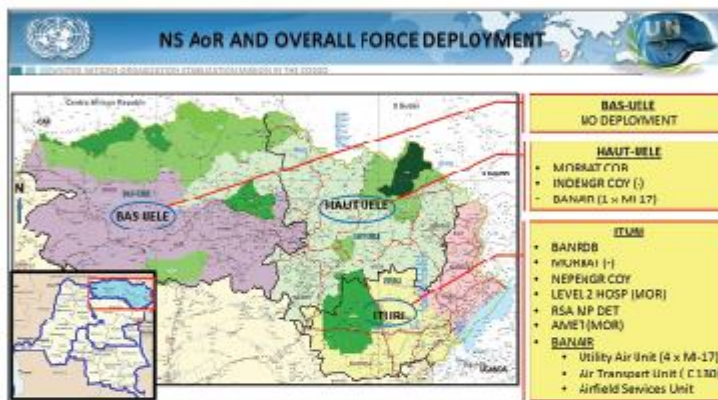


Source: Author's self-construct

Northern Sector – Hub of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers

Out of four operational sectors of MONUSCO, NS is predominantly a Bangladeshi Sector commanded and staffed by Bangladeshi officers. Three out of 26 provinces of DRC - Ituri, Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele lie within this sector which stretches around 5,70,000 square kilometers. Truly a multinational sector, 2600 troops of NS is composed of infantry from Bangladesh and Morocco, engineers from Nepal and Indonesia, doctors from Morocco, military police from South Africa and aviators from Bangladesh. The overall deployment of forces at this sector are shown in the map. BANRDB-1, BANHQ SP AND SIG COY 13 are deployed at this sector.

Figure 5: Force Deployment at NS

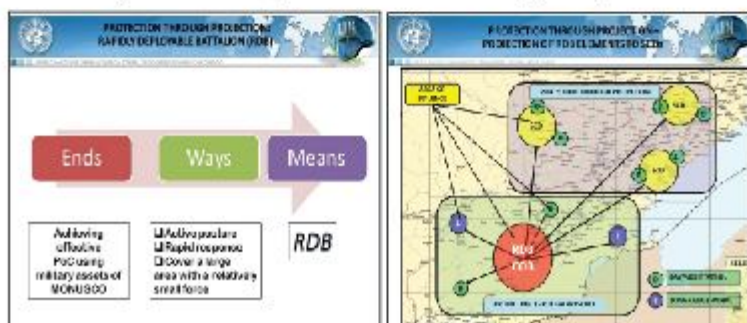


Source: Author's self-construct

BANRDB-1 – Success Story of Implementing 'Protection through Projection (PtP)' Concept at MONUSCO

During 2016, to strike a balance between force reduction and deteriorating security situation at DRC, MONUSCO came up with the new concept of 'Protection through Projection'. Under the new concept, MONUSCO relies on small detachments of highly mobile troops and civilian staff, known as Standing Combat Deployments (SCDs), to deploy on ground to hot spots for a

Figure 6: Concept of Protection through Projection



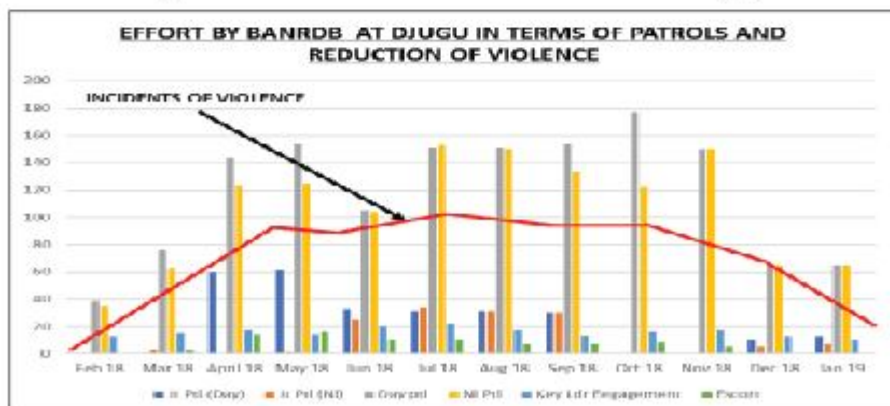
Source: Author's self-construct

limited period with a view to carrying out various 'Protection of Civilian' related tasks. MONUSCO also decided to introduce Rapidly Deployable Battalions (RDB). The main idea of the PtP concept is the dislocation of the static force posture by reducing static bases (Company Operating Bases-COBs/ Temporary Operating Bases-TOBs) and centralizing assets and troops into fewer, larger bases.¹⁰

BANRDB-1 replaced BANBAT 1/20 at Ituri Province of DRC during the first week of February 2018. On 03 February 18, the first report of the violence between Hema and Lendu tribes at Djugu, around 100 kilometers from Bunia (nearest BANBAT/ BANRDB base), started to pour in. Despite domination by a number of joint patrols in the area, by 09 February in more than 70 people including women and children were killed and around 200 houses were burnt.¹¹ NS Commander immediately decided to execute the concept of 'PtP' by launching an SCD at Djugu Center. This would become the first SCD to be deployed by BANRDB-1. Many of the BANRDB soldiers deployed at SCD DJUGU came into the mission area the night before. Despite the shock of the immediate deployment to highly threatened areas and unfamiliarity of operational environment, BANRDB 1 troops quickly took control of the situation and started rigorous patrolling in the violence prone areas.

By March '18 despite establishing another SCD at BLUKWA, the possibility of violence spreading towards BUNIA City still loomed large. Under these circumstances, a 'Security Box' was created by deploying four SCDs around the hotspots of Djugu. This was done with a view to deter violence, containing the spill over effect of the violence, ensuring freedom of movement and devising a coordinated response to 'Protection of Civilian' alerts.¹² BANRDB troops conducted hundreds of day and night patrols both on foot and using vehicles from these seven SCDs. They contacted the community leaders and locals, arranged dialogues between fighting communities, escorted MONUSCO civilian partners, deterred the assailants, oversaw the return of hundreds of IDPs, secured numerous helipads and ultimately created a security

Figure 7: BANRDB efforts to contain violence at Djugu

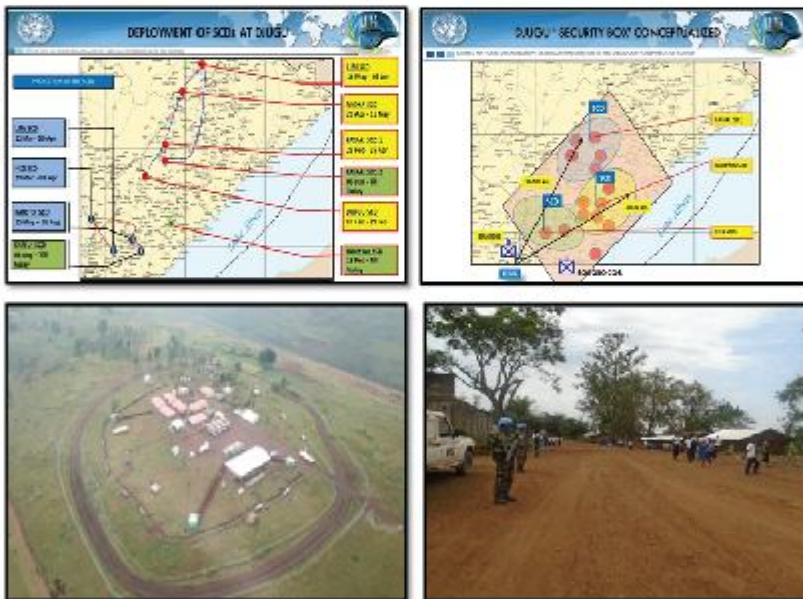


Source: Author's self-construct

blanket to protect the vulnerable population. With the untiring effort of the soldiers of BANRDB-1 under the dynamic leadership of their officers, violence at Djugu could be stabilized by the end of April. Thousands of IDPs started returning to their homes.

The SRSG, Force Commander, DSRSG and a number of MONUSCO senior officials visited Djugu and praised BANRDB-1 for their outstanding performance in executing 'Protection through Projection' concept. SCD Djugu, SCD Blukwa and SCD Fataki became examples of proactive and robust response with adequate force protection measures. Perhaps the best description of BANRDB's success can be portrayed by the code cable that was sent from SRSG office to DPKO, which expressed, "The immediate and rapid deployment of Standing Combat Detachments (SCDs) by Northern Sector's Rapidly Deployable Battalion (RDB) in the beginning of February 2018 at the outbreak of Djugu crisis provided dividend in containing the violence within weeks after reaching its peak in early March 2018".¹³

Figure 8: Successful Employment of SCDs at Djugu, Bunia



Source: Author's self-construct

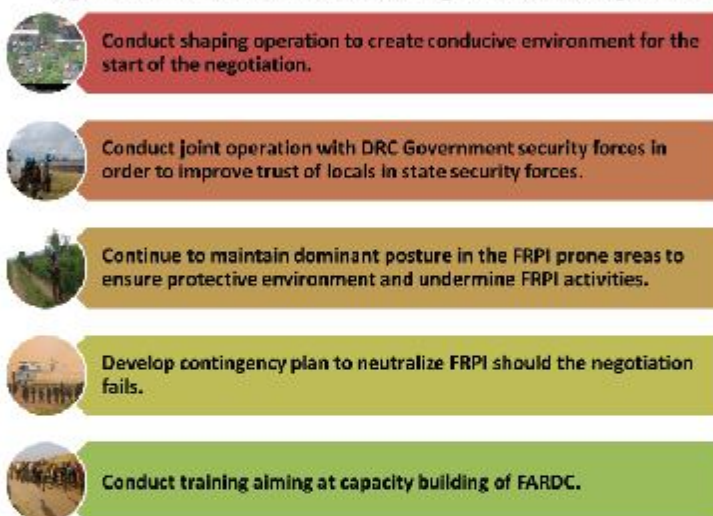
Negotiation with Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI) – Success of BANRDB in Stabilization Process

The FRPI is an indigenous AG which operates mainly in South Ituri Province. The organization was formed in 2002 from the NGITI ethnic group as a counterweight to the Rwanda-backed and Hema-dominated Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) AG. It has dwindled from an estimated size of 9,000 combatants in 2003 to no more than 1500 in 2017. However, the hard-core remaining elements of FRPI were often able to avoid the strikes

against them and retaliate against the civilian population following such operations. It became clear by 2017 that a military solution to the problem was not effective. A new approach called **Joint Operation Plan to Neutralize the FRPI** was undertaken by MONUSCO that laid out a coordinated method of applying both sharpened military "sticks" with civilian-developed incentives or "carrots" to bring FRPI to negotiation table. Under this plan BANRDB was to create conducive security environment for the negotiation to continue and be ready to apply force if needed.

In order to implement this strategy, BANRDB launched 'Operation PEGEON BLANC' and undertook following activities:

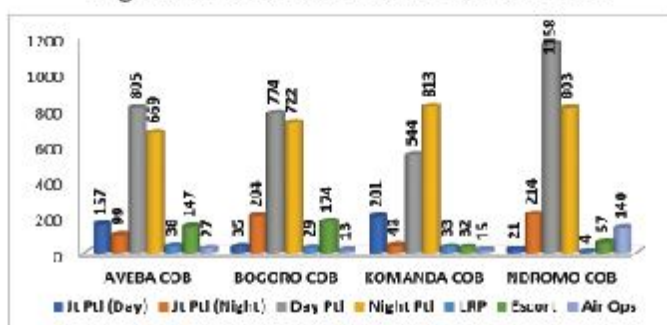
Figure 9: BANRDB activities to expedite FRPI negotiation



Source: Author's self-construct

Under **Operation PEGEON BLANC**, BANRDB conducted hundreds of joint patrols, Key Leader Engagements, meet with Local Protection Teams, arranged security meeting with village notables and state security apparatus, went to the hiding places of FRPI to meet their leaders, create favourable

Figure 10: BANRDB efforts to contain FRPI



Source: Author's self-construct

condition for the negotiation between DRC government and FRPI. All these activities paid off when on **04 November 2018 FRPI agreed to sign a historic peace treaty** with the DRC government. FRPI militias have already started moving towards concentration areas as agreed from where they will move to disarmament camps. It may be mentioned here that on 20 March 2019 the peace treaty was expected to be signed. Mission senior leadership including DSRSG Grassley, who heads the FRPI task force, expressed his deep satisfaction for the contribution of BANRDB in creating condition for the surrender of FRPI militia, thus ending decades of agony and violence at Ituri province.

Figure 11: Negotiation with FRPI Top Leadership



Source: Author's self-construct

Bangladesh Engineer Contingent (BANENGR) – An Outstanding Force Enabler

BANENGR has always been an important force enabler of MONUSCO. It provides technical advice, supports other MONUSCO entities and DRC authorities with engineer equipment and manpower for the smooth completion of engineering tasks. Bangladesh Engineer contingent has been deployed at DR Congo since 2010. So far nine BANENGR contingents has served at MONUSCO. Currently deployed at Goma, this contingent provides engineering support to two brigade size forces; Central Sector and FIB. Mandated to operate from only two bases, BANENGR contingents has long been undertaking engineering tasks from 4 to 5 bases.

Figure 12: Deployment of BANENGR Detachments and Engineering Works at Simuliki COB



Source: Author's self-construct

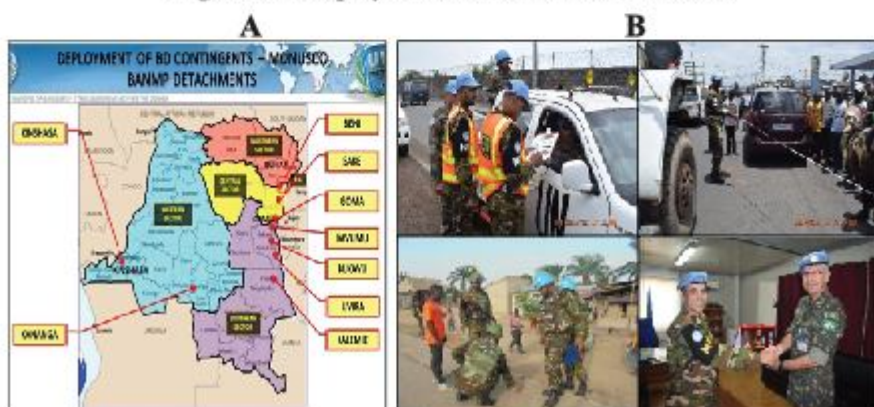
This contingent provides support in carrying out three types of tasks: Key Projects such as rehabilitation of Main Supply Routes (MSR), Major Tasks such as base camp site preparation, and Minor Tasks. So far, a total of 05 Key tasks, 28 Major tasks and also 142 minor tasks have been completed by various BANENGR companies over last 8 years.¹⁴ BANENGR contingents completed establishing of a number of COBs, rehabilitated the main airport at Goma, repaired hundreds of kilometers of roads and installed a number of water purification plants and prepared a number of ammunition dumps.

On 18 December, 2017 rebels attacked Simuliki COB of FIB. A number of Tanzanian soldiers were killed which was attributed to the poor force protection measures of the COB. Force Commander personally tasked BANENGR 9 contingent to develop the force protection measures of Simuliki COB. BANENGR 9 could complete the task before the scheduled time and with fullest satisfaction of Force Commander receiving Force Commander's Commendation. Moreover, as a recognition to the extraordinary support to MONUSCO, BANENGR contingents has been securing first position among all six engineer contingents deployed at MONUSCO for last consecutive 3 years.

Bangladesh Military Police Contingent (BANMP) – Eyes and Ears of Force Commander

BANMP contingent is one of the important and specialized contingents of MONUSCO. Mandated to look after the conduct and discipline mostly of military contingents and staff, ten BANMP detachments are deployed across eastern DRC and Kinshasa. The contingent contributed superbly in maintaining the conduct and discipline of MONUSCO military and civilian staff alike by their vigilance, frequent crime prevention drives and awareness program. They remained committed to ensuring safety and security of MONUSCO personnel. The Road Safety Campaign organized by various BANMP contingents over the years contributed significantly towards reducing traffic accident. They conduct thousands of day and night patrols, hundreds of Road Traffic Accident (RTA) investigations and number of SEA investigations.

Figure 13: Deployment and Activities of BANMP



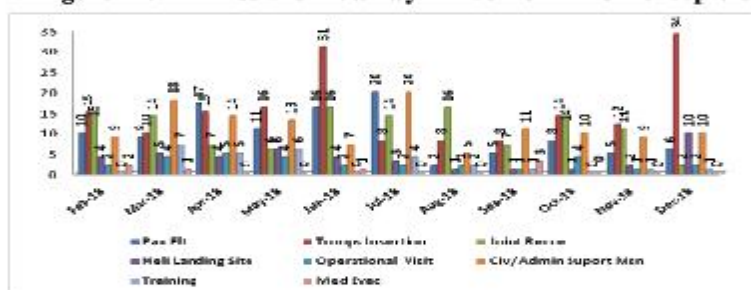
Source: Author's self-construct

Bangladesh Air Force Contingents (BANAIR) – Bridging the Air Gap Over DRC Skies

Bangladesh Airforce has deployed peacekeepers at DRC in the form of Bangladesh Utility Aviation Unit (BANUAU) since 29 August 2003. At present, 358 peacekeepers of Bangladesh Air Force are deployed at MONUSCO in the form of 3 contingents: Bangladesh Utility Aviation Unit (BANUAU), Bangladesh Airfield Services Unit (BANASU) and Bangladesh Aviation Transport Unit (BANATU).

With four MI-17 and two MI-171 helicopters, BANUAU constitutes total UN air assets of NS. So far, 16 BANUAUs has been deployed at DRC. The primary mission of BANUAU is to provide air transportation support to Northern Sector in the form of troop's insertion/ exertion, aerial reconnaissance, casualty evacuation, search and rescue, cargo re-supply, VVIP/VIP visit, etc. Additionally, they also fly in civilian experts to the field. BANUAU helicopters have flown hundreds of successful missions without any incidents and accidents.

Figure 14: Air Missions Flown by BANUAU MI 17 Helicopters



Source: Author's self-construct

Bangladesh Air Force had been sending female peacekeepers to MONUSCO for last seven years. However, they added another feather to their

Figure 15: Female MI 17 Pilots from BANUAU- as Seen in MONUSCO Website



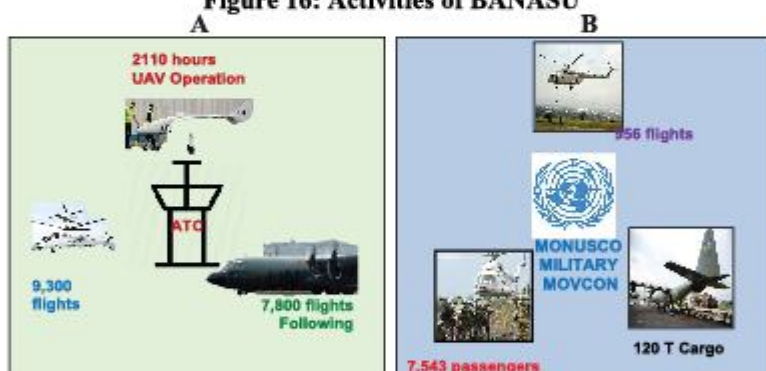
Source: Author's self-construct

already illustrious caps, by deploying first ever female helicopter pilots to MONUSCO in December 2017. These two pilots have flown operational mission throughout DRC. Highly appreciated by MONUSCO senior leadership, the walls of MONUSCO HQ at Kinshasa and even the building of DPKO has been decorated with the poster showing these female pilots. This inclusion has been seen by UN as a major step towards Bangladesh's commitment towards gender mainstreaming and women empowerment.

Equipped with C- 130 aircraft, BANATU, a MONUSCO strategic asset has been operating in MONUSCO since 25 June 2010. This contingent is entrusted to conduct flights for strategic administrative and logistic support, humanitarian aid distribution, troop insertions/extractions, and airmobile operations. The unit is lauded for successful and crucial evacuation of UN Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB) staff in 2015 without support from MONUSCO forces on ground. In recognition to its excellence, BANATU earned the coveted "Force Commanders Appreciation" in 2012, 2014, 2018, i.e. three times out of its eight years of operation.

BANASU had been providing Air Traffic Service, flight following, Military Movement Control (MOVCON), Aero-Met Service and Emergency Crash and Rescue Service at Bunia and Dungu Airports. Its services are summarized below :-

Figure 16: Activities of BANASU



Source: Author's self-construct

Bangladesh Female Formed Police Unit (BANFPU) – First Female FPU at MONUSCO

The contribution of Bangladesh Police in UN peace operations reached its peak when Bangladesh Police sent a female FPU to MONUSCO in 2017 to respond to the challenges in implementing the UN mandate in the field of gender issues, women and children affairs. This unit is hailed as key driving force to reduce gender-based violence, conflict and confrontation, providing sense of security especially for women and children at Kinshasa. The peacekeepers from this unit regularly mentor DRC female police officer in the local area thus empowering women in the host country. Bangladesh female police officer with its name and fame has established themselves as the role model in the community in the mission area.

Figure 17: Bangladesh Female FPU at MONUSCO



Source: Author's self-construct

Reason for Success by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers

Bangladeshi peacekeepers proved themselves worthy of acting as global peace promoters willing to walk the extra mile to ensure peace at DRC. Following are the issues that distinguish them from rest of the peacekeepers:

a. Training. Training imparted by Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police institutions paid the dividend. Assembling the contingents at least 6 months prior to deployment and imparting training as prescribed by UN could prepare our peacekeepers to undertake the challenge of working under harsh and dangerous environment. Vivid example of this was BANRDB-1 who undertook rigorous pre-deployment training for deploying LRPs and SCDs. This allowed them to deploy for operational duties as soon as they arrived at DRC.

b. Motivation and Dedication. Bangladeshi peacekeepers were motivated and dedicated to undertake challenging responsibilities in order to implement MONUSCO mandate. They endured harsh operating environment, compromised personal comfort and risked their life to protect DRC civilians.

c. Professionalism. On number of occasions Bangladeshi peacekeepers proved their professionalism in executing mission mandate. The force protection measures undertaken by our troops at various bases, even by sappers and signalers were praised by MONUSCO senior leadership. The method of engaging with local population and notables during patrolling by BANRDB-1 was appreciated by MONUSCO leadership.

d. Understanding the Socio-Cultural Dimension of the Problem.

Bangladeshi peacekeepers have better understanding of the socio-cultural dimension of the conflict at DRC. They understand that a straight forward military solution by applying force is not going to solve the crisis. Thereby, all their activities revolve around supporting the political approach led by civilian experts.

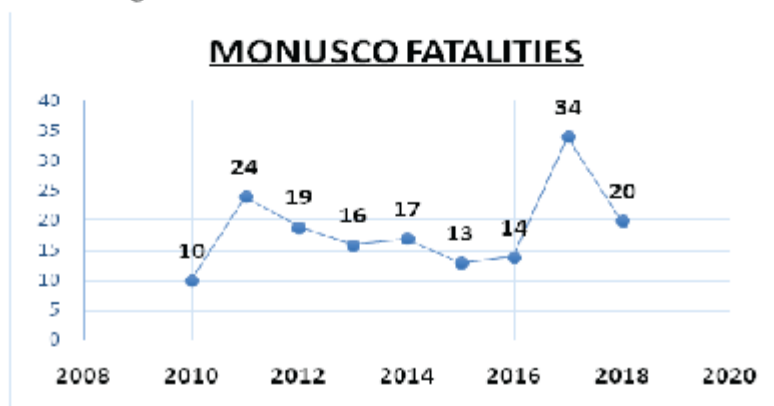
e. Emphasis of Gender Mainstreaming. Bangladeshi peacekeepers always advocated gender mainstreaming. A significant portion of our peacekeepers are female. Female Engagement Teams from BANRDB regularly participate in operational activities.

f. Discipline. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are disciplined. Over last one year there had been no serious breach of discipline by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers. There had been no breach of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse code of the UN over last two years by Bangladeshi peacekeepers.

Challenges for the Days to Come

Old models of peacekeeping operations are not working fast enough to reduce or bring an end to conflict, fully protect civilians or alleviate immense suffering and displacement especially in protracted conflicts.¹⁵ Bangladeshi peacekeepers need to prepare themselves to adapt to this change. They are expected to face following challenges:

a. Changes in Operating Environment. Day by day the UN mission environment is becoming dangerous. The natural protection provided to the 'Blue Helmets' by conflicting parties are no more guaranteed. In many conflicts, UN is considered as a party to the conflict by other fractions. We can see the UN peacekeepers casualty over last few years in the chart below. Our peacekeepers need to be prepared to face heightened threat situation at UN mission environment. Soldierly professional attitude and rigorous training would be of help in this respect.

Figure 18: MONUSCO Fatalities within 2008- 2018

Source: Author's self-construct

b. Increased Demand of Female Participation. In 2017, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has set a target of recruiting 15% women as military observers and staff officers by the year end and to reach a goal of 20% female police deployments by 2020. Our contingents need to include more and more female soldiers that would form part of Female Engagement Teams to be deployed in the field.

c. Requirement of Better Force Protection. MONUSCO and other UN bases are constantly becoming target of attacks by the AGs. Very often their patrols are ambushed upon. A force that cannot protect themselves will not be able to protect the civilians. Dynamic measures for ensuring 'Force Protection' need to be included in the organogram of the contingents. Protective vehicles, tactical ISR capabilities, defensive measures such as trip flare, illuminating shells need to be included in the inventory.

d. Demand for Modern Equipment. Day by day, the dependency on modern equipment is increasing at UN environment. UN expects the Troops Contributing Countries to deploy modern equipment in terms of enhanced and protected mobility such as Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) tactical vehicle, long range tactical drones, signal intelligence collecting devices, etc. These modern equipment ensures effective implementation of UN mandate with minimum cost to life and property. Bangladesh Army needs to be prepared to deploy such platforms in order to enhance its already established professional image. New and effective equipment like tactical drone and Light Armoured Vehicle and Quad-bike deployed by BANRDB 1 drew positive attention of MONUSCO senior leadership.

e. Demand for Intelligence. Even though intelligence was once considered as a taboo under UN environment, with the change in the dynamics of UN mission environment UN is rethinking its position on intelligence. Collection and processing of tactical intelligence will be the responsibilities of contingents themselves. Bangladeshi contingents need to prepare themselves to deal with tactical level electronic and human intelligence.

f. Quality of Junior Leaders. The uncertainty of future UN environment demands that the decision made by peacekeepers need to be prompt. There will be hardly any time to clarify all issues from HQ. Senior leadership expects the base commanders, patrol leaders to make their own decisions without referring to senior officers. Our junior leadership need to be competent and confident to make such critical calls.

Conclusion

DRC is one of the most troubled countries of the world. Despite enormous natural resources and huge economic potential, DRC ranks among poorest countries of the world. Its natural resources have always been the principal reason for its misery. Various political entities, ethnic groups, AGs with diverse identities, warlords, government officials, military leaders, and even neighbouring countries - all attempt to control access to DRC's natural resources. Thus, the conflicts become inevitable. Since its independence from Belgium in 1960, DRC has gone through continuous instability, armed conflict and two major wars resulting in millions of deaths and displacement.

UN has been involved in peacekeeping operation at DRC since 1960. Over the years, the nature of peacekeeping operations has changed from 'observation' through 'peace enforcement' to current outlook of 'stabilization'. The latest UN mission, MONUSCO, is working at DRC since 2010. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are involved in peacekeeping operation at DRC since 2003. Over the years they have attained a reputation as committed, dedicated and professional soldiers who are willing to sacrifice in order to build peace. Currently, a number of contingents - BANRDB-1, BANHQ SP AND SIG COY-13, BANENGR-9, BANMP-13, three BANAIR contingents, a Female Formed Police Unit, few Military Observers and Staff Officers are deployed at MONUSCO. Additionally, NS, one of the important sectors of MONUSCO is commanded and staffed by Bangladeshi officers. In total around 2000 Bangladeshi peacekeepers are currently working at MONUSCO. Quite a few Bangladeshi peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of their duty.

BANRDB-1 has been deployed at MONUSCO under Northern Sector since February 2018. Over the course of one year this unit has become a text book example of successful implementation of new MONUSCO concept of 'Protection through Projection.' This concept is a mitigation measure against force reduction in the face of deteriorating security situation where MONUSCO relies on small detachments of robust and mobile force component and civilian experts (known as SCDs) to deploy to the field to respond to threat. MONUSCO introduced RDBs to implement this robust and rapid response capability. Immediately upon deployment to MONUSCO, BANRDB-1 troops were sent to the field to Djugu of Ituri Province to deal with a violent situation. BANRDB was successful in not only containing the situation, but also bring back the communal harmony in that area. The SCDs of BANRDB became ideal ones in the eyes of senior leadership. BANRDB-1 undertook another endeavour in another part of their AOR. They played an instrumental role in the negotiation process between DRC government and FRPI, a notorious AG that plagued Ituri Province for decades. BANRDB troops conducted hundreds of patrols and created the protective environment in FRPI prone areas, deterred violence and exert pressure on FRPI leadership to sit for negotiation. As a result of all these efforts, FRPI has agreed to sign peace treaty with DRC government by 20 March 2019. BANRDB efforts in this process were praised at all levels of MONUSCO.

BANENGR-9 contingent had been instrumental in supporting MONUSCO and DRC partners with engineering tasks. It has drawn attention of the Force Commander due to its professionalism, commitment and dedication. BANENGR-9 performed superbly in upgrading the protection measures of Simuliki COB, prepared numerous roads to facilitate Indian RDB movement and repaired major airfields. Three BANAIR contingents, BANUAU, BANASU and BANATU had been successfully bridging the skies over NS AOR for last couple of years. They had been supporting the operation of NS by inserting and extricating troops, conducting air reconnaissance, supplying cargo and escorting VIPs. BANUAU deployed first ever female helicopter pilots to MONUSCO on December 2017. This is seen as a milestone in gender mainstreaming and women empowerment at UN environment. Bangladesh Police deployed the first ever female FPU to MONUSCO. This is seen as commitment of Bangladesh towards implementing 30% female quota for all peacekeepers.

Training, motivation and dedication, professionalism, an understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics of the conflict at DRC, respect towards diversity, commitment to women empowerment and discipline are the main ingredients of success of Bangladeshi peacekeepers. However, they are likely to face the challenges of harsh, threatening operating environment, demand for modern equipment, need for better force protection, tools for acquiring intelligence and better-quality junior leadership. If these requirements can be met all these Bangladeshi peacekeepers will continue to prove their worth in UN environment.

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Brief Biography



Lieutenant Colonel Abu Hena Mohammad Razi Hasan, SUP, SPP, psc, acsc, AC was commissioned with 33 BMA Long Course on 29 November 1995. He attended number of courses at home and abroad. He attained Bachelor of Science degree on Computer Science and Engineering from Military Institute of Science and Technology. He is a graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur and Joint Services Command and Staff College, United Kingdom. He completed Master of Arts in Defence Studies under King's College, London and Master of Science in Military Studies under Bangladesh University of Professionals. His career saw a mix of staff, instructional and command appointments. He served as Brigade Major at 16 Infantry Brigade and was the chief coordinator of National Identity (ID) Card Project. Lt Col Razi served at ACC&S as an Instructor. He was also a DS at the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur. He commanded an armour regiment - 4 Horse. He was deployed as Military Observer in South Sudan (UNMIS) in 2006. Currently the officer is serving as Chief of Staff at Headquarters Northern Sector, MONUSCO at DRC.

Action for Peacekeeping (A4P): Steps Crucial for Bangladesh to Effectively Implement the Declaration of Shared Commitments

Major Abul Hasnat Muhammad Mofazzal Karim, SUP, Artillery

"Peacekeeping remains a critical tool, an indispensable tool, for our collective security... Peacekeeping, as we designed it, as we practiced and upheld it, today has come to the end of a cycle." - French President Emmanuel Macron¹

Introduction

For last seven decades or so, UN Peacekeeping operations have been deployed to the conflict-torn countries of the world as the widest response to international peace and security. "To save the succeeding generation from the scourge of war" being declared in the preamble of the UN Charter as one of the founding pillars of the UN, Peacekeeping operations have become the prime enterprise of this global forum. Out of 71 operations so far many have yielded expected outcome while a few have triggered big questions about the willingness and readiness of the Organization.

Armed conflicts have changed rapidly in nature. Intra-state rather than inter-state conflicts, marked by systematic violence and mass atrocities against civilian, torture on women and girls as a weapon of war, non-alliance with UN efforts for peace, attacks on UN peacekeepers and obliteration of a country's national system, are very often interconnected with organized crimes and hosting the unregulated spread of new generation weapons. Peacekeepers of Bangladesh often go where no one else is prepared to go, and they put their lives at risk every day. Not a single month passes without an attack on peacekeepers. Required political solutions to resolve the conflict have become increasingly elusive while it is seen that many longer-running conflicts have turned difficult to end. After the closure of UNOCI and UNMIL, another 14 missions are deployed in the face of weak political agreement, diminished consent and stalled peace processes with vague exit strategies. Alongside, mandates have grown broad and complex. Peacekeeping missions have been given staggering tasks and wide-ranging responsibilities. Additionally, peacekeeping continues to face performance issues and continued need for well structured, equipped and trained forces. Unfortunately, in a few places Host Governments put restrictions on freedom of movement that severely affects peacekeeping effectiveness, prevents swift responses on the ground, hinders efforts to protect civilians, prevents investigation of human rights violations, and undermines safety and security by blocking urgent supplies and equipment that ultimately damages and destroys UN's credibility.

This paper intends to review the need for stronger commitment, as focused by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres through his Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, by all actors in support of peacekeeping efforts, from political to operational issues, to achieve peacekeeping excellence. In

this connection, steps crucial for Bangladesh to effectively implement the shared commitments, developed through a high level panel to put into practice the A4P initiative, are also briefly highlighted at the later part of the article.

Context for the Initiative

UN Peacekeeping is effective and Blue Helmets are cost efficient as UN Peacekeeping's \$7 billion annual budget is less than 1% of total global military spending. And, the cost for each uniformed peacekeeper has declined by 24% over the last 10 years. At the moment 14 peacekeeping missions are deployed throughout the world, with most of them based in Africa. United Nations missions are carrying out complex operations with multidimensional mandates in extremely difficult and increasingly dangerous environments, such as Mali and Central African Republic (CAR), where the situation demands more than usual. Complex threats in several environments are causing a rise in fatalities and injuries of peacekeepers, and missions have sometimes lacked in personnel and equipment to meet these threats. The Santos Cruz Report identifies that "the United Nations and many T/PCCs are gripped by a 'Chapter VI Syndrome' that leads them to plan and deploy peacekeeping operations without a full appreciation of security risks in the field and the operational approach needed to address them."² Alongside, political solutions are often absent; and missions seem to have mandates that lack focus and clear priorities and thereby face challenges in delivering on protection mandates and in contributing to long-term, sustainable peace, and in achieving coherence with other actors operating in the same contexts.

The African continent hosts seven of the 14 United Nations peacekeeping missions and more than 80 per cent of the United Nations peacekeepers. African countries provide nearly half of United Nations Blue Helmets deployed around the world, including almost two-thirds of all women peacekeepers and the majority of United Nations police officers. Peacekeeping in Africa continues to present some of our greatest challenges. Transnational crime, non-state armed groups and terrorist groups pose serious challenges in this part of the world through targeting our peacekeepers directly. Against this backdrop, our partnership with the African Union and African Member States is vital to our collective efforts for peace, and we must continue working to strengthen it.³

To respond to these challenges, the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has launched Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative on 28 March 2018 to renew mutual political commitments to peacekeeping operations. Through his Action for Peacekeeping initiative, the Secretary-General calls on all the stakeholders—the UN Secretariat, Member States, the Security Council, Host countries, Troops/Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs), financial contributors and regional partners — to renew the unified commitment and collective engagement to ensure that UN peacekeeping can meet today's and tomorrow's challenges with the goal of reaching a formal agreement by the end of 2018.

Declaration of Shared Commitments

The Secretary-General shared the Declaration of Shared Commitments on 16 August 2018 and invited Member States and relevant international and regional organisations to endorse it. More than 151 Governments have signed the Declaration of Shared Commitments in support of Action for Peacekeeping, including 42 of the African continent. Partnerships with T/PCCs, with regional organizations, particularly the African Union, and with Host Governments are critical to the success of this initiative - which is already showing results. The salient aspects of Declaration of Shared Commitments are summarized as under⁴:-

- a. The Member States support the Secretary-General's vision for reforming the peace and security pillar of the UN Secretariat and his commitment to improving the ability of the UN to deliver on its mandates through management reform, which will enhance the impact of peacekeeping.
- b. The Member States collectively commit to stronger engagement to advance political solutions to conflict and to pursue complementary political objectives and integrated strategies, including at national and regional levels, within respective mandates and responsibilities. They further affirm that the pursuit of sustainable political solutions should guide the design and deployment of UN peacekeeping operations.
- c. To strengthen consultation between peacekeeping stakeholders on mandates and their implementation, the Member States collectively commit to implement existing intergovernmental commitments on triangular cooperation between uniformed personnel contributing countries, the Security Council and Secretariat, and to consider options for further direct engagement between Host Governments and the Security Council.
- d. The Member States commit to implement protection of civilians mandates of peacekeeping missions, including through using all necessary means when required, in accordance with the UN Charter, mission mandates, and applicable international law.
- e. Recognizing the evolving challenges in today's conflict environments, the Member States collectively commit to take active and concerted measures to address the rise in peacekeeper fatalities and enhance safety and security, and in this regard, we note the importance of the Secretary-General's Action Plan and Peacekeeping Training Plan, as well as efforts to improve continually medical, technical and logistical support in peacekeeping operations.
- f. The Member States collectively commit to ensuring the highest level of peacekeeping performance, and to hold all civilian and uniformed peacekeepers, particularly leadership, accountable for effective performance under common parameters while addressing performance shortfalls.

g. The Member States commit to provide well-trained and well-equipped uniformed personnel and to support the effective development and delivery of peacekeeping training. They further commit to support pre-deployment preparations of personnel and capabilities required for effective performance, and the existing human rights screening policy.

h. The Member States collectively commit to enhance collaboration and planning between the UN and relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations and arrangements, including the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU), which have deployed several mandated operations in the past years, while recognising the need for a clear delineation of roles between respective operations.

In other words, A4P refers to the following issues to be implemented through meaningful actions:

- a. A recommitment by states to the concept of peacekeeping.
- b. A recognition – building on the work of the earlier “HIPPO” report – of the centrality of political peace processes to peacekeeping.
- c. A reorganisation of the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department for Political Affairs (DPA) into two new Departments: the Department for Peace building and Political Affairs (DPPA) and the Department for Peace Operations (DPO), in order to eliminate the arbitrary distinction that had previously existed between political and peacekeeping missions.
- d. Some tough talk on the robust use of force in self-defense and in the defense of civilians, building on the Santos Cruz report released on 19 December 2017.

Security Council Resolution 2436 (21 September 2018)

To facilitate implementation of A4P the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2436 on 21 September 2018 with the focus as quoted below:-

Recalling the importance of the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations in protecting civilians, where mandated, and expressing strong concern regarding continued instances of underperformance, including, inter alia, inaction in the face of, in particular, imminent threats of physical violence against civilians, insufficient contingency planning to react to violence, conduct and discipline issues, risk averse leadership, lax force protection standards, inadequate operational readiness and preparedness, and inadequate integrated planning, and also noting with concern instances in which national caveats may have a detrimental effect on mandate implementation and performance...⁵

Steps Crucial for Bangladesh

Bangladesh being one of the top T/PCCs to UN Peacekeeping Operations for last three decades has far more diplomatic inclination and to some extent constitutional obligation to facilitate the A4P initiative come to the reality through effective implementation of the shared commitments. The major concern for Bangladesh, in this regard, should be raising the capability standards of military and police peacekeepers to the height as demanded by the Secretariat. Nevertheless, there remain some issues that require state level diplomatic engagements with the Secretariat as well as the Security Council and at a later part with the concerned Host Government.⁶

It is imperative for Bangladesh to undertake heightened diplomacy towards the following accomplishments:-

- a. Establishing stronger and effective political process through the use of tools at the disposal of the Security Council with a view to ensuring environment conducive for the deployment of UN Peacekeeping Operations and providing necessary support thereafter by the Host Government and related stakeholders including regional or sub-regional organisations.⁷
- b. Negotiating objective and evidence-based baseline criteria for contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions through ensuring required arrangements for the safety and security of the peacekeepers with correspondence to the effective implementation of the clear and achievable mandate, vis-à-vis mandate-resource gap, duly supported by the Host Government and relevant stakeholders including active involvement of the regional and sub-regional organizations.⁸
- c. Devising a comprehensive performance framework and universal mechanism to ensure accountability at all levels in order to maintain the minimum standards in support, equipment, training, mindset, clarity of political vision and mandate through impact on protection of civilians, safety and security of peacekeepers, and implementation of all mandated tasks.
- d. Ensuring expanded peacebuilding tasks during and after peacekeeping transitions and drawdown involving the role of civilian staffs including women and youth in institution-building in the just-stabilized yet conflict-shaken country.⁹
- e. Focusing on and resolving the issues of national caveats that stand as bars to implement mandated tasks in many situations and ensuring incentives for peacekeepers for better work and accepting dare devil challenges of life in safety hazard situations far away from homeland.

For the tactical level performance, Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police must make sure necessary steps to incorporate appropriate and modern training modalities bolstered with robust psyche and use of hi-tech equipment to boldly deal with any situation, should that be a case of protecting civilians, a threat to safety and security or an issue of effective implementation of any mandated tasks any time within the Area of Responsibility in a UN peacekeeping operation. In this connection, Bangladesh Armed Forces should look into the possibility of incorporating a package on Laws of Armed Conflict or International Humanitarian Law in the regular training courses for officers and men.¹⁰

It is a matter of pride that Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) has already achieved familiarity as one of the top Peacekeeping Training Centres in the world where our peacekeepers are routinely trained before being deployed to the mission area. Yet, it might be taken into consideration that only 6 months training cannot transform an ordinary soldier into a professional peacekeeper with proper mindset and confidence in working in a multinational and multi-cultural environment under tremendous pressure of adverse weather and terrain condition where the nature of threat is also unpredictable involving asymmetric offensives and uncommon diseases. As well, the line of modern gears and equipment as incorporated in various missions are not very common to our regular usage and therefore demand additional attention for requisite orientation and skill to correctly handle them. Addressing these challenges might necessitate reviewing the time allotted for pre-deployment training and redesigning the same with enhanced focus on operational readiness vis-a-vis safety and security.

On the issue of expected operational readiness, as demanded in the mission areas of high intensity operations, we must develop integral quick reaction capability including prompt decision making by the on-scene commander as to what action should be taken to address a certain situation based on relevant Rules of Engagement (RoE) in order to deliver the quickest possible and most effective response. Mission specific scenario-based exercises, case studies, field training exercises and best practices are key tools to developing quick decision making skill. Commanders at all levels should be confident enough to act with no diffidence and allow leverages for the on-scene commander to decide upon the action as deemed necessary and appropriate. In present day UN Peacekeeping, African countries have taken up the topmost positions in troops and police contribution in number through their expanded and diehard participation. In this context, a sharp alignment to the demand of the operational environment has to be met through incorporation of robust posture in all our actions to prove our worth. Here varied culture between African and Bangladeshi peacekeepers plays a vital role. African people are war-beaten and thereby desperate in mental built. They are habituated in

experiencing clashes between the clans, bloodshed and deaths off and on in their everyday life. Though its not common for all, yet, their anthropological history is not much away from the same. On the other hand, Bangladeshi people are soft in nature and love to remain in peaceful environment. Additionally, religious and cultural norms are sharply different in these two parts of the world. Hence, African soldiers perform intensely and live a life as appropriate to their usual practices while Bangladeshi soldiers act as per our trend and live life within our social and religious norms. Its an undeniable fact that, in some complex UN Peacekeeping mission environments robust posture in delivery of responses is highly demanded. We need to inculcate this posture in our uniformed peacekeepers to deliver robust responses as delivered by the Rwandan or Nigerian uniformed peacekeepers. We've already designed our training to incorporate this modalities and our commanders are pursuing the same with a view to heighten our efficiency and act as expected by the situation on ground.¹¹

Finally, two questions might remain unsolved in the national level diplomacy. First, on the question of providing financial support to AU-led missions USA has disagreed to finance any operation beyond UN auspices while France, Norway, and many other Member States have been strong proponents for supporting the former. Being strongly supported by USA should Bangladesh raise voice for financial support to AU-led missions? Second, the heart of A4P initiative is to strengthen political process which lies at the centre of conflict resolution. Bangladesh is also in favour of augmenting the same to help reduce sufferings of the population of conflict-torn countries. However, this would result in likely shrink of UN peacekeeping engagement which provides a commanding tool to Bangladesh's Soft Power. Does Bangladesh have alternative arrangements to augment her Soft Power in absence of or reduced UN peacekeeping engagements?

Conclusion

In the Security Council open debate on 'Peace and Security in Africa: Strengthening Peacekeeping Operations in Africa' the Secretary-General recalled the Action for Peacekeeping initiative with the explanation, "this aims to mobilize all partners and stakeholders to first refocus peacekeeping around more realistic mandates; second, to make our missions stronger and safer; and third, to mobilize greater collective support for political solutions, and for well-equipped and well-trained troops".¹² Through his action for Peacekeeping initiative, the Secretary General calls on all of us, the UN Secretariat, Member States, the Security Council, Host countries, T/PCCs, financial contributors and regional partners, to renew our commitment and collective engagement to ensure that UN peacekeeping can meet today's and tomorrow's challenges.

What is needed is to reinforce efforts to advance political solutions, in close partnerships with all Member States, no matter how intractable a conflict

may seem. We need the right capabilities and political will to protect civilians, and the resources to sustain peace in the long term so we may continue to positively impact people's lives. Defining these commitments and subscribing to them is the first step but turning them into a reality will require sustained effort, commitment and actual implementation on the ground.

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Brief Biography



Major Abul Hasnat Muhammad Mofazzal Karim, SUP Artillery was commissioned on 07 June 1996 in the Corps of Artillery. He has served in different capacities in Special Security Force (SSF), Army Security Unit (ASU), Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT), Headquarters Artillery Brigade, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), BANBAT-3 in DR Congo and Headquarters Sector West in Ivory Coast beside regimental appointments in his parent unit 30 Field Regiment Artillery. Presently, he is serving as Staff Officer (Logistics) at Army Aviation Group. In addition to his diverse professional courses in home and abroad, he has worked as Instructor and Facilitator in United Nations Training of Trainers (UNToT) Course in Argentina (2011) and Bangladesh (2012 and 2014), Protection of Civilians (POC) Course at Argentine Peace Operations Joint Training Centre–CAECOPAZ (2012) and in 'UN Logistics Officers' Course in Malaysia (2014) on invitation from Integrated Training Service (ITS) of DPKO-DFS, Argentine Government and Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) respectively. He is one of the very few selected Training Experts who developed the Revised Core Pre-deployment Training Materials (CPTM) -2017 on invitation from ITS of DPKO-DFS.

Potential Sectors of Women Empowerment in United Nations Peacekeeping: A Bangladesh Perspective

Major Golam Mohammad Saiful Alam Khan, psc, Signals

Introduction

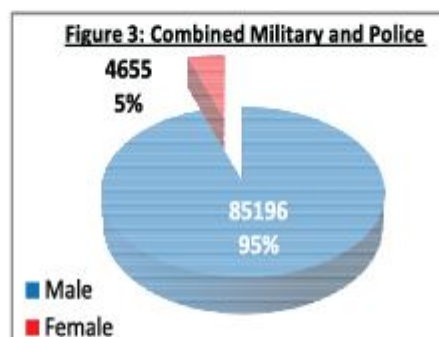
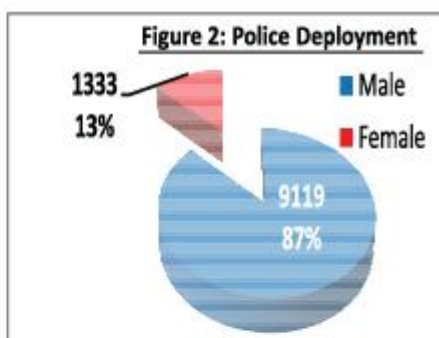
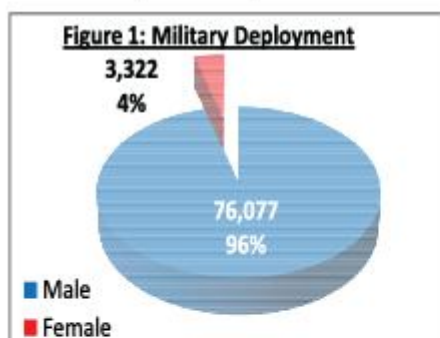
Equality is fundamental to lasting peace and security. It can only be achieved and sustained if all members of the society are equal in terms of opportunities, protection, access to resources and services, participation in decision making and other basic rights. Promoting women's rights and women's empowerment is critical for achieving sustainable peace and security. Therefore, gender equality is addressed as Goal 5 among 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). As a peace loving country, Bangladesh has always been committed to international peace and security which is also reflected and supported by the constitution. With this backdrop, Bangladesh has always stepped forward upon the call of United Nations for strengthening peace and security in global arena. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his speech during 29th session of UN General Assembly on 25 September 1974 projected his vision for the first time in front of international bodies which is considered as a commitment and has become the principle for our foreign policy 'Friendship to all and malice to none'. He also addressed the role of men and women in peace as reflected in the words **"Peace is an imperative for survival of mankind; it represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world"**.¹

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations proved to be the most reliable and most effective tool for maintaining peace and stability of the world. For this reason, demand of peacekeepers remains high around the globe for maintaining peace and security in war-prone areas. Bangladesh is a leading contributor to United Nations peacekeepers and has already participated 54 missions in 40 countries around the world. Peacekeepers of Bangladesh earned credibility in international arena for their dedication, sincerity, professionalism and humane attitude. As Bangladesh is one of the top Troops and Police Contributing Country (TCC and PCC), the requirement of employing women peacekeepers is now the demand of time.

Existing Employment of Women Peacekeepers

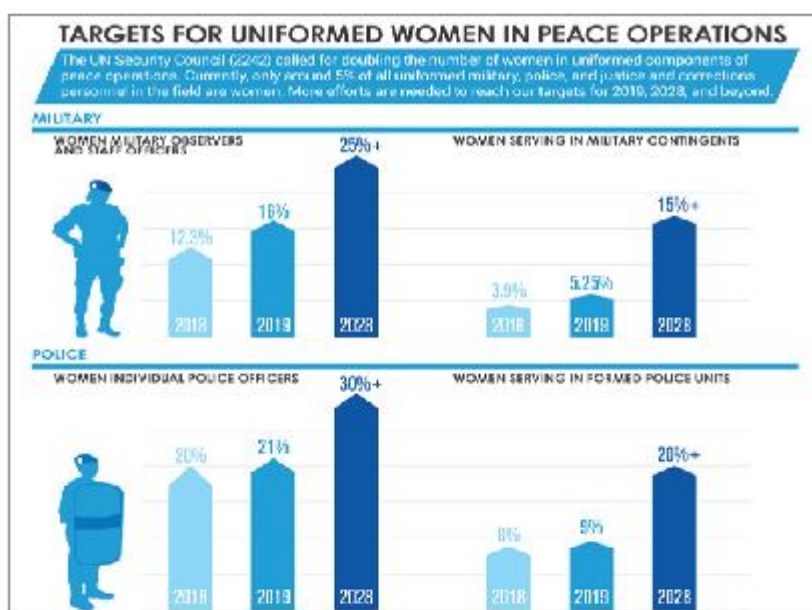
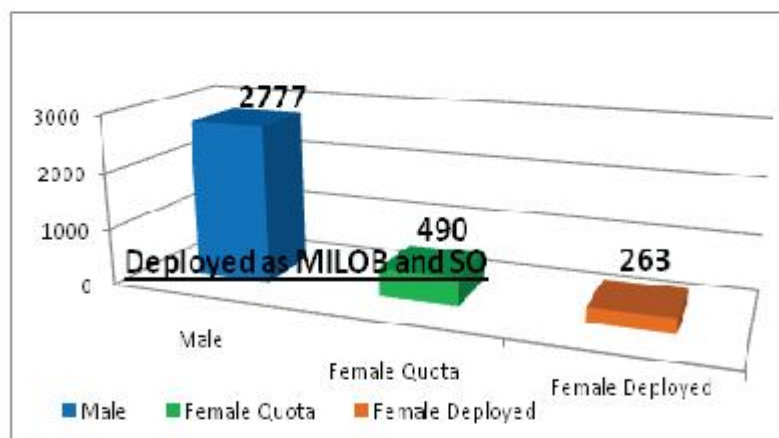
Women engagement in every sector of professional platforms has been highlighted in recent years to ensure gender parity. To encourage the participation of women in peacekeeping operation, United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1325 in 2000, which envisages the increase of women participation for the goal of gender equality and representativeness with regards to peacekeeping missions. According to the Resolution 1325, the target set by the UN is to employ 15% women as military observers and staff officers by 2018 and 20% women police by 2020.² As peacekeeping has evolved to encompass a broader humanitarian approach, women have become increasingly a part of the peacekeeping family.

Employment of Military and Non-military Personnel. Women are deployed in all areas – police, military and civilian – and have made a positive impact on peacekeeping environments, both in supporting the role of women in building peace and protecting women's rights. In all fields of peacekeeping, women peacekeepers have proven that they can perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions as their male counterparts. According to the UN statistics, in January 2017, 4059 women military personnel and in November 2016, 3623 civilian women served under blue helmet. As on 31 December 2018, total 3322 women military personnel and 1333 women police have been employed in peacekeeping operation, where total number is 79,399 for military and 10,452 for police respectively.³ In a 32 years span from 1957 to 1989, only a total of 20 uniformed women served as UN Mission peacekeepers.⁴



Source: https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/msrs_december_2018_0.pdf

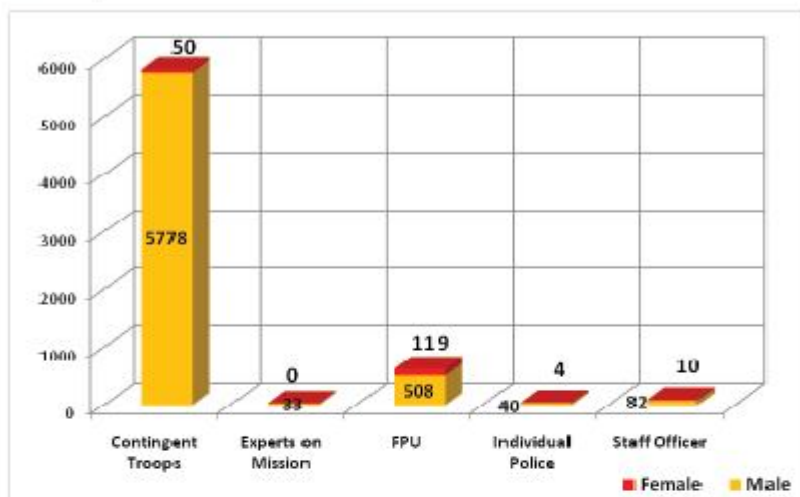
Employment of Women as Military Observer (MILOB) and Staff. According to the 'Guidelines on the Allocation of Military Observer (MILOB) and Staff Officer (SO) posts to Women in Peacekeeping Operation,' United Nations set a roadmap to achieve 15% women participation by the end of 2018 in different capacities. But the present state of deployment is not up to the mark. The state given with the guideline shows that total 3267 MILOB and SO are deployed in different peacekeeping missions from 113 countries, where 490 women need to be deployed according to the UN guideline of 15%. At present only 263 are deployed, which is only 8.05% of total number.

Figure 4: Target of United Nations for Deploying Women in Peacekeeping OperationSource: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/infographics>**Figure 5: Current Deployment of Male and Female as MILOB and SO in Peacekeeping Operation**Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/infographics>

Bangladesh Perspective. In the year 2018, Bangladesh Army deployed 1,56,409 peacekeepers out of which only 1435 were women that constituted 0.92% of the total deployment. Since 2000, Bangladesh Police has deployed 1122 female personnel as member of Female-formed Police Unit (FPU), 60 as United Nations Police (UNPOL) officers and 3 in other capacity. As of 31 December 2018, sector-wise comparative statistics of male-female

deployment is shown in the chart below. This indicates that there is still a vast room for improvement in female labor force participation in the defense sector of Bangladesh, which calls for an increase in those numbers.

Figure 6: Deployment of Bangladeshi Male and Female Peacekeepers in Different Capacities on 31 December 2018



Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/index.htm>

Women Leadership around the Globe

In World Politics and Bangladesh

The number of women in politics and policy making has always been relatively small, and even so their power now seems more tenuous than ever. As political leaders around the globe face an ever more precarious geopolitical climate, female head of states are no exception. The US based influential magazine *Forbes* published a list of 22 most powerful women in the world politics of 2018, where German Chancellor Angela Merkel topped the rank, British Prime Minister Theresa May is in second and International Monetary Fund (IMF) President Christine Lagarde hold the third position. In this power list, Prime Minister of People's Republic of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, proudly holds seventh position, just after the US First Lady Melania Trump, which indicates the development of Bangladesh in terms of politics, policy making, leadership and empowerment of women in all sectors in comparison with world perspective.⁵ In 2011, Sheikh Hasina formulated and adopted the progressive and comprehensive 'National Women Development Policy.' This provided an exhaustive list of goals to socially, economically, politically and legally empower the women of Bangladesh for the first time. In Commonwealth Women's Forum event at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London, she said "We want to build a future where world peace and women empowerment remain the cornerstone to create a society free from poverty, discrimination and conflict."⁶

Picture-1: Women in World Politics



Source : Author's Collection

Under Blue Helmet. From 1957 to 1989, only 20 women peacekeepers participated in 32 years.⁷ In 1999, the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action called for the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to undertake a series of measures to advance the gender balance and gender equality at all levels of peacekeeping missions. In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Resolution 1325 was the first time that the Security Council recognized that women and girls are affected by conflicts in a different way than men and boys and therefore, have an essential role in participatory peace processes⁸ (Bertolazzi, 2010). The first all-women police contingent to UN peacekeeping came from India and was sent to the mission in Liberia in 2007. In 2014, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon appointed Major General Kristin Lund of Norway to command the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. This achievement made Lund the highest-ranking female peacekeeper in the world.

Bangladesh Military and Police. The remarkable success for Bangladeshi female peacekeepers is Colonel Nazma Begum, who is the first female military Contingent Commander in the history of UN. She was given UN special award for her outstanding leadership in BANMED, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). At present, another female Contingent Commander Colonel Amina Hasnat Chowdhury is leading BANMED in Central African Republic (CAR). Bangladesh also sent two female combat pilots in the UN mission in 2017.⁹ Bangladesh Police sent 6 female police officers in United Nations Police (UNPOL), United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) in the year 2000. The first all Female-formed Police Unit (FPU) came into operation in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in May 2010 and another female BAN FPU in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in November 2010.¹⁰

Picture 2: First Female Contingent Commander Colonel Nazma Begum



Source: Author's Collection

Picture 3: Female-formed Police Unit of Bangladesh



Source: Author's Collection

Necessity of Women Employment in Peacekeeping Operation

Women's participation is essential for the social, political, national and global development beside man. Women are now holding higher rank positions nationally and internationally where professional skill has been at par with their counterpart. No job description now a days can restrict a women in undertaking an assignment. The concept of globalization has increased the scope and opportunities to apply and prove one's capacity beyond the physical boundary. Therefore, women are ready to accept more challenging professions. Peacekeeping missions are getting difficult in the present day's context. The role of peacekeepers is not only limited to monitor ceasefire in observing peace accord; instead, it's extended to implementation of peace by driving the political will and actions where internal issues are often influenced by the interest of external actors. In this complex situation, protection of civilians and protection of human rights have become principal focus for United Nations leaderships. At this backdrop, participation of women in peacekeeping operations has become more essential than ever.

Millions of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations are endangered due to extreme inequalities and violence. In many cases, women and children are considered as the soft target for the expansion of hostility. The conflict areas consist of women headed households. Sexual violence is a common form of exploitation by the hostile force. In such situations when women participate in the peace process, there are more chances to implementation of peace agreements and their participation ensures greater credibility. Female soldiers are not only able to perform in the same functions and capacities as their male counterparts, from command to frontline roles; they also bring an added value to military operations. Female soldiers bring an additional perspective in planning operations and in making key decisions, especially those affecting civilians, particularly women and girls. This is a critical consideration for a mission as it provides a holistic approach to meet its mandate in today's complex and

evolving peacekeeping environment. They can support the victims with such care which may not be done by any of her male counterpart. Female military also serve as role models in the local environment, encouraging women in host countries to consider security sector as a career option. Some unique tactical skills female military bring to this field include screening of female civilians and conducting of house searches in areas where it is not culturally appropriate for men to enter private spaces. Local population in host countries often feel more comfortable liaising and sharing information with military troops that include women alongside men. By obtaining better information, peacekeepers are able to better protect these communities.¹¹ One real life example of an Observer in Haiti stated that, "When female peacekeepers would patrol the camp, women and children felt more comfortable to come out and talk, and often walk with them."¹² Women's participation in security forces improves dispute resolution. Female police officers are less likely than their male counterparts to use excessive force and are less likely to intensify tensions and more likely to build trust with communities, thereby advancing stability and the rule of law. Women's participation in the security sector is associated with fewer misconduct complaints and improved citizen perceptions of force integrity. For example, in Namibia, Rwanda, and South Africa, local populations perceived female police peacekeepers to be more effective at weakening potential violence, less threatening, and more receptive to civilians.¹³

In order to ensure the complete range of United Nations Police activities, including the promotion of rule of law, planning, leadership, intelligence investigations, public order management, capacity-building of host-state police, community-oriented policing, gender awareness raising and engaging communities, participation of female police officers is essential. Female police officers also help the United Nations address issues of sexual exploitation and abuse. With their wide range of contributions, female police officers help to shield the community from all types of violence, which covers more than ensuring the mere physical safety of the people. The valuable lessons from United Nations Police activities reiterate that women are capable of fulfilling leadership roles in political participation, conflict resolution and in facilitating the progression from conflict to peace. Female peacekeepers serve as motivational leaders, encouraging women and girls to break free of the forces of the stringent male-dominated societies by fighting for their own rights and participation in the peace processes. Women also serve as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) as they execute their leadership position and duties in peace operations.¹⁴

Female participation in peacekeeping operation enhances the operational effectiveness in many ways like:

- a. Empowering women in the host community.
- b. Addressing specific needs of female ex-combatants during the process of demobilizing and reintegration into civilian life.
- c. Helping the peacekeeping force approachable to women in the community.
- d. Interviewing survivors of gender-based violence.

- e. Interacting with women in societies where women are prohibited from speaking to men.
- f. Helping to reduce conflict and confrontation.
- g. Improving access and support for local women.
- h. Providing role models for women in the community.
- j. Providing a greater sense of security to local population, including women and children.
- k. Broadening the skill set available within a peacekeeping mission.

It is evident that, women's meaningful participation in peace process increases 35% probability of suitable agreement lasting at least 15 years.¹⁵ Starting from pre-negotiation stage to implementation stage, if the meaningful participation of women can be ensured in peace process, the positive result will be evident in most of the cases.

Figure 7: Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Building Process



Source: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2018/10/infographic-womens-meaningful-participation-builds-peace>

Provocation of Women Employment in Peacekeeping Operation

Despite having enormous potentialities and ratified United Nations resolutions on empowering women, the participation of female peacekeepers in mission and different peace process is very negligible due to some obvious challenges. Those challenges are perceived from different perspectives like mission specific, cultural and psychological, UN charter or policy and country specific. One of the greatest impediments to women empowerment or women moving out in the public affairs is to bring about the change in attitude or perception.

While performing chartered duties, the female peacekeepers face challenges like psychological dilemma, role conflicts, language barrier, infrastructural drawbacks etc. Despite ratified UN resolutions regarding women, their representation in different peace process lacks. It's seen that, language and communication are most obvious challenges for both male and female. Female peacekeepers are deployed in mission area as military doctors, military staff officers, military observers, nurses, paramedics and others. All the female peacekeepers are working with their male counterparts and performing a generic role. They are not yet assigned with any specific task of peacekeeping/peace building.

Our view is that, while this is a question for the individual Member States, some troop-contributing countries may not have women in their military's infantry/fighting/supporting arms, which impacts the number of women they can deploy to peacekeeping operations, though others may have women in combat roles, and may choose not to deploy them on peacekeeping missions.¹⁶

Challenges in Command Role. Command is a different dimension for uniformed service. Usually, most of the members of military service are male and same thing goes with the commander of any military fighting and supporting unit. Very less number of women attain with the command responsibility of any unit. Recently 04 (four) women have been adorned with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, who achieved the qualification to become commanders of units. Previously, only few medical units have female commanders. Initially, a female commander in a male dominant unit will face difficulty to establish command and control over all members of the unit, because of the socio-cultural barriers exist within the society.

Physical and Psychological Challenges. Physically women are considered as weaker than man and they are ridiculed for lack of physical strength and endurance. Therefore, they are subverted by their male counterpart, which causes the psychological dilemma for the women.

Picture 4: Four Newly Promoted Female Lieutenant Colonels of Bangladesh Army with Honorable Prime Minister



Source: Author's Collection

Security Issue

a. **Within UN Environment.** Sometimes, they are also subjected to sexual violence by their male counterparts. According to one female peacekeeper in Liberia "In some instance, women were victims of sexual harassment done in a subtle way thus making it difficult to report to the authorities."

b. **Socio-cultural Dilemma.** There is another aspect which relates to the role conflict. Potential imbalance between work and family can lead to role conflict for the women. To a Bangladeshi woman, family is the first priority and she structures her work around her family responsibility.

When she perceives an imbalance between mother and peacekeeper: she finds herself in the horns of dilemma. Presence of non-conducive environment poses challenge in performing their role effectively. In the male dominated environment following are some challenges posed to female peacekeepers:

- (i) Headquarters based employment
- (ii) Less scope of sharing
- (iii) Less recreational scope
- (iv) Less number of female peacekeepers

Religion is one of the important issues that sometime plays a vital role in developing right kind of perception about women empowerment, especially in Bangladesh. Though there is no barrier in religion, the perception is made sometimes on wrong interpretation of religion.

Potential Sectors for Empowering Women Under Blue Helmet

Peacekeeping activities are not only confined within the specific areas of conflict. The headquarters of different organizations in United Nations thus provide good opportunities for women which are related to the peacekeeping missions. Therefore, the positions of staffs at the headquarters in-and-out of the mission areas along with the field work inside the conflict zones offer the scopes of women participation. There is a perceived idea amongst many that peacekeeping mission is predominantly driven by military components. The fact is that civilian elements are the 'prime mover' of peacekeeping missions with strong participation of women. Hence, from women perspective, military, police and civilian have equal opportunities to participate in the peacekeeping missions. In this regard, women can participate in different role, which are discussed below:-

a. **As MILOB and SO.** The UN has already taken necessary steps to employ women as MILOB and SO in all the missions. 15% quota is given for the year 2018, which need to be filled up by the member states.

b. **In Command Role.** Amid sexual exploitation, scandal and ineffective peace building, the role of female peacekeepers, along with other mechanisms, can work to improve the situation drastically in both areas. Steps, while few and far between, are being made in the right direction: for example, appointment of Major General Kristin Lund of Norway—the first female to serve as Force Commander in a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Cyprus; female UN police officers, such as Gladys Ngwepekeum Nkeh in the Central African Republic; and Major Bettina Stelzer's contribution to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to enhance understandings of gender perspectives in South Sudan.¹⁷

c. **For Intelligence Gathering.** Access to the local population is incredibly important to peacekeeping missions. Mission leaders and Force Commanders need to be able to map threats and identify armed groups and their leaders for effective planning. Experience from operations in Cambodia, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Liberia and the DRC demonstrates that female soldiers can overcome the cultural

restrictions around interactions with male peacekeepers, and are able to gain information from women and children. In the words of Major General Lund: "Being a female, from my recent deployment in Afghanistan, I had access to 100% of the population, not only 50%". Women peacekeepers are able to search local women at checkpoints; can establish better relations with local women's groups; and can improve intelligence gathering about the local community via better access to local women and/or a broader understanding of what constitutes a security threat.

d. Protective Role. PKOs with more women peacekeepers are better able to protect citizens, especially women and children, because women peacekeepers bring a greater awareness of and sensitivity to their particular needs and challenges, and because women peacekeepers are less intimidating or provocative than men peacekeepers.¹⁸

e. Countering Sexual Violence. There are three dimensions with which women can play role in countering sexual violence:

(i) **Deterrence.** By having a "civilizing" effect on their male colleagues, women's presence ensures a better-behaved, less-corrupt and less-abusive PKO.

(ii) **Assistance to Victim.** Women peacekeepers ensure a more compassionate or empathetic response to victimized women and children, especially those that have been sexually assaulted; it is often claimed that it is "easier" for a raped woman to talk to another woman about her assault.

(iii) **Incidence.** With regard to the problem of sexual exploitation or abuse committed by the UN personnel, women are less likely to be perpetrators, thus lowering the overall level of sexual exploitation or abuse committed

f. Inspirational Activities. Women peacekeepers help contributing to more equitable gender relations within the local society by serving as role models or mentors for local women and girls.

g. As Female Engagement Team (FET) and Female-formed Police Unit (FPU). Female Engagement Team (FET) and Female-formed Police Unit (FPU) are some excellent future opportunities. These teams may utilize untapped potential of female peacekeepers and integrate them for building trust with the locals.

Conclusion

The integration of women in peacekeeping operation is not the outcome of the wish list of thoughts anymore; rather many studies have proven its viability and effectiveness in ground level execution. Women's participation in the negotiation process for peace building enhances the possibility to end with a plausible agreement. United Nations along with all member states are agreed to increase the employment of women in peacekeeping operations and initiatives have been taken to increase the participation.

Though the holistic progress that has been manifested in the global policy level and the important initiatives have been implemented at regional and national levels, a lot of accrued progress is yet to be made to transform global commitments into practice. Concrete gaps and challenges pertaining to the issue of women, peace and security still exist. Many member states are yet to deploy women peacekeepers as per requirement of the UN, as they have less no of female in their security force. There is also scarcity of qualified peacekeepers in many countries. Therefore, conduct of robust pre-deployment peacekeeping training is needed to enhance competencies of peacekeepers including gender perspectives. Pre-deployment gender training, with an emphasis on sexual abuse and exploitation (SEA) and Gender Based Violence (GBV), is intended to educate troops on the core principles and values of the United Nations, targeting not only men and women of the host population, but also to protect women peacekeepers from the threat arises within the workplace. The troop contributing countries are responsible and accountable for pre-deployment training. In order to continue women's representation in peacekeeping operations, it is necessary to recruit more women in domestic military and police forces.

TCCs and PCCs like Bangladesh also need to take more initiative to lessen the gender gap in domestic level though Bangladesh has already taken a number of measures and achieved praiseworthy success to overcome the challenge. By identifying the potential sectors of women employment in the UN peacekeeping operations, the pre-deployment training can be guided with some obvious objectives, which enable women to contribute positively and play crucial role for establishing peace and security in war-prone areas. These steps will not only empower women peacekeepers but also help host communities to protect and recover themselves from the violence and hostility.

The female peacekeepers are generally well regarded by members of host countries. A balanced force can reduce the level of sexual harassment and violence against local women. So a greater number of well trained and integrated female peacekeepers are the assets to increase the effectiveness of peacekeeping operation who can put an end to the conflict and bring a sustainable peace and development.

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Brief Biography



Golam Mohammad Saiful Alam Khan, psc, sigs was commissioned in the Corps of Signals on 17 Jun 2001 with 44 BMA Long Course. He is a graduate from Defense Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, Dhaka. He completed his graduation from the Department of Computer Science & Engineering of Military Institute of Science and Technology, Dhaka. The officer served in three signal Battalions and commanded an Independent Brigade Signal company in 17 Infantry Division, Sylhet. He served twice under the "Blue Helmet". His first United Nation assignment was in Ivory Coast in the year 2007-2008 as Sector Communication Officer with BANSIG-4 and second UN Mission was in the Republic of Mali as detachment Commander in Sector North Kidal. At present he is serving as Deputy Assistant Adjutant & Quarter Master General (DAA&QMG) at Headquarters 65 Infantry Brigade, 10 Infantry Division, Ramu Cantonment, Cox's Bazar.

Experiences and Achievements through Journey Under Blue Beret : As a First Female Military Police Officer

Maj Ishrat Maria Mitu, psc, Artillery

*"To call women the weaker gender is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman.
If by strength is meant moral power and humanity,
Then woman is immeasurably man's superior." - Mahatma Gandhi*

Introduction

Women have been deployed in all areas – Military, Police and Civilian and have a positive impact on peacekeeping environments, both in supporting the role of women in building peace and protecting women's rights. In all fields of peacekeeping, women peacekeepers have proven that they can perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts do.

In 1993, women made up 1% of deployed uniformed personnel. In January 2019, approximately 102,910 peacekeepers were deployed in various missions. As per the statement of Overseas Operations Directorate upto February 2019 total 6703 Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police had been deployed in different missions area, among them 209 women peacekeepers were which constituted 3.11% of women military and police personnel. While the UN encourages and advocates for the deployment of women to uniform functions, the responsibility for deployment of women in the police and military lies with Member States and troops Contributing Countries (TCC).

Bangladesh being one of the top most TTCs (Troops contributing Country) is determined to bolster her role in global peace. Bangladesh has been engaged in UN peacekeeping missions since 1988 to uphold the principle of peace, justice and development, which are enshrined in the constitution of Bangladesh. As a female participant, our first engagement was in the year of 1995 as doctors. The female officers were sent for deployment for peacekeeping mission in 2005. In 2009, for the first time, Bangladesh participated in the UN mission by deploying its female officer as Female Military Police Officer under Force Bangladesh Military Police-5 (Force BANMP-5) in United Nations mission in Sudan (UNMIS). I was selected and sent for that mission. It was an unforgettable journey and opportunity for me to be able to take part as a proud member of Force BANMP-5 (UNMIS) as female officer from Bangladesh.

Tough Decision to Keep Family Aloof

It was perhaps the toughest decision of my life to accept the opportunity to be a part of a proud member of Force BANMP-5 (UNMIS). It was like a dream come true. From inside I was thrilled to take over the challenges, but from outside it was not easy as because I have had my family and lots of family responsibilities. At the first instance, I felt a little hesitated but was overwhelmed

by thoughts which were captivating me in my own decision making process. I was not able to complement my decision in persuasion of my dream. At this juncture, my better half and parents approached with their good words of courage and determination. They assured me the necessary propulsion to carry out new assignment. Their words and motivation acted as a real catalyst for me. My better half assured me that he would look after everything in my absence while I will be far away. His assurance inspired me with immense strength from inside that ultimately helped me to take the decision to go for UN mission in Sudan. I still believe that without his continuous support and care I would not be able to perform my duties. Thereby, with my determination and mental support of my family to fulfill my dream at last I was all set to start my new adventures.

Journey Began as Detachment Commander in Military police

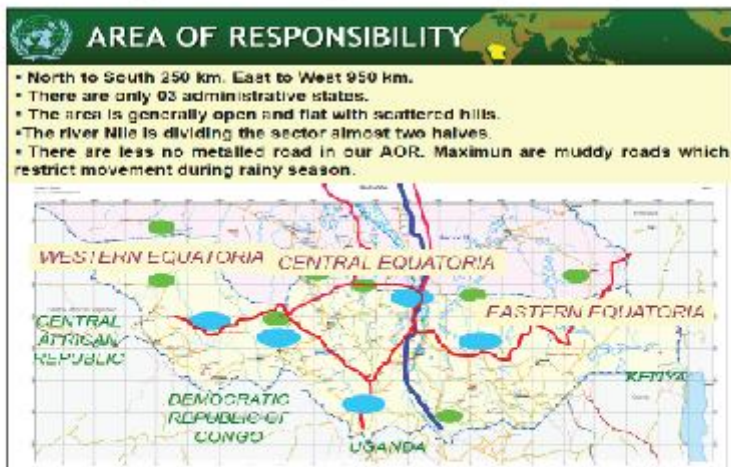
It has been indeed a privilege for me to be selected as Detachment Commander (Juba) in Military Police of Force BANMP-5 (UNMIS) in Sudan. On 11 November 2009, I started my journey towards Juba, the capital of South Sudan to acknowledge my duty as Juba Detachment Commander under the banner of UNO. When I landed from plane, I knew that I was ready to take over my duties. In a sandy stormy day we touched the red soil at Juba International Airport and subsequently proceeded towards UN compound with lots of curiosity. Next day I was briefed and I took over my duties and responsibilities from previous Detachment Commander. Within a week I started to establish my foothold in my area of responsibilities (AOR) and introduced myself as new member with UN security including various UN organizations. As peace process of South Sudan for independence was on going, thereby various movement and talks were going on between UN delegations and The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)/Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leaders during my tenure. Our force was under Force Commander Major General Paban Thapa from Nepal (May 2008-May 2010) and Major General Moses Bisong Obi from Nigeria (June 2010-July 2011). It is to be mentioned that on 9th July 2011, South Sudan became the new born country in the world. The birth of the Republic of South Sudan is the culmination of a six-year peace process.

A Journey through Experience as Detachment Commander, Military Police, and AOR

Job patterns ensured team members of Force BANMP-5 (UNMIS) to be deployed all over the area of Sudan covering total 8 sectors. I was appointed as Detachment Commander of Sector-1 (Juba). Under Sector-1 there were five team sites including Juba, Torit, Maridi, Yambio and Yei. During that time Juba was the most vital sector as talks over Independence of South Sudan through peace process was going on. As Juba is the capital city of South Sudan, my responsibilities were to look after the all types of discipline, providing VVIP/VIP escorting and investigating all the accidents/incident that matter of UN military

personnel under Blue Helmet. My team consisted of total 15 members including two officers. During the tenure of one year of normal duty my detachment provided approximately seventy two VVIP escorting and investigated various accidental cases including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) cases. Besides my normal duties, I had to undertake some other duties as female officer which were supporting the local female in building their trust in their own ability to reconcile their conscience with their capacity to become a useful member of their own society. The local women loved to talk and used to interact with two Bangladeshi female officers. I took this opportunity to bring peace and harmony in their society through counseling. Although it was not my official duty, while interacting with them I learnt a lifetime lesson from the Sudanese local, "When you are good to others, you are the best to yourself."

Figure 1 : Showing Area of Responsibility



Source : Author's self-construct

Figure 2 : Operational Activities of Military Police



Source : Author's self-construct

Challenges and Difficulties Faced during Tour of Duty

There is much dissimilarity between Bangladesh and Sudan as regards to weather and terrain. Juba itself is much larger than Bangladesh. The nature of my job was policing to all the members of UN military personnel, looking after all types of discipline of UNMOs and dealing with other country's military contingents. I was appointed as first female military police officer from UN. In Sudan other than contingent members and staff officers, this was first time a female was assigned to perform an important responsibility. Most of the time my responsibilities were to provide VVIP escort and controlling UN delegation movement and ensuring their safety and security, controlling all types of traffic, road safety related issues, looking after all UN military personnel disciplines. In case of any breach of discipline, I had to investigate the matter with proper recommendations that were sent to force commander. Covering all five team sites was a mammoth task. But the real challenges came in front of me when I needed to go out of UN complex to investigate various incidents and accidents; first I had to think about my safety as female officer and then my staffs. But with the help of my senior command echelon of Force BANMP-5 and with support of sector Headquarters, I could discharge my duties keeping high professional standard. I had to deal with SEA cases in coordination with male UNMOs or Civil Police. Maintaining good liaison with local and UN security members, going to the roots of local people and their lifestyle were the key to be successful in discharging my duties. Within a very short time I could represent myself as competent Military Police Officer. My main objective was to uphold the honour and pride of the appointment and responsibility that Bangladesh Government entrusted me with. I had faced some challenges that are given below :-

a. **Limited Manpower.** As Juba was capital city of South Sudan, having vast area of responsibility including five team sites seemed to me a challenging task to have control over it. Thereby, it was a challenge for the detachment commander to cover all Military Policing activities beside investigation of various incidents and accidents with only 15 team members.

b. **Communications Systems.** There is an international airport located in Juba through which all communications were done. There were also functional airstrips activities in Maridi, Yambio, Torit and Yei. The real problems which I had to face are given below:

- There was no connectivity by rail inside the vast area.
- The roads in the city are very narrow and uneven.
- There is very less number of metal roads in those Areas of Responsibilities.
- Most of them were under construction. Maximum roads were muddy that restrict movement during rainy season.
- Poor road condition leads in increasing number of road accident. It happens frequently, especially in rainy season.

Figure 2 : Operational Activities of Military Police



Source: Author's self-construct

c. **Sensitivity of Work.** Local authority and people are very inhospitable and non-co-operative to UN staffs. In most of the cases it was difficult to create blissful coexistence with local people. Sometimes I had to face little resistance from the local people to accept UN as their friend. But when they understood that we are there to help them then they always welcomed us.

d. **Movements without Arms.** During any investigation of accident or incident military police members had to move without arms. They only took assistance from the UN security and local administration. In many a cases they had to face life threatening situation while dealing with local peoples.

e. **Difficult to Take Quick Reaction.** As all the team sites were very far from Juba and the only means to reach other team sites was by Helicopters. In many cases actual information of various incidents came to us in late from the sector. That caused administrative problems for the investigator to find out the actual facts.

f. **Language Barrier.** Many a times Military Police personnel needed to communicate with local people for the purpose of various investigations. But it was very difficult to communicate with local people without language assistants/ interpreters.

g. **Investigation following Fatal Accident.** When fatal accident took place the victims and injured persons needed to be evacuated to hospital immediately. Thereby, MP personnel needed to know the various locations of hospitals that could provide necessary assistance to UN personnel. In many cases embarked on hospitals were difficult to find out. To find out actual facts we started to take interview instantly which was missing during delayed investigations.

h. **Distance from Juba to Other Team Site.** The team sites were located far away from the Sector HQ and air transport was the only

means of communication. On other hand, reports of various accidents/incidents did not reach instantly. Though there was a set up internal communication but it was not enough to face immediate threat and unforeseen events.

j. **Cultural and Religious Strain Deviation.** From 2009 until 2010, the time was crucial. Discussion was going on for division of the birth of new state named South Sudan and North Sudan. Thereby, there was an ethnic clash between South Sudan and North Sudan. At the same time there was a sustained high tensed situation and relation between various ethnic groups like Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Lord Resistance Army (LRA). The majority of South Sudan is Christian and North Sudan is Muslim and this phenomenon made my job a little harder than usual.

Few Mentionable Experiences during Investigation as Detachment Commander

As a bearer of UN flag my duties and responsibilities was never like the traditional police. My investigation was different in regards of approach and multifaceted. Deep understanding of core value of the local people was highly necessary to facilitate my duties smoothly. Sharing experience by the UN personnel is more beneficial in combat environment. While serving as a detachment commander I had to handle the following few mentionable incidents:

a. **A Life Threatening Situation during Investigation.** The incident still chases like a nightmare in life. It happened at the outset of my duties in 2009. I received an instant message that there was an accident between two vehicles, Sudanese local vehicle and UN military vehicle. Immediately I went for investigation with team members including UN security member. When I reached the area where the incident took place, my team found a sizable local driver who was a Sudanese, quarrelling with UN uniformed soldier. They kept the two vehicles in custody where the collusion took place and blocked the normal traffic. As he saw me that I was investigating the matter, he thought if he could give blame to UN driver, he would get monitory support from UN. When our team requested him to come to UN office with the help of local police he denied to come and asked 600 USD claiming damages of his vehicle. Once he understood that it was his fault, he then got annoyed and tried to attack on my forehead thinking as weak target by a large sized iron bar which was kept in his vehicle. With a very quick action our UN security and investigation team captured him and I was safe from a big accident. The Sudanese man was arrested by local police. Through motivation, information and facts gathered, our team made him convinced and he felt sorry for his deeds. Thereafter, vehicle accident investigation was completed successfully. On that day I learned one lesson that an UN investigator has to know the nature of individual country's people and their behavioral pattern before investigating any cases.

b. **SEA Case Investigation.** Investigation inside unknown environment

is always challenging for the investigator. One of the memorable incidents that took place outside of my known area, where one of the military observers was held responsible by the locals for involving in sexual abuse case (SEA). It was violation of UN rules. My detachment was assigned to investigate to find out the actual fact by the Force Headquarters. My team with the help of local administration, UN security and interpreter went to the investigation point. I talked with the suspected UN Officer in a place where the incident took place. In that case, I found the locals and police were very co-operative while interviewing with us. Successfully, our team brought out actual facts and reports were sent to the Force Headquarters. It was for the first time I was handling a SEA case in multi-cultural environment. Each and every case had its own merits which has equipped me with unforgettable experience.

c. Problems with Military Observer and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Settlement Negotiation. The incident took place in one of the team sites in my area of responsibility. One UN military observer (UNMO) was beaten by SPLA and he was under their custody. The matter was very serious and I was ordered to investigate the matter as soon as possible. This was one of my sensitive investigations during my tenure. I took this case very seriously and took urgent measure to move to team site by helicopter. The journey was of 2 hours. I had my second in Command including investigation team with me. At first we completed our ground work. We prepared a team for talking with locals, LEA (Local Law Enforcing Agencies), representative of United Nation Head of the organizations and UNPOL and UN security, representative of SPLA who worked under UN representative. It is to be mentioned that SPLA members always moved with arms and MP investigation team moved without arms. The incident took place when an UNMO went for shopping in vegetable market near to SPLA camp. The maid servant of the said UNMO, a Sudanese girl was assisting him to purchase vegetable. A group of SPLA members saw that girl and got furious. They thought that the girl was held captive by the UNMO. In no time they arrested the UNMO and beat him vigorously. They kept him under their custody. Our negotiation team members took their appointment and had a long meeting to settle the matter very meticulously considering the sensitiveness of the case. After a long negotiation we brought back our UNMO with us by giving assurance in written. I have learnt some valuable lessons for my profession from this experience which is a rare case not only for a female officer but also for a UN male officer.

d. Death of Child Near to UN Complex in Team Site. Torit was always a calm and quiet team site in comparison with other four team sites. I was instructed to carry out investigation after getting a news that a child was drown inside water log near the UN complex which was under construction. The locals claimed that UN members were responsible for this child's death. Again we moved to Torit with my investigation team

consisting of four people. Necessary co-ordination was already done with team sites and UN security personnel. We moved to the village where that incident took place to talk with local authority. I found that in Torit area local people were very gentle in nature. Children were also lovely. Thereby, I could complete my investigation without any apprehension. Also we had a meeting with victim's family, local heads and other children who were the witness of the incident. We got all types of co-operations from them. They had some tough demands. we forwarded the matter through administrative channel to our Force Headquarters.

Achievements during UN Mission

Peacekeepers are the role model for others. She/he is an ambassador of the UN and his/her country. Thereby, as a proud member under Blue Helmet, few achievements that I have brought with me from UN mission which will remain as my life time achievements and experiences.

a. **Working with Multinational Force.** I am always grateful to my authority who assigned me to perform this important responsibility as Detachment Commander-1 (Juba), Force BANMP-5 (UNMIS). This UN mission allowed me to intensify my confidence as individual. The honour and working experience I received would remain as an asset throughout my life. Due to my nature of duties and responsibilities I had to work with Multi National Force including co-ordination with all types of UN staffs, UN security service, UN Intelligence Organisations. I believe it is a rare opportunity for any officer in the military to work with Multinational Force. During my tour of duty I served under two Force Commanders. One was from Nepal and the other was from Nigeria. Beside my duty as force Military Police, I could get a chance to serve under Force Provost Marshal who was from Nepal Army.

Figure 4 : Farewell Visit of Force Commander Major General Paban Thapa from Nepal May 2008 to May 2010



Source : Author's collection

**Figure 5 : Welcome Visit by Force Commander
Major General Moses Bisong Obi from Nigeria**



Source : Author's collection

b. Providing VVIP Escorting. My detachment conducted approximately 72 VVIP escorting to UN high officials and Ex-president of Various Country from 12 November 2009 to 15 November 2010. It was great achievement and experience for me. It is to be mentioned that it was the highest number of VVIP escorting conducted by Detachment-1 (Juba) amongst all Force BANMP-5. My tenure of duty was just prior to the independence of South Sudan that took place on 9th July 2011. Thereby, Juba was one of the important places to visit for the UN high delegations. Being a junior officer it was a rear opportunity for any officer to move with UN high officials to provide their Military police security and escorting.

Figure 6 : VVIP Escorting



Source : Author's collection

Figure 7 : SRSG Mr Haile Menkeriuos



Source : Author's collection

c. **Rare Opportunity to Visit to South Sudan President (Salva Kiir Mayardit) House.** I still cherish the memory to get a chance of visiting President Salva Kiir Mayardit Presidential House, (upon the South's secession on July 9th, 2011 and the first President of an independent South Sudan). Towards the end of 2010 just before independence of South Sudan, UN peace process talk and UN high official visit took place.

d. **Smooth Coordination between Multinational Forces and Staffs.** It was the UN mission area where I learnt how to carry out coordination for any assignment in conducting delegation visit or any investigation. I came to know their culture and how other country's armies performed their work in their respective places of duties.

e. **Easy Approach towards Local and Knowledge about Sudanese Culture.** Due to my nature of duty I had to communicate with local people for investigation and road reconnaissance for VIP/ VVIPs escorting. I and my detachment team never faced any difficulties while doing so. I always rather got added advantage due to my gender and friendly approach towards locals.

f. **Inspiration for Women and Children.** I always try to inspire women. In many countries, where women are treated as subject substance, I had to always uplift this sentiment. It is more comfortable while talking to other women as a woman. I felt it as additional benefit during any kind of duty as investigator or as social worker. Sometimes I received cozy hospitality by the women and children from South Sudan. While passing them, they used to salute me as female peacekeeper. In Lamptey's words, "the presence of more women can actually help dilute a macho approach to peacekeeping," this can in turn help combat against SEA among peacekeepers. A woman in the field as UN peacekeeper always works as inspirations for other local women, especially children.

Conclusion

I have faced many critical situations where operations and security support were impaired by either weather, conflicts or unforeseen events. But successfully with the help of my detachment members, I could overcome those entire situations with the help of my training and common sense and re-established disrupted operations and security support channel. Whenever it was necessary to keep operations and security support ingenuity I tried my best to keep operational and delivered the expected operations and security support. In a highly demanding and challenging environment where operations and security support blend with cooperation, a practical leadership was necessary there. In my service tenure with Force BANMP-5, I had to undergo many situations where these two vital components of an operation came face to face to each other that needed some special care to get mutually blended with each other so that the whole operation could be completed with optimum resources and by the best usage of minimal assets. These incidents stated above have not only helped me to shape my professional standard but also equipped me with many valuable insights that

would work as an inspiration in the later part of my career.

Taking part in operations where various multinational militaries were important, cross cultural cooperation and coordination meetings and settlements with multiple military services of other countries also provided immense knowledge and experiences.

The mission with Force BANMP-5 was a very challenging and demanding job which required diligence, hard work, tactfulness and above all dedication. I could discharge my duties satisfactorily with the help of my training, family and superiors who were relentless in their effort to provide me all kind of support. My experience and learning with BANMP-5 mission would always help me to perform my professional duties in a manner that meet the military needs. I believe that my obligation towards my service and its values was and will always be most effective and powerful weapon in my career arsenal while serving in Bangladesh Army.

Notes and References

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Brief Biography



Major Ishrat Maria Mitu, psc, Artillery was commissioned from Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) with 49 BMA Long Course in the Corps of Artillery on 24 December 2003. She has a diverse experience of service in different units, Brigade and Divisional Headquarters as well as in the Military Police. In pursuance of her unit career, she gained experience of serving twice in two different Air Defence Artillery Units. She held all the regimental appointments under different capacity. She also served as Staff Captain (Admin and Quartering) in Headquarter 6 Independent Air Defence Artillery Brigade and Deputy Assistant Adjutant General (DAAG) in 19 Infantry Division . She has the unique experience of serving as Operation Staff Officer of Military Police in 24 Infantry Division. She is a graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College. She has participated in United Nation Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan as a Detachment Commander of Force BANMP 5 from November 2009 to November 2010. She is happily married with Major Mohammad Mahfuzul Islam, G+, Artillery and blessed with a son.

Bangladesh Force Marine Unit- A Name of Reliance Along the River White Nile

Lieutenant Commander Khondoker Md Shafiquer Rahman, (X), BN

Introduction

Bangladesh Force Marine Unit is the only Naval component operating as a military contingent in UNMISS (United Nations Mission in South Sudan) contributed by Bangladesh Navy. It operates as a specialist tactical unit under the Force Headquarters. The task and responsibilities of BANFMU is distinctive in nature and cannot be equated to other formed unit of UNMISS. It comprises of naval/maritime forces with specialist amphibious and marine background personnel. The unit is trained and equipped for operating in hostile and arduous maritime environment. Thus, dependence and reliance on BANFMU by all components of UNMISS is very high. Maintaining situational awareness throughout the area of responsibility remains an essential activity for the mission's military component. This awareness is a prerequisite for the mission's mandated task of protecting UN personnel and assets including civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.

BANFMU is the riverine unit contributed by Bangladesh Navy to UNMISS since 2015. It is located at Juba (Contingent HQ) and Malakal (Contingent Operating Base). The unit consists of 200 personnel and 12 Light Patrol Crafts (LPC). The unit is capable of deploying 2 sub units concurrently in 3 separate areas. BANFMU provides armed escort to UN barges in order to secure movement of UN supplies, equipment and personnel along the Renk - Juba and Akobo - Bentiu river route, which is generally known as OPERATION LIFE LINE. At the same time, BANFMU assists with limited logistic resupply without the dependency on contracted civilian vessels. Apart from that, BANFMU conducts Search and Rescue Operations as and when required. In addition, BANFMU renders Force Protection and transportation facilities to UNMISS Civil and Military pillars.

The task and responsibilities of BANFMU is diversified and needs to be integrated with concerned stakeholders for the smooth and effective operational output. Apart from that as a Force enabler, BANFMU has some implied tasks to do. This paper will highlight mainly upon the operational activities of BANFMU. The background and how BANFMU had been deployed to this mission will be shortly described. Side by side, it's going to focus upon the capabilities and achievements of BANFMU so far. At the same time, the increasing proportion of commitment demanded from BANFMU will also be discussed.

Aim

The aim of this paper is to apprise about the operational activities of BANFMU in light of its proficiencies and obligations.

Background

South Sudan is having a good reserve of hydrocarbon amongst many other natural resources. It was an integral part of Sudan till they got separated on 9th July 2011 by a referendum. The socio economic condition of South Sudan is still a great challenge as the long historic communal violence continues between many ethnic groups. The country stepped into a bloody civil war while the two dominant ethnic groups namely Dinka and Nuer started fighting since April 2013. Mass killing, rape, abduction and abuse of children and women and destructive activities of different ethnicity continue at almost every part of the country. The road communication of the country is rudimentary. Most of the roads were destroyed during the war and still those are yet to be repaired. 80% of the roads become extremely unusable during the rainy season. Hence, the transportation through roadways is very expensive, risky and sometimes impossible. The country is blessed with longest river Nile and 65% of it traverses South to North of the country as river 'White Nile'. Thus, the White Nile offers a great flexibility to transport lifesaving stuffs from the capital Juba to all the way to Northern sectors of the country. United Nations (UN) were involved closely to establish peace in South Sudan since her independence. 'White Nile' becomes the cheapest means to support the Northern sectors for the sustainment of UN troops, different NGOs, UN organizations (WFP, UNDP, WHO etc.) and the IDPs in different POC camps.

UNMISS uses few logistics barges for transportation of daily essentials since 2011. The logistics line was severely interrupted once the war broke out and UNMISS started to face tremendous resistance by the factions' en-route. Till then Force Protection from different Troops Contributing Countries (TCC) were provided. Most of that Force Protection Element (FPE) was provided from regular infantry battalions. Later, it was realized that a specialized task like 'Barge Operation' cannot be mounted by regular force after the incident of December 2014. The barges were abandoned by the FPE in April 2014 while the belligerents attacked on the barge. UN peacekeepers faced severe casualty on that incident. Hence, a marine capable force was felt essential and FMU was formed with specialized trained personnel of Bangladesh Navy. BANFMU consisting of 200 personnel were deployed in the mission area in three phases from April-June 2015. BANFMU-4 joined UNMISS on 12 July 2018 and operating to fulfil the mandated tasks till date. Presently, BANFMU HQ with 90 personnel is stationed in Juba while other 110 personnel with 12 boats are stationed in Malakal.

Mandated Tasks of BANFMU

As per the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) BANFMU has some specified tasks in accordance with CONOPS (Concept of Operation). However, the list of tasks should not be considered as exhaustive; other tasks may be requested by the Force Commander within the limitations of national commitments as mentioned below:-

a. Operational Tasks. The operational tasks are as follows:-

- (1) Provide armed escort to UN barges in order to secure movement of UN equipment and personnel along the river routes between Renk and Juba and between Akobo and Bentiu.
- (2) Collect and report any intelligence which would support the transit of the barges as well as current operations of the Force.
- (3) Be prepared to conduct medical evacuation for the assigned Protection Teams and where other assets are unavailable or unsuitable.
- (4) Be prepared to assist with protecting designated ports and riverine infrastructure.
- (5) Be prepared to provide fire support to ground forces.

b. Secondary Tasks. The secondary tasks for the unit include (but are not limited to):

- (1) Be prepared to assist with limited logistic resupply without the dependency on contracted civilian river vessels.
- (2) Be prepared to conduct search and rescue operations (SAROPs) to assist any person or vessel in distress along navigable waterways in the UNMISS AoR.
- (3) Be prepared to provide riverine transport to MLOs and representatives of other UN pillars (and stores/ equipment) in accordance with priorities set by the Force Commander.

c. Implied tasks. Apart from the abovementioned tasks, in spite of being Force Enabler, BANFMU is solely responsible for its own Base security. In addition, BANFMU needs to ensure the security of UNMISS water point as well as warehouses situated inside BANFMU compound, MALAKAL. Hence, BANFMU is accomplishing its maintenance, logistics and training issues for the smooth conduct of the operational activities at regular basis.

Capabilities of BANFMU

BANFMU is sub divided into 3 Sub FMU for concurrent deployment in 3 different areas. BANFMU has 06 in number Defender Class Boats (DCB) and 06 in number Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIB). A small cadre of FMU comprises of Naval commandos are experts on river craft and boat handling. As a marine unit, BANFMU is capable of operating in a high threat level environment. In a nutshell, the particulars of the sub units are as follows:-

Figure 1 & 2 : Maintenance arrangement of BANFMU Boats



Source : Author's Collection



Source : Author's Collection

- a. Manpower - generally 35 in each sub-units.
- b. Boats - generally 4 (with 3 crews in each boat).
- c. Able to conduct three different tasks concurrently at three different locations which may include simultaneous deployment for FP to OLL convoy, Recce Patrol, CASEVAC etc.
- d. One sub-unit comprising at least two LPCs kept standby 24/7 for immediate deployment.

BANFMU has an integral repair and maintenance capability for the boats. It has dedicated maintenance crew possessing expertise on repair/maintenance of engine, hull, gearbox & transmission, hydraulic and electric equipment. The boats are being lifted by the crane and docked at boat shed as and when required.

Figure 3: Defender Class Boat (DCB) **Figure 4: Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB)**



Source : Author's Collection



Source : Author's Collection

Operational Activities

The operational activities of BANFMU are centered basically on 'Operation Life Line' and Riverine Patrol. The brief of those ops are narrated below:-

a. Operation Life Line. Operation Life Line is one of the most important operations in entire gamut of UNMISS. The main effort of this operation is to provide safe transit of UN contracted barges, her crew and UN staffs through River White Nile from Juba to Malakal up to Renk and vice versa. It is to be mentioned that total 938 km needs to be toured in each leg. After the deployment of BANFMU-4, about 60% days are already spent for Operation life Line till date, which depicts the importance and compactness of the operational commitments of the unit. Total 49 legs completed since 2015 which altogether covered 45,286 km along the river White Nile. In the following figure the entire route has been marked with red color to distinguish the Area of a convoy of in and around 6/7 barges with pusher needs to be provided with force protection in each leg. During dry season the depth of the river reduces resulting grounding of the barges often which makes the operation more time consuming and troublesome. Before each leg, SOI (Sharing of Information) is being issued by the Force Headquarters prior approval from the concerned ministry of South Sudan. However, this SOI does not always suffice for the safe movements for the poor command and

Figure 5 : Entire route of Operation Life Line along river White Nile

Source : OPS Room Map of Force HQ

control scheme of both SSPDF (South Sudan Peoples Defense Force) and SPLA-iO (Sudan People's Liberation Army). Around 21 SSPDF/ SPLA-iO check points encountered en-route in each leg. Each check points needs to be negotiated in a very meticulous way by the AVPD (Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment). Necessary training in this respect is generally imparted prior sailing and on board barge as well. The check points are not always stationary at same place other than big concentration of forces. Thus, it is a hectic task to locate them before proceeding any check point. Both the SSPDF and SPLA-iO don't like crossing check point without informing them. Hence, if anytime the barges cross any check point without their prior notice, situation gets volatile and the AVPD commander got to handle those very adroitly. However, the best practice is, before encountering any check point Military Observers with escorts are being sent for negotiation. The movement of the convoy depends upon the negotiation status. If the concerned stakeholder agrees, then the convoy passes without being stopped. If not, then the convoy needs to be stopped and an inspection team boards the barges for inspection. Generally, a ramified Marine Platoon of 30-35 troops (FMU sub-unit) characterized as Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment (AVPD) team under the command of AVPD commander gets deployed with the convoy of the barges. The general information of AVPD Team as follows:-

- (1) AVPD Team formed by FMU sub-unit (s) boards the barge with appropriate equipment and armament to operate in any sort of hostile environment.
- (2) Permanent firing points/weapon stations with Hesco Parapets are installed onboard barges for protection against small arms firings.
- (3) Each AVPD team is included with a minimum of 2 in number armed boats with three crews.
- (4) AVPD Team has self-sustenance for maximum 30 days.
- (5) Limited maintenance gear for the boats and medical facilities for first aid and very minor injuries are being carried with the AVPD Team.
- (6) For the internal (within AVPD team) and external (with BANFMU HQ, Force/Sector HQs) communication SATPHONE, HF & VHF sets are used.

Figure 6 : Briefing by AVPD Commander before Encountering CP



Source: Author's Collection

Figure 7 : Instructional Period on Life Saving Apparatus



Source: Author's Collection

Figure 8 : Convoy stopped at a Check Point for inspection onboard Barges



Source: Author's Collection

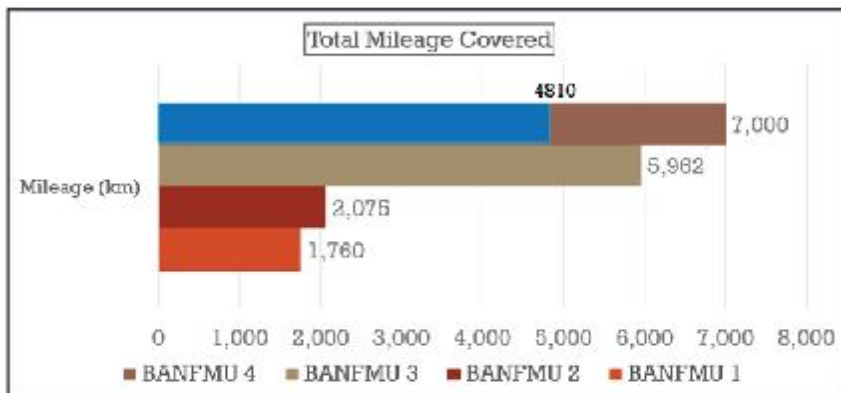
b. **Riverine Patrol.** As per MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), BANFMU provides riverine transport to the Military Observers and other representatives of UN pillars. In addition to the transportation BANFMU also provides Force Protection during the riverine passage.

Figure 9: Boat Convoy while Proceeding for Riverine Patrol



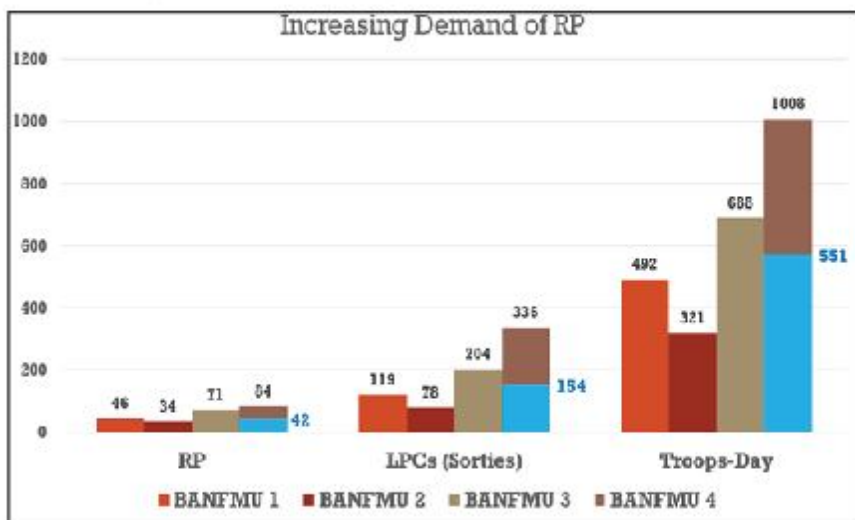
Source: Author's Collection

Generally, 04 in number boats are deployed for every patrol. Around 7 Riverine Patrols are being conducted in each months. However, with the passage of time the commitments in Riverine patrols have increased a lot. In the following figure, the comparison of mileage covered from BANFMU-1 (2015-16) to BANFMU-4(2018-19) has been depicted with a prediction of 7,000 kms, where the blue marked 4,810 kms have already been covered by BANFMU-4 till date. The mileage covered by BANFMU-4 is going to be almost 4 times more than BANFMU-1 with same manpower and resources available.

Figure 10 : Comparison of Riverine Patrols

Source: Author's Collection

Interoperability of BANFMU enhances through the patrols. It is to be mentioned that, both the SSPDF and SPLA-IO factions have come to a common point to foster the peace. Thus, a peace agreement has been signed recently. Consequently, the people driven away from their localities started returning to their native habitation. But, their houses are already burnt down and at the same time they are tremendously suffering from scarcity of food and drinking water. So, the demand of humanitarian assistances is in a rise day by day that in turn raised the increasing demand of riverine patrol by the UN pillars. In the following figure, the increasing demand of Riverine Patrols from BANFMU-1(2015-16) to BANFMU-4(2018-19) has been depicted with a prediction, where the blue marked proportions have already been covered by BANFMU-4 till date.

Figure 11 : Increasing Demand of Riverine Patrols

Source : Author's self-construct

Following are the vital activities been observed during a riverine patrol:-

- (1) Conduct Key Leadership Engagement.
- (2) Conduct CIMIC (Civil-Military Coordination) activities.
- (3) Provide Humanitarian Assistancess.
- (4) Deliver necessary support to various awareness programme.
- (5) Assess the security situation.
- (6) Show increased presence of UNMISS.
- (7) Familiarize with different areas.

The stations mostly visited by BANFMU during the Riverine Patrols are shown in the figure below :-

Figure 12 : The stations of Riverine Patrols visited by BANFMU



Source : Author's self-construct

c. Search and Rescue Operation. On 25 Nov 2018 at about 1130 hrs the duty personnel stationed at BANFMU pier observed a boat sunk on the either (Western) bank of the river. The duty person immediately informed the boat crews and a LPC rushed to the scene of incident within a very short time. All 07 personnel including 02 ladies and one male child of 07 years were rescued and embarked on the BANFMU LPC. The LPC crews tied the sunken wooden boat and towed it up to the landing site. All personnel disembarked at the landing site and BANFMU handed over the boat to them. The boat was wooden which is generally made of palm tree. It seems that the boat might have been sunk for being overloaded. No casualty occurred and personnel of the sunken boat were safe and sound.

Figure 13 & 14 : Rescuing sunken boat on river White Nile



Source : Author's self-construct

d. Night Search & Rescue Operation. As the only riverine component, BANFMU is the first unit to respond in any sort of Search and Rescue operation along the river White Nile. In light of that, on 23 January 2019 BANFMU successfully conducted a Search and Rescue Operation at night in a very short notice. A Speed Boat of SOLIDARITE INGO was moving back from KODOK (63 kms on the northerly direction from MALAKAL) to MALAKAL. On the way back near WAU SHILLUK (18 kms on the northerly direction from MALAKAL) the engine of that boat malfunctioned, and they ran out of fuel. BANFMU received an e-mail from FIOC, Sector North at 2003 hrs on the same day about the incident and were requested to conduct the Search and Rescue Operation. BANFMU completed the necessary preparation within 20 minutes and sailed for the said Operation at 2025 hrs. A Marine Section of 10 personnel with 02 Light Patrol Crafts conducted the Operation. The Marine Section rescued the distressed boat from about 06 km away from BANFMU Pier from the northerly direction. There were 07 personnel including 01 female on board the speed boat. The Marine Section rescued all of them in safe and sound condition. The speed boat was towed by the BANFMU LPC and returned to BANFMU Pier at 2105 hrs. Later on, the distressed personnel were provided with First Aid and necessary associated supports by BANFMU staffs. The quick action undertaken by BANFMU was highly appreciated by the Head of Field Offices, MALAKAL as well as by Headquarters, Sector North. Later on, it was published on UNMISS website as well as in UNMISS intranet which espoused the image of BANFMU as well as Bangladesh in the international arena.

Figure 15 : The Distressed Boat was Towed by BANFMU Boat and brought to the BANFMU Pier with all its Passengers on Board



Source : Author's self-construct

Other Activities

BANFMU has often been tasked to perform various activities like:

a. Conduct Visit of Various Delegation Teams. BANFMU hosted visits of various delegation teams during the tour of duty since deployment. during the visits, the delegation teams were briefed regarding

the operational and other associated activities of BANFMU. Amongst those, visit of Deputy Force Commander, Commander Sector North, Commander Sector South, Head of Field office for MALAKAL, United Kingdom Secretary of State for Defense, Head of Office for Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership form United Nations Headquarters etc are mentionable.

**Figure 16 : Review of Honor Guard-
by the Sector Commander,
Sector North, UNMISS**



**Figure 17 : Signing of Visitors'
Book by the Deputy Force
Commander, UNMISS**



Source : Author's self-construct

b. CIMIC (Civil-Military Coordination) Activities.

Scarcity of drinking water is a tremendous problem in South Sudan. Most of the population are suffering from eater borne diseases. In light of that, BANFMU undertakes Water Purification campaign in order to educate the local personnel regarding the procedure of purifying the water with household kits. The step in this respect taken by BANFMU has widely been accepted and admired by both local commodities and UN pillars.

Figure 18 : Water Purification Campaign by BANFMU



Source : Author's self-construct

c. **Celebrating/Observing different National Days.** All the members of BANFMU demonstrated high level of enthusiasm and morale while celebrating/observing different National Days abroad. Amongst those celebrating Victory Day, Eid-e-Miladunnabi, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Adha are mentionable. Apart from that; National Mourning Day, International Mother Language Day, BDR Carnage incident etc were also observed with due solemnity and resilience.

Figure 19 : Exhibition of Film Show on the Occasion of National Mourning Day, 2018



Figure 20 : Commanding Officer of BANFMU, MALAKAL with the Invited Guests on Victory Day Celebration, 2018



Source : Author's self-construct

d. **Extinguishing Bush Fire.** On 18 February, 2018 at about 1245 hrs some unknown local people suddenly set fire on dry Bushes to clear the area for cultivation which was first discovered and reported by duty staff at OP-4. The fire rapidly spread out and generated dense smoke. The North-Easterly wind drove the fire towards BANFMU camp. In a very short time the fire reached within 50 feet of BANFMU perimeter where it was contained and eventually extinguished from outside, BANFMU perimeter using water pump and hosepipe. At the same time, BANFMU fire truck, portable diesel pump and submersible pumps were deployed along with fire hoses from inside the BANFMU camp. After hectic efforts for 1 hour and 30 minutes the fire could be controlled. As UNMISS water point and ES-KO warehouse are situated inside BANFMU compound, the timely dowsing of the fire was of much significance. The prompt and effective actions taken by BANFMU in this respect was highly appreciated by all stakeholders of UNMISS, MALAKAL.

Figure 21 : The Bushes around BANFMU, MALAKAL got Burnt due to Massive Fire



Source : Author's self-construct

Achievements

BANFMU, through the professional and courageous presence in UNMISS, could achieve significant feat since her deployment. The mentionable are:

a. **News Coverage by Reuters.** Peacekeeping activities under the mandate of UNMISS are being covered by several international medias. In connection to that, journalist of international media REUTERS accompanied by representatives from different organization of United Nations took part in Riverine Patrol with BANFMU on 08 September, 2018. On completion of that patrol a report was published in the website of Reuters mentioning the contribution of BANFMU in Peacekeeping operations. This report upheld the image of BANFMU as well as Bangladesh in the International arena.

Figure 22 : Pictorial view of riverine patrol along river White Nile published in the official website of REUTERS



Source : Author's self-construct

b. **Achieving Confidence of the Local Populace.** Being the Riverine Unit BANFMU has the opportunity to access the localities while participating in Riverine patrols. During the ground phase of the patrol many a times the local people seek medical help from BANFMU which is being provided to them always. At the same time, conducting CIMIC(Civil-Military Coordination) activities widened the acceptance of BANFMU to the local residents. Thus, the friendly gesture of the local people always enhance the morale of the troops of BANFMU which in turn provides positive output to the deliverance of operational commitments.

Figure 23 & 24 : The Friendly Gesture of the Local Authorities and General People Clearly Depicts the Eclectic Acceptance of BANFMU



Source : Author's self-construct

c. **Friendly Sports Meet.** In spite of being the Force Enabler and having a strength of only 110 personnel in MALAKAL, BANFMU has already proved their proficiency in the arena of Sports. BANFMU became Runner Up in the Volleyball UN meet by defeating the Battalions having strength of 800 troops. Apart from that, BANFMU beaten United Kingdom Engineers in a friendly volleyball match. BANFMU also took part in friendly cricket matches with Indian Horizontal Military Engineer Company and United Kingdom Engineers, while BANFMU beaten both the teams and netted the respect from all the TCCs (Troops Contributing Country) as a sports giant in MALAKAL.

Figure 25 : BANFMU Receiving the Runner Up Trophy after the Final Match of Volleyball UN Meet



Source : Author's self-construct

Figure 26 : An Exciting Moment during the Cricket Match between BANFMU and Indian Horizontal Military Engineer Company



Source : Author's self-construct

Conclusion

The tasks and responsibilities of BANFMU is varied and diversified in nature. Being the marine component, its job specification is not at all bounded within maritime activities. BANFMU always extends its cooperation for the Humanitarian assistance to the penurious people. Hence, BANFMU constantly renders transportation and Force protection support for the enhanced peace progression. The increasing rate of Riverine Patrols and associated operational commitments narrates the consummate reliability of BANFMU in UNMISS. Supporting the Key Leadership Engagement during the Riverine Patrols and providing limited logistic resupply without the dependency upon civilian contracted barges illustrates the optimistic approach of BANFMU. Rendering assistance to the UN civil pillars as well the local populace made the activities of BANFMU more vibrant and acceptable. Thus, BANFMU gains the recognition of the local stakeholders of South Sudan and enjoys their friendly gesture.

BANFMU is operating under the blue helmets for last three and half a year in UNMISS. During this short period by the grace of Almighty BANFMU could achieve the confidence of all stake holders while delivering the services those are being necessitated by the Force Headquarters. BANFMU being a small component thriving hard to disburse its duties and responsibilities relentlessly. Though the main effort of BANFMU is to provide FPE (Force Protection Element) on board UNMISS contracted barges, but by the utmost

demonstration of professionalism, BANFMU is performing Riverine Patrols, Search and Rescue Operations, CIMIC (Civil-Military Coordination) activities, Sports meets concurrently. At the same time, BANFMU successfully accomplishes the implied tasks delegated unto it which clearly portrays the positive outlook of the troops deployed in Bangladesh Force Marine Unit to uphold the national flag of Bangladesh in the international arena.

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Brief Biography



Lieutenant Commander Khondoker Md Shafiquer Rahman, (X), BN was commissioned in Bangladesh Navy on 01 June, 2009 in the Executive Branch. He received Bachelor Degree from the Bangladesh University of Professionals. He completed Executive Officers' Basic Course from BNS ISSA KHAN, Ship's Diver Officers' Course from BNS NIRVIK, Junior Staff Course from Junior Staff Training Institute and Group Testing Officers' Course from Inter Services Selection Board in Bangladesh. Apart from that, he completed International Diver Course from Turkey and Underwater Demolition Technology Course from China. He served as Executive Officer on board BNS CHITRA. He is a Navy Diver and served as a Diving Officer in BNS SHAHEED MOAZZEM and BNS HAJI MOHSIN. Presently, he is performing the duties as Operations Officer of Bangladesh Force Marine Unit, MALAKAL deployed in United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

Contribution of Bangladesh in DDR/RR-CVR in MONUSCO: A New Challenge for Female Peacekeepers

Instructor Lieutenant Commander Swabnam Perveen, psc, BN

Introduction

Bangladesh has a considerable role in maintaining peace in international arena since beginning of peacekeeping mission in conflicting states or nations.

It is known that Bangladesh is the largest contributor of both male and female Peacekeeper in the United Nation Mission.¹ Female officers are working independently as Military Staff Officers in international arena, and of course we will feel good even if we hear that a female peacekeeper has died to save a life. We will feel

Photo 1 : Showing Respect to the Matryed Peacekeepers



Source : Author's collection

better when we will be shown respect nationally and internationally. There is no doubt that she is luckier to die as saviour. In reality the prescribed method of dying for any living being is when Providence decrees. It is a well-known fact that Bangladesh has been contributing in UN Mission over three decades. At least, 146 Bangladeshi peacekeepers have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace, but she doesn't stop to contribute in UN Mission. She also began her new journey in Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDR/RR) of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) from 2018.²

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo currently, there are over 80 armed groups operating in eastern DRC. In North Kivu Province alone, civilians report hundreds of security violations at the hands of these armed groups to the UN each

Photo 2 : A Local Inhabitant of DRC



Source : Author's collection

month including extortion, coercion, sexual violence, abduction, and forced recruitment into armed groups. "The Congolese national army (FARDC) and police (PNC) are equally abusive, routinely committing approximately half of the violations recorded by the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC."³

Photo 3 : Peacekeepers in DRC



Source : Author's collection

In this unstable security situation, Bangladesh has played a vital role to deploy one female military officer in DDR/RR in MONUSCO. Bangladesh is playing a large role to Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of the Ex-combatants. It is mentionable that in 2018/2019 within five months DDR/RR team received 711 Congolese combatants, 911 Foreign combatants including dependents. DDR/RR team also succeeded in Repatriated 1383 Foreign Ex combatant with their family from Kanyabayonga, Walungu, and Kisangani in November 2018.

Short Description of DDR/RR-CVR

What is DDR/RR-CVR? DDR/RR means Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration, and Resettlement of Ex-Combatant. Nowadays DDR/RR is known as DDR/RR-CVR, 'MONUSCO is applying a new 2nd generation DDR Strategy termed Community Violence Reduction (CVR), featuring a community-based approach to reducing the high levels of violence within DRC communities and an end goal of obtaining a corresponding increase in security and stability.'⁴ The objective of the

Photo 4 : Local Newspaper of DRC Highlighting the Peacekeepers



Source : Author's collection

DDR process is to contribute to security and stability in post-conflict environments so that recovery and development can begin. Through a process of comprehensively disarming combatants, preparing them for civilian life and providing them with opportunities for sustainable social and economic reintegration, DDR aims to support this high-risk group so that they become stakeholders in the peace process.⁵

Operational Environment of DDR/RR-CVR. It is mentionable that DDR/RR is led by Civilian Team Leader. It has approximately 160 staff including International Military Staff, International Civilian staff and National staff but the majority part are Congolese national staff. The DDR/RR national headquarters are based in

Photo 5 : Inspection of arms in DRC



Source : Author's collection

Goma with 11 provincial team sites. These team sites are established nearly with MONUSCO military contingents to ensure the security of DDR/RR staff and the ex-combatants. At present, many military officers are working as Military Liaison Officer from different countries like Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Uruguay, Bangladesh, Nepal, India etc. There are also many International Civilian staff from Moorish's, Russia, Indonesia, Cameron, Bhutan, Switzerland, Kenya, Morocco, Philippine, etc.

Photo 6 : Map of DRC



Source : Author's collection

Photo 7 : UNPK helicopter in DRC



Source : Author's collection

Methods to Convince Combatants. The different types of method to convince combatant to voluntarily surrender through DDR/RR process are as follows:-

- a. **Distribution of Gifts.** DDR/RR team distributes various gift items like Umbrella, T-Shirt, Cap, Bag to the mass people for building awareness through Public Sensitization program.
- b. **Distribution of Leaflets.** There are different types of rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many of them are living in a remote area into the forest. DDR/RR distributes leaflets with messages for ex-combatants by hand or dropped by helicopter.
- c. **Radio Broadcasting.** In case of difficult target areas they transmit messages through radio broadcasts on 14 mobile FM radios also broadcast on Radio Okapi to the Ex-Combatant
- d. **Direct Negotiation.** DDR/RR also conducts direct negotiations with combatants in convincing the combatants to go back to civilian life through DDR/RR process.
- e. **Rehabilitation Program.** DDR/RR initiates different types of Community Violence Reduction (CVR) program through DDR/RR-CVR project like Launch of Solar Lights projects, Beni Stadium rehabilitation project, Brick Field project, Income Generating project, Soap factory project etc.

Photo 8 : UNPK Field office



Source : Author's collection

Contribution of Bangladesh in DDR/RR-CVR

Deployment of Female Officer. There are many male military officers from different countries like Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Uruguay, Nepal, India etc but only single Female Officer from Bangladesh is working in DDR/RR in MONUSCO. It is mentionable that Bangladesh become a pioneer to deploy female Officer in this section. From July 2018 one female officer from Bangladesh Navy is working as Senior Military Liaison Officer to DDR/RR in Force Headquarters, GOMA.

Contribution in Surrender and Repatriation. Until the end of November 2018 within 5 months DDR/RR received 84 Congolese combatants, 162 Congolese Child Associate with Armed Group(CAAG) and Repatriated 132 Foreign combatants.

Table 1: Statistics of 5-month Surrender and Repatriation(Source:DDR/RR report)

SUBJECT	Ex-Combatant (XC)		Child Associate with Armed Group (CAAG)		DEPENDANT(Dep)		CIVILIAN (Civ)		TOTAL
	Foreign XC	Congolese XC	Foreign CAAG	Congolese CAAG	Foreign Dep	Congolese Dep	Foreign Civ	Congolese Civ	
Surrendered to DDR/RR	60	91	0	162	65	20	8	0	406
Surrendered NETTO	60	84	0	162	65	20	8	0	399
Transfer to Petit Nord (Goma)	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Received from another field office	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Repatriated	57	5	0	0	63	12	0	0	137
Transferred to Pre-DDR/PNDDR/III	2	73	0	0	0	4	0	0	79
Transferred to CP/UNHCR	0	0	0	145	0	0	8	0	153

Source : Author's self-construct

Contribution in CVR Project. There are many Rehabilitation and Resettlement program for Ex combatant under the Community Violence Reduction(CVR) program of DDR/RR. Few of those ongoing projects are

Photo 9 : Different activities of UNPK



Source : Author's collection

Vocational Training on Solar Electricity, Rugenda Market, Bukano-Mulo road, Socio-economic reintegration and psychosocial support to ex-combatants,

Illumination of Panda District, Illumination of Nzuma District, Illumination of Road Axis from Hotel Okapi to Rond-Point project etc. 'Through 25 DDR-CVR' projects, totalizing 26,175 beneficiaries are implemented in 7 regions of the DRC. These projects are comprising high intensity labor/infrastructure, vocational trainings, security and stabilization, income generating, and child protection offer an alternative to a life within an armed group. As direct beneficiaries of DDR-CVR projects are nearly 1,800 venerable women, 1,250 ex-combatants, 2,400 young at Civil Affairs finally, 91 sensitization and mobilization projects are targeting more than 3,75,214 community members. These projects are reaching to build peace culture, social cohesion and peaceful cohabitation between communities and communities.⁶

Photo 10 : UNPK in DRC



Source : Author's collection

Photo 11 : UN Female PK in DRC



Source : Author's collection

Is There any Challenge for Female?

We know that DDR/RR deals with ex-combatants/Armed groups. Sometimes rebel groups try to trap UN Peacekeepers by showing their interest to surrender. There are many incidents of Kidnap, Looting, physical assault etc. of UN Peacekeepers. That is why it is more challenging for female peacekeepers to work in the DDR/RR-CVR section.

Constraint to Deploy Female Peacekeepers

Common ethical dilemma that has impact upon female officers for making the decision to join in the mission are as follows:

a. **Unwillingness.** Everybody wants to live a carefree, happy and easy life with family and friends. Mission area means to work in a risky zone. Many times, we experienced that female officer are not willing to participate in UN Mission for insecure feelings. Sometimes members of the family or guardian like a husband, or parent do not allow the female officers to go to a war-affected country for a long time. This tension becomes stronger when they hear any bad news of casualty of the mission area.

b. **Lack of support from Family.** In absence of joint family children always remain at close proximity with the parent. They don't feel comfortable to stay with the grandparent. It is very difficult for a working mother to away from her children for a long time. Though it is very common in our society for a working father to enjoy professional opportunity without any obstacle, but working mother needs to sacrifice for her family.

c. **Lack of Qualification and Experience.** Participation in the mission of female officers depends on vacancy and required qualification asked by the United Nations. Many times it happened that female officers are willing to join in UN Mission, but they don't have the required qualification and experience.

Is There any Medicine for Encouragement?

There are neither any special medicine of Doctor nor a magical stick of Magician to encourage both female and male organizations. Both side cooperation may be as follows:-

a. **Awareness Build-up and Training.** Organization may arrange Mission related workshop, short and long-term training, documentary show, Mission journal, successful stories of peacekeepers etc. Besides, this female officer can enhance their knowledge and experience by participating in different mission related workshop and online training at their own responsibility.

Photo 12 : Briefing session of UNPK **Photo 13 : UN female PK in DRC**



Source : Author's collection



Source : Author's collection

b. **The Flexibility of Rules.** There are no policy for military officers to bring family in Mission area. Above all, those who are working as military staff officers, their leave facilities are less than MILOB, Contingent members, Civilian International Staff and National staff. This situation becomes complicated for Female peacekeeper when her kids or husband become ill. She neither can manage leave nor can bring a family in the mission area whereas many civilian international staffs are living in the mission area with their families. Considering the requirement of female military staff officer organization may flexible rules for them to allow families in the mission area for a short period of time with their own risk or may enhance leave facilities.

c. **Self Help and Family Support.** If anyone want wishes to contribute in UN Mission, he/she has to be determined. In the contest of a dynamic world there is less opportunity to depend on others. Everyone needs to manage everything on their own. Even in the family a husband or children may feel a burden to wife or mother if she every time depends on her husband or children. No Super Man or Spider-Man will come in our life to make everything easy. Female officers themselves

have to be determined and take initiative to work as humanitarian assistance and savior of the helpless people in the national and international arena. Members of the family may contribute more to ease the challenging journey of female peacekeepers.

Photo 13 : UN female PK under trg in DRC



Source : Author's collection

Photo 14 : UN female PK with family



Source : Author's collection

Conclusion

Bangladesh is committed to maintain world peace and is always with the international community to contribute for establishing peace and harmony of mankind.

Photo 15 : Local Family of DRC



Source : Author's collection

Photo 16 : Refugees of DRC



Source : Author's collection

As mentioned before that DDR/RR-CVR is led by the civilian officer where mostly civilians predominate. Maybe the number of military personnel are less but DDR/RR-CVR is completely dependent on military. Starting from the liaison with the different armed group, surrendering, screening, providing escort to Ex combatant or DDR/RR staff in the field, patrolling, receiving arms/ammunition, destruction of weapon, security of the transit camp etc everything is done by military personnel. In doing so Bangladeshi contingent also plays important role to support DDR/RR-CVR activities in MONUSCO. Both Bangladeshi male and female peacekeepers are working together to fulfill the mandate of the United Nations and Bangladesh.

Photo 17 : Target Aiming by UNPK Photo 18 : Briefing of UNPK with the Help of OPS Map



Source : Author's collection



Source : Author's collection

It may be mentioned here that at present there are many female officers from different countries working as military staff officer for instance from Pakistan-09, India-06, Nepal-04, Egypt-04, Malaysia-06, Uruguay-04, Morocco-04. But from Bangladesh there are only 02 female officers are working as military staff officer. In this case Bangladesh may deploy more female in UN mission as military staff officer in order to enhance their experience and knowledge by working independently in a multinational environment. In doing so, besides the service support to the female officers themselves have to be the initiator and determined.

We have to keep in our mind that if we want to hit the target, we have to grip our gun with two hands but if we want to miss, we can use one. There is no alternate way to create a better world without contribution by the women. To build or to ruin nation both male and female participation is required. Participation of a few female officers is not enough to establish peace and security of any war affected country. We don't want that the way women, children and mass people of Bangladesh have suffered in 1971, any single person of the world will suffer in the same way. We are ready to enlarge our helping arm towards humanity.

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Brief Biography



Instructor Lieutenant Commander Swabnam Perveen, psc, BN was commissioned from Bangladesh Navy in the Education Branch on 01 February 2007 with two years ante dated seniority. In her academic background she is a legal specialized officer and has done her LLB (Hons) in 2002 and subsequently completed LLM in 2004 from Islamic University, Kushtia, Bangladesh. She also completed enrolment course as Lawyer from Bangladesh Bar Council, Dhaka. In her defence career she has a diverse experience of service in different capacities under various command and Headquarters. Her service as Staff Officer and instructional duties include, Area Law Officer to Administrative Authority Dhaka, Staff Officer Law to Commander BN Fleet, Adjutant BN School and College Chittagong to Commander Chittagong Naval Area, Staff Officer Law to Commodore Superintendent Dockyard, Staff Officer Law to Naval Headquarters etc. Lt Cdr Swabnam is also a graduate of Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, Bangladesh. Presently, she has been participating in United Nation Peacekeeping Mission in MONUCSO (DR Congo) as Senior Military Liaison Officer to the Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration Repatriation Resettlement-Community Violence Reduction (DDR/RR-CVR) section. She is happily married with S M Fakrul Alam.

Journey of Bangladesh Aviation Transport Unit (BANATU) in MONUSCO

Wing Commander A.K.M Rahmat Ullah, psc, GD (N)

Introduction

Bangladesh Aviation Transport Unit (BANATU) started rendering its contribution to international peacekeeping operation under the auspices of MONUSCO from 25 June 2010 with one C-130B aircraft. The contingent's task is to provide MONUSCO with the air transportation capability while operating in accordance with the mission's concept of employment and within the scope of Letter of Assists (LOA). The tasks include, but not limited to, all sorts of administrative and logistic support flights and support for airmobile operations.

Performing all these demanding tasks safely, efficiently and timely, thousands of miles away from home country, no doubt is a mammoth task. These tasks become more complex because the operational environment in Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) and the facilities/supports/threat available/present at different places where BANATU operates offer their own challenges. All challenges are unique and need to be addressed every now and then. Despite these challenges, BANATU has been performing all its mandated tasks in MONUSCO relentlessly without any major incident or accident. It was only possible due to the dedication and hard work of all its members since deployment, and continuous support and guidance from Bangladesh Air Force Headquarters. As a recognition, this contingent has achieved the trust and confidence of MONUSCO management and earned appreciation from the highest level of mission management multiple times.

Photo 1 : C-130B Aircraft



Source : Author's Collection

Aim

The aim of this paper is to discuss the achievement of BANATU.

Due to the inherent capability to deploy anywhere in the globe with tons of aerial cargo and passengers at a short notice, MONUSCO has been using BANATU C-130B aircraft as a strategic air asset from the beginning. As a result, despite being positioned in Bunia, a North-Eastern city of DR Congo, BANATU has marked its footsteps across the whole DR Congo and beyond by operating from 20 different airfields.

Photo 2 : Map of Bunia



Source : Author's Collection

Photo 3 : Cargo Loading in the Aircraft



Source : Author's Collection

Considering the importance of C-130B aircraft, Joint Mission Co-ordination Centre (JMCC) located at MONUSCO Headquarter in Goma plans all its tasks. The tasks include administrative and logistic support flights, humanitarian aid distribution, cargo re-supplies, troops movements, troops insertion and extractions, transportation of Dangerous Goods (DG), Quick Reaction Force (QRF) response, VIP transportation, medical transportation (MADEVAC/CASEVAC), search and rescue, air reconnaissance, support for airmobile operations, patrol observation and monitoring flights.

Challenges in Operation

No journey is without challenges. BANATU has also encountered few challenges in operation, maintenance and administrative aspects. However, with the contribution from dedicated crew and guidelines from Air Headquarters the contingent has mitigated those and continued its sustained operation with only one aircraft.

Weather. In DR Congo weather pattern is quite severe and unpredictable. Such whims of nature where weather frequently changes so suddenly in uncontrolled airspaces of DR Congo puts additional pressure to the aircrew of BANATU, especially during long flights. In addition, due to higher elevation of DR Congo the UV spectrum is also very high, which increases extra physical strain to the operating crew.

Photo 4 : Aircraft Landing in the Runway



Source : Author's Collection

Terrain and Runway. DR Congo possesses mountainous terrain with thick vegetation, which is very different than that of Bangladesh. Here, many of the runways:

- a. Are surrounded with mountains, and many have volcanoes, hills, and lakes on the approach path.
- b. Are situated over the mountains like tabletops. In general, the elevation of the runways varies from 4000 to 5000 feet above sea level.
- c. Have slopes between the ends as high as 74 feet. Even some of them are uneven.
- d. Are unpaved and have uneven surface.
- e. Are of 5500 feet or lesser length.

Airspace. DR Congo has complete uncontrolled airspace. Most of the airfields lack adequate navigational aids. Moreover, this country lacks sufficient and qualified air traffic controllers. To make situation worse, many of the traffics and the air traffic controllers often communicate in French. All these factors, forces BANATU crew to remain extra vigilant to avoid any midair collision.

Facilities. Storage of facilities at different runways put BANATU aircrew to face a lot of challenges.

- a. Many of the airfields that C-130B aircraft lands do not have:
 - (1) MONUSCO security forces. Operating within a war-ravaged country in a hostile environment where militias, fired at aircraft in the past, are very active puts the wide-bodied aircraft like C-130 and its crew at risk.
 - (2) Minimum Emergency Crash and Rescue (ECR) facilities from neither MONUSCO nor Civil Aviation Authority of DR Congo (RVA) exists. As such, operating from such airfields possess considerable risk factor for the crew.
- b. In whole DR Congo, night landing facilities are available only in two airports. Unfortunately, both of them are far away from the primary operating base of BANATU. As a result, landing back at primary operating base well before sunset adds extra pressure on the crew.

Contagious Diseases. DR Congo is a country ravaged by contagious diseases which is amply reflected in the statistics given below:-

- a. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the risk assessment of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), especially in the North-Eastern provinces of DR Congo, is currently very high at both the national and regional levels. Until 11 February 2019, a total of 811 EVD cases were identified in DR Congo, among which 750 confirmed and 61 probable cases. Out of these cases, total recorded deaths were 510 with a fatality rate of 63%. Moreover, recently two EVD cases including one death at Bunia city and the other close by (within 13 km) was

reported. The overall picture depicts the rapid engulfment of the main operating areas including the primary operational base of BANATU under very high risk of EVD, which is extremely easy to get transmitted. Such a frightening situation of a fatal disease puts extra pressure on the crew and calls for continuous precaution from all members of BANATU and other BAF contingents as a whole.

b. Concurrently, DR Congo is also experiencing other epidemics like cholera, vaccine-derived poliomyelitis and a long-term humanitarian crisis.

Besides, the security situation in Ituri and North Kivu province i.e. main operating areas of C-130B aircraft at times limit the implementation of operational activities.

Operational Achievements

BANATU has been mitigating all the above-mentioned challenges with utmost professionalism, hard work and self-discipline. As a result, by 31 January 2019, BANATU has logged 6616:10 flying hours, transported 1,04,328 passengers and 11,305.824 tons of cargo.

a. Passengers were mostly troops, ex-combatants, prisoners, casualties, stranded UN staffs from other mission, transporting VIPs like Minister of Defence DR Congo etc. In fact, due to C-130B aircraft's higher passenger lifting capability than other aircrafts of MONUSCO, this contingent traditionally shouldered the major share of transporting troops during military contingents' deployment/rotation/repatriation.



Source : Author's Collection

b. Cargo ranged from infrastructure building materials, humanitarian assistance goods, armoured personnel carriers (APC), fuel bowsters, SUVs, pickups, trucks, water trailers, fork lifters, tractors and K-Loaders, different types of containers, electoral goods, rations, human remains etc. This figure also includes 2,119.135 tons of different Dangerous Goods (DG) such as bombs, arms and ammunitions.

c. It's inherent flexibility to be able to reconfigure from cargo to troop and vis-a-vis within a short notice and anywhere proved to be of high demand in performing different demanding tasks in mission area.

Special Achievements

a. It is the versatility of C-130B aircraft and dedication of BANATU personnel that made the evacuation of stranded MENUB personnel

from Burundi. The country had been suffering from civil war and military just staged a coup. At this juncture, MENUB personnel got stranded and were planned to be evacuated. This contingent was tasked to evacuate them from Bujumbura (capital of Burundi) while the runway was still under the control of the rebel forces, forcing all international

flights to refuse landing there. In that volatile situation, BANATU with utmost professionalism, provided critical evacuation flight for those stranded personnel and upheld its mission mandate.

b. BANATU has shown remarkable performance to support UNMISS during crisis in Juba, South Sudan. BANATU C-130B was the first UN aircraft to land at Juba with UN support, which was appreciated by global media and mission management.

Photo 6 : MENUB Personnel Embarking in the Aircraft



Source : Author's Collection

Photo 7 : Maintenance of Aircraft



Source : Author's Collection

Photo 8 : Maintenance of Aircraft



Source : Author's Collection

Maintenance Competency of BANATU

As per LOA, this contingent has to keep the lone C-130B aircraft flyable for 25 days and fly 80:00 hours on average a month. Historically, this contingent surpassed well above the mandated requirement in most of the months. Such sustained air operation with only one aircraft, 7,000 km away from Bangladesh, has been possible due to dedication, enthusiasm, initiative and hard work of all the personnel of BANATU.

To get this record the maintenance crew had to adopt new techniques, procedures and maintenance activities with the changing environments. Anticipated logistics requirement at overseas for sustained operation are now streamlined. Smooth maintenance is possible due to relentless effort through careful planning and its implementation supported by Air Headquarters.

Recognition Received by BANATU

In recognition of the distinguished service rendered to MONUSCO, BANATU received couple of times Force Commanders Unit Citation. BANATU has also been assessed as an outstanding unit for operational readiness during Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). Crews have received appreciations from Chief Aviation Officer (CAVO) as well as Chief of Air Staff (COAS) commendations in number of instances due to their outstanding professionalism and dedication to the service.

Photo 9 : Unloading of Goods from Aircraft



Source : Author's Collection

Photo 10 : Unloading of Container from Aircraft



Source : Author's Collection

Enhancing the Image of Bangladesh

The C-130B is the only flag carrier of Bangladesh, which operates all over DR Congo, even beyond DR Congo like Uganda, South Sudan, Burundi and Rwanda. This enormous capability has boosted the image of Bangladesh to a great extent in the international arena under the umbrella of UN.

Photo 11 : Exterior View of Aircraft During Night Flying



Source : Author's Collection

Photo 12 : Interior View of Cockpit During Night Flying



Source : Author's Collection

Conclusion

BANATU has proved its importance and professionalism in all arena of MONUSCO operations. As a result, this contingent has been praised and received lot of recognition from different corner. BANATU also retains good flight safety record without any major incident or accident. Challenges like maintaining serviceability of single aircraft, having limited maintenance

facilities, unpredictable weather pattern with uncontrolled airspace, critical airfields, threat and facilities available etc could only be possible to overcome by the courage, dedication, sincerity and high professionalism of all the members of this contingent.

BANATU has been playing a vital role to shape the image of Bangladesh in international arena. The operational environment of DR Congo is considered as a desired place for any military transport pilot to fly, as it involves many challenges and builds tremendous experiences that increases the efficiency of the crew. Operation in DR Congo also provide the other operating crew lot of experience in terms of maintenance and logistics management. The appreciations received by BANATU from different corner projects professional efficiency and commitment of Bangladesh Air Force personnel. All these contributions and capabilities make this contingent very important in accomplishing MONUSCO mandate i.e. supporting to establish peace and stability in DR Congo.

Brief Biography



Wing Commander A K M Rahmat Ullah joined Bangladesh Air Force on 31 December 1996. He was commissioned in GD (N) Branch on 24 May 1999 from Bangladesh Air Force Academy. He has completed his MSc (MS) from Bangladesh University of Professionals. He attended various professional courses at home and abroad. He held various appointments during his career in BAF in different capacities. He has served as Navigation Instructor in the BAF Academy and Navigator Leader of 3 Squadron, BAF. The officer has also served at Special Security Force as Assistant Director. He has flown more than 3600:00 hours as navigator. He has participated in UN Peace Keeping Mission in DR Congo as navigator of C-130B aircraft. The officer has completed Air Staff Course from Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur and Malaysian Command and Staff Course from Malaysia. Prior to serving as Navigator Leader at Bangladesh Aviation Transport Unit (BANATU) in DR Congo, he served as Officer Commanding, 2 Field Unit and Deputy Director, Directorate of Air Intelligence. He has visited India, Pakistan, KSA, Ukraine, Czech Republic, China, Maldives, Malaysia and Thailand. He is married and blessed with two sons and a daughter.

Deployment of BAF Female Pilot in DR Congo: A New Horizon of Women Empowerment

Squadron Leader Nayma Haque, GD (P)

Introduction

Bangladesh is committed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since the Millennium Declaration by the United Nations in 2000, along with other 180 member nations to promote "gender equality and women empowerment" is one of the most vital issues amongst those development goals. As per the commitment, Bangladesh has shown appreciable efforts to promote women empowerment in both of its government and non-government sectors. This progress was highlighted in the number of working women increased to 18.6 million in 2016-17 from 16.2 million in 2010. As per the Global Gender GAP report Bangladesh secured 48th position among 149 countries in 2018, whereas India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and Pakistan remain at 108, 100, 105, 122 and 148 positions respectively. This change didn't happen overnight. Whether it is government or non-government, all agencies have adopted policies and put up their efforts to bring this remarkably positive change in the society of Bangladesh since the millennium.

As a stakeholder of the nation, Bangladesh Air Force has also contributed immensely in this regard. Just when the United Nations came up with the Millennium Declaration, Bangladesh Air Force became the pioneer in the induction of female officers in the armed forces in 2000. And yet again in the year 2018, BAF became the pioneer in sending two female pilots in its Utility Aviation Unit in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). BAF is contributing to UN Peace Keeping Mission in DR Congo since 2003. After almost a decade of sending the first set of female peacekeepers in DR Congo, BAF has entered into the open challenge of deploying female pilots in the international arena. When UN itself is striving towards gender parity as only 3% of military personnel are female amongst the UN Military staffs; right at that moment, it was indeed a bold move by BAF to deploy its pioneer female pilots in DR Congo. As the former Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Herve Ladsous remarks, "Women can and must play a leading role in political participation, conflict resolution and the transition from conflict to peace." BAF has surely opened a new horizon of women empowerment by entrusting its first two female military pilots to contribute in a conflict resolution in DRC.

MONUSCO in Ituri Conflict

Bangladesh Air Force contingent is deployed in the Northern sector of Democratic Republic of Congo in the Ituri province. BAF has three contingents of Utility Aviation Unit, Airfield Support Unit and Air Transportation Unit in DRC. The main operating base of BAF contingent in Northern sector is in Bunia and the forward operating base is in Dungu. The Ituri conflict involved a violent relationship between the two ethnic groups of agriculturalist Lendu and pastoralist Hema in the Ituri region of the North-Eastern DRC. While the

infamous 'Ituri conflict' often refers to the major fighting from 1999 to 2003, this fighting existed before and continued since that time. In 2018, with the deterioration in security as President Kabila extended his stay in power, more than 100 people were killed, hundreds of homes were burnt and about 2,00,000 people were forced to flee as aftermath. Bangladesh Utility Aviation Unit with its 06 x Mi-17 Helicopters played a vital and challenging role in the air operations in the Northern sector since the establishment of the peacekeeping mission in DRC by BAF contingent. Year 2018 was extra challenging for the unit not only because it was the pre-election year but also for the very first time this unit had 2 female aircrews in its list of 18. Apart from that, the highest number of female

Photo 1 : Female BAF Officers in DR Congo



Source : Author's Collection

officers was sent for UN peacekeeping mission in DRC in 2018 by BAF. Total 15 female officers of different operational capacities as pilot, air traffic controller, flight following service provider, meteorologist, security officer, engineering officers and air operation control officers served with utmost dedication in their respective sectors throughout the mission's tenure. It was indeed a big leap for BAF as amongst 64 military officers, the percentage of female officers as peacekeepers were almost 23.43% which was higher than that of any contingent operating over the mission area.

Operations in MONUSCO

The year 2018 was a crucial year for operations of MONUSCO in DR Congo. Considering the recent budget constraint, the overall flying hour was considerably less than that of the previous year. But due to tense political and electoral situation, all the missions that took place were of greater importance. Following are the various types of operational missions :-

- a. Troops Insertion and Extraction.
- b. Medical Evacuation/Casualty Evacuation Mission.
- c. Joint Mission Control Cell Support Missions.
- d. Electoral Missions.
- e. Helicopter Landing Site Reconnaissance.

- f. Aerial Reconnaissance Mission.
- g. Admin Support Flight.
- h. Regular Passenger Mission.
- j. UN higher officials & Force Commander's Mission.

All these missions were equally challenging for both male and female aircrews, as the risks involved in such missions are more or less similar to all. The unknown terrain, hostile rebel groups and unpredictable weather are calculated risk part of the missions. And being a female pilot exposure to such situations definitely increased the adaptability skill which is very much necessary for any future operations at home and abroad. Moreover, all these operations were extensively carried out with the help of other female peacekeepers. Even the engineering officer who was a female worked relentlessly under tremendous pressure to keep the helicopters serviceable for the smooth operations in the mission area. This time the women of Congo who are struggling to survive their way out in their male dominating society have seen how much empowered a woman can be. In a place where women are denied from their basic rights, where they are considered only as responsible wives and mothers, there when another woman performs the difficult task of piloting a helicopter or perform any operational task just like their male counterpart, they get a glimpse of hope. The perception of society towards women also begins to change with these small leaps.

Acceptance of Female Pilot in UN

UN has always emphasized on gender parity. In all fields of peacekeeping, women peacekeepers have proven their worth. They have proved that they can perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts. But contribution of a female military pilot in peacekeeping mission is still very much a new concept. Even though, from the very beginning the UN civilian staffs were cordial and open-minded towards this change, there were stereotypical mentalities involved as well. Can a woman take up the physical hardship of flying in hot and humid weather condition under adverse security situation? Is a woman capable of carrying out safe operation considering their mental weakness? What will be their response in crises situation? Lots of questions were answered with the course of time over the past year. And it's not the first time, women in deployment face questions of such nature. But to break the stereotypical mentalities, women must not stop from taking up such roles, where their action and their performance will do all the justification. Though there are also a couple of civil female pilots operating UN chartered aircraft in DR Congo; but amongst the TCCs (Troops Contributing Countries) this was the first time. So the recognition was also overwhelming in this case. 2018 was the 70th year of United Nations Peacekeeping missions. And earlier TCCs have contributed female peacekeepers more in non-combat roles. BAF changed this concept and employed female peacekeepers in a combat role and puts women in the leading role in the conflict zone. And that is why it was widely appreciated by the

UN. Even for the other contingents operating under UN, now have an idea of how a woman can also take up the role of a combatant and can produce equal results like a male.

Photo 2 : Two Female BAF Pilots



Source : Author's Collection

Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) Activities and the Impact

Apart from the operational activities, as a female peacekeeper contributing to CIMIC activities has a great impact on the overall peacekeeping operation. On International Women's Day, the CIMIC activities have improved the inter-personal relationship between the female peacekeepers and the civil UN staffs with the local women. The impact of the presence of a female pilot as peacekeeper in such events is splendid. Female peacekeepers act as role models in the local environment, inspiring women and girls in often male-dominated societies to push for their own rights. When the local women have seen female peacekeepers and female pilots operating in enforcing peace, it helped to reduce conflict and confrontation. Women in blue helmet provide inspiration to the locals. They provide a greater sense of security amongst local women and children. As a female military person, indeed it's a great opportunity to contribute to such communities where women's right is still fable.

Photo 3 : Locals of DR Congo



Source : Author's Collection

Challenges in Operations

Aviation support has been an essential part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations since the establishment of the mission. BANUUA has been providing extensive air support in this regard since its deployment. But there are few extra points that need to cater while deploying female peacekeepers directly in the leading role like being a second in command or in future as Pilot in command of a helicopter. For both, the genders separation from small children, sexual assault, isolation, risks of combat or being taken as hostage and being affected by epidemics like Ebola are of equal concern. The stresses of deployment affect both sexes, but some are profoundly different for women. These include gynaecological issues and female health issues. Though maintaining personal hygiene is important for all but women are more susceptible to get infected by lack of proper sanitation. Accommodation, on the other hand, is another big challenge. Lack of proper accommodation has almost put a barrier in deploying female pilots to any other places other than the Main Operating Base (MOB) and Forward Operating Base (FOB). For example, in 2018, there were several deployments in Goma and Bukavu to support operations in North Kivu province of DRC, where accommodation facilities for the male pilots were also insufficient. As every contingent deployed, doesn't have the provision for female accommodation, this type of constricted situations did not allow to deploy female pilots in remote placements. Also for the same reason in 'Long Switch Off Missions' female pilots were discouraged to be detailed on the first place. Another challenge in operations is the authorities being overprotective for its women employees. To look after the well being of all the employees is definitely praiseworthy. But on the other hand, it must not handicap or cripple the performance of female employees. Often these types of constraints impinge optimum level performance of women in an operational environment.

Photo 4 : A Female Pilot in the Cockpit while Flying in DR Congo



Source : Author's Collection

New Horizon for Women Empowerment

Women have been involved with aviation for a long time but aviation still has a long way to go in pilot gender equality. According to the International Society of Women Airline Pilots, over 5% of airline pilots worldwide are female. All over the world the number of female military pilots is very less. Bangladesh got her first female military pilot in 2014 and first female commercial pilot in 1977. Women in aviation have to work very hard to prove their worth in the male dominating aviation industry. The first American woman appointed to a major ambassadorial post abroad Clare Booth Luce wrote, "Because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed. If I fail, no one will say, She doesn't have what it takes. They will say, Women don't have what it takes". This is pretty much applicable for women in all profession. Still, we live in a world where women need to prove themselves every moment. But the good news is the world has started changing its misogynistic way of vision and perception. And for Bangladesh, being a developing Muslim country this is definitely a new horizon.

Bangladesh Air Force inducted female officers in 2000 and female pilots in 2014. Pilots in air force are like infantries in battlefield. So by inducting female pilots, BAF has shown that women also have what it needs to be in that position. If they are given the opportunity and platform and proper training, women will also flourish like their male counterpart. Moreover deploying female pilots in UN Peacekeeping Mission is another breakthrough. Because Bangladesh is a country where the literacy rate of the female is lower than that of the male. Not only Bangladesh but almost every country of Southeast Asia are facing crisis like child marriage, sexual harassment and social inequality. So now organizations like BAF, when standing up against all these odds, it is indeed opening of a new horizon for women not only in Bangladesh but all

Photo 5 : BAF Female Officers with the Local Girls in DR Congo



Source : Author's Collection

over the world where women are deprived of their basic human rights. As the UN is now carrying out all of its operations on a more humanitarian approach, participation of women in all walks of operation is really necessary. And deploying female military pilot or female peacekeeper is a humble beginning of that approach. Now women are indispensable in the peace process. Because the UN created a platform for women from all over the world and countries like Bangladesh and organizations like BAF are getting opportunities to promote their girls on that very platform.

Conclusion

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres mentioned in one of his statements that "There are 'multiple barriers' including 'systemic discrimination' bias and lack of training, which are keeping the largest generation of girls in human history from reaching their full potential." In connection with his statement when countries like Bangladesh comes forward to eliminate gender stereotypes and takes the lead to promote women empowerment beyond the national border, it is indeed a matter of great hope. Still may be there are lot to be done to establish a system where no longer gender will be an issue. But it is at least the beginning to overcome one of those many 'multiple barriers' in exploring the true potential of girls and women of our generation. As a woman the society creates an invisible wall surrounding us and it is high time we break that glass and bloom to our full potential. Because now for women 'Sky is the Limit'. And to talk about personal contribution, representing the country in the international arena as a female military pilot is a sanctified opportunity. To be able to contribute in women empowerment in such area where women's basic rights are suppressed; is definitely giving them a role model to follow. Women on deployment do a wonderful job in their mission. Discreet attention paid in certain of their needs will further increase their operational capabilities. As women reach higher ranks in military services, they are to be given with more operational tasking to achieve the success in forces goal.

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Brief Biography



Squadron Leader Nayma Haque, GD (P) was commissioned in Bangladesh Air Force on 01 Dec 2011. In her career, she has served in 18 Squadron, 31 Squadron and 1 Squadron BAF. She has completed various courses at home and abroad like Flight Safety Officer's Course and OPTRAM course from India. She served as the first female military pilot in UN peacekeeping mission in DR Congo. Her hobby is reading books and travelling. The officer is presently serving as Squadron Pilot in 1 Squadron, BAF.

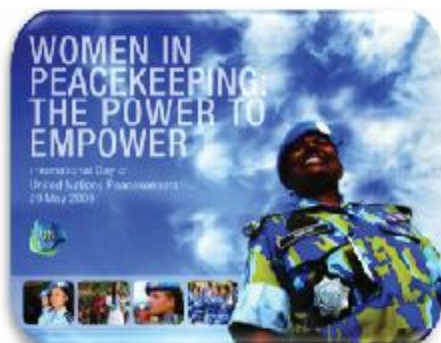
Women and Gender Issues in Peacekeeping Operations

Moushumi Mandal, Additional Superintendent of Police

The tasks of peacekeeping have seen drastic changes for a couple of decades as the 'more complex intra-state' and the 'inter ethnic conflicts' have got the highest priority to be addressed. Peacekeeping mission mandates need to lessen the dependency on military operations and the inclusion of new personnel with more comprehensive skills. This new multi-dimensional approach to peace development implies a gendered approach to meet up the needs of men, women, boys and girls affected by conflict. Effective step can be taken by integrating more women in peace-support operations. Consequently, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has issued a number of policies emphasizing women's role in achieving the mission mandate.

Women have the potential advances in accessing and working with vulnerable populations, particularly with female victims of gender-based violence. Even after the armed conflict is over women and girls face various forms of violence and exploitation. Despite active roles during conflicts and peace development, women continue to be marginalized in peace negotiation, peacekeeping, rehabilitation and the decision-making process. One key mechanism adopted by the United Nations is the 'Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.'

Photo 1 : Poster Display on Bangladesh Police Women Peacekeeping



Source : Author's Collection

Photo 2 : Bangladesh Police Women Peacekeepers Disembarking from Aircraft



Source : Author's Collection

The UN is yet to achieve gender balance or to ensure the full participation of women in peacekeeping. Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action 1999 formed the base for UN Resolution 1325. This calls for mainstreaming of gender perspective into all activities of UN peacekeeping missions. To achieve gender dimension in multi-dimensional peacekeeping, there are needs for effective integration of more women in peace support operations and gender training to peacekeeping personnel. The success of such integration is largely dependent on the political

will and government policy of the troops/police contributing country and the organization of mission support staffing.

The regulation emphasizes the importance of women's participation at all steps of the peace process, from negotiation to the signing of a peace agreement. It prioritises the necessity for pre-deployment Gender and Sexual Exploitation & Abuse (SEA) training for deployed personnel. In many peacekeeping missions gender units, gender advisors and gender focal points are created to ensure regular implementation of gender mainstreaming mechanism. These activities run well only when police, military and civil components of a peacekeeping mission collaborate in a cross cutting manner. Gender mainstreaming is not solely about advocating for women's rights but about critically analyzing challenges and opportunities for reform and reconstructions in the shape of gender roles and inequalities. It is observed that gender-blind peace agreements cannot be considered an inclusive one as they have a partial effect.

Female recruitment and inclusion in peacekeeping operations have slowly improved over the years. Report has been found that sometimes member states recommend men for vacancies and their cultural and institutional impediments persist despite mandates for a gender balance. Hindrance to women's inclusion by member states is the result of traditional male-dominated environment cultured in the security forces as well as the rigid national policy.

Diverse opportunities resonate with women's inclusion in a peacekeeping mission. The first one is to pursue a promising career and, secondly, the economic benefits. Thirdly, an altruistic value driven goal of bringing peace to a war-torn society is a common motivating factor, especially to the African women peacekeepers who experienced conflicts or upheavals in their own areas. Having international work experience and meeting multicultural nations can be placed to a fourth position. Working and living in a demanding international environment can be termed as both an incentive and a challenge. Women peacekeepers are selected by their own state for possessing particular skills needed in mission levels.

While serving in a mission, women also face some disadvantages. As many missions are non-family duty stations, personal and familial relationships affect to a great extent. Reports and experiences of sexual harassment, gender discrimination and biases towards candidates with a humanitarian background also contribute to the less number of women in peacekeeping operations. This is also augmented by the long-standing inability of the UN to address the issues.

It is a challenge for women to obtain positions of leadership in peacekeeping activities. Women chosen to work in high ranks are assigned to work in a safer, less visible or less serious position rather than decision making or front line positions. Mission reports express women's outstanding quality to make the work environment positive and to have sound understanding of mission activities. The male dominated environment with emphasis on 'male patriarchal'

attributes of toughness and combat readiness are considered to be the opposites of the women nature.

Photo 3 : Women Police Peace-keepers in the Operational Area



Source : Author's Collection

Photo 4 : Women Police Peace-keepers Giving Humanitarian Aid to the Needy Persons



Source : Author's Collection

Now Bangladesh holds the top position in contributing female police officers to the UN peacekeeping operations in Formed Police Units. Female peacekeepers of Bangladesh act there as the key driving force to reduce gender-based violence, conflict and confrontation. They induce the sense of security, especially in women and children, mentor female police officers in the local area, help in empowering women in the host country, and promote social cohesion. Presently, 123 female police officers of our country are working in 4 UN Peacekeeping Missions including Darfur, Mali, DR Congo and South Sudan. To fulfill the UN demand for 20% of women employees in the recruitment system, Bangladesh now sends contingents comprising both men and women. The presence of females facilitates communication, information sharing and problem solving; for instance, a woman victim of violence definitely feels ease and comfort to disclose her suffering to a female peacekeeper.

Gender training is an excellent way of preparing peacekeepers to be deployed in peacekeeping operations. Mainly two types of trainings are given: Pre-deployment training and Induction training. Pre-deployment training, responsibility of the troops/police contributing country, should be designed keeping the social context and culture of the host country in consideration. Upon arrival at the mission headquarters, peacekeepers undergo the short-period Induction Training. This training should be well equipped with gender, knowledge of sexual exploitation & abuse, and such other issues, and should be arranged on a regular basis.

The importance of inclusion of females at all levels of conflict management and post conflict recovery has achieved international recognition. Female involvement in peacekeeping missions can trigger positive effects of their leadership in both the host and the contributing countries. Presence of females in a mission improves the level of professionalism of the male members. Additionally, it can be said that a mixed mission enjoys the advantage of reflecting the host society in a more representative way.

Troops/police contributing countries should bear the responsibility to ensure the preparedness and well-trained conditions of the peacekeepers. Lack of funding and understanding as well as an overwhelming number of other tasks hinder the formulation of gender specific national policies. One challenge in implementing Resolution 1325 is that the works of local level women's associations are too fragmented to collaborate or include in peace activities.

To conclude, it can be said that the necessity of the installation of effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting on progress, achievements and challenges is needed to increase female participation in peacekeeping. And, to boost women's representation, the contributing country must take measures to bring about institutional changes including recruitment policies and improve the incentives. Fruitful efforts should be taken to reach the ultimate goal of gender equality, sustainable peace and security by both the UN and the Troops/Police Contributing Country.

Brief Biography



Additional Superintendent of Police (Addl. SP) Moushumi Mandal was appointed as Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) under Bangladesh Civil Service (Police Cadre)-28th Batch in 2010. She served as Assistant Commissioner (Sports & Culture), DMP and Assistant Commissioner (Victim Support Center) in Women Support & Investigation Division (WSID), DMP, Operations Officer of MONUSCO mission DR Congo (from April 2013 to April 2014) and ASP, Planning and Research section, Police Headquarters, Dhaka. Presently, she is serving as Additional Superintendent of Police (Addl. SP), Training-2 at Police Headquarters, Dhaka. Participation in training on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) in BIPSOT, Gazipur and Civil, Police and Military Relationship Course in COESPU, Italy aroused her keen interest on peacekeeping. She also contributed to several creative works of Bangladesh Police.

Women Peace Builder in Haiti: A Power to Empower

Sahely Ferdous, PPM, Assistant Inspector General

Introduction

Gender is a differing role and social relationship among men, women, boys and girls. These roles are determined by social, cultural, economic and political conditions as well as expectations and obligations within the society, which in turn influence how each group is affected by armed conflict. In 2002, Secretary General Kofi Annan in his report on women, peace and security observed, "We can no longer afford to minimize or ignore the contributions of women and girls to all stages of conflict resolution, peacemaking, peace-building, peacekeeping and reconstruction processes. Sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men." The international interest toward gender in peace and security has not appeared once and not on a sudden rather it has to experience a long way in the last 20 years.

In 1990, existing armed conflicts increasingly targeted the civilians where women and girls were subjected to undergo incredible suffering during such conflict. In 1995, women and armed conflict was identified as one of the critical areas of concern at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. In 2000, UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on "women, peace and security" to address the impact of war on women and to underline the importance of their participation in all facets of UN peace operations in the same year.¹ For the first time in an omnibus resolution, the Council recognized that women bear the brunt of armed conflicts, and should have a commensurate role in their prevention and resolution. The resolution stressed the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Among its many recommendations, the Resolution called for an expansion of the role and contribution of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations, including in military, police, and civilian roles, as well as in positions of leadership. The resolution also recognized the contribution of local women to decision-making in conflict prevention and their proactive role in building local capacity as part of peacekeeping and peace building efforts. After the adoption of Resolution 1325, the United Nations Headquarters, peacekeeping operations and Member States have been working to meet these goals, but progress is far from satisfactory. On the civilian side, the percentage of women recruited, hired and deployed by the Secretariat to work in peacekeeping operations has reached 30 per cent, bringing gender parity well within reach. Progress has been much slower on the uniformed components of UN peacekeeping operations, which Member States contribute and now have less than 3 per cent women. This includes 8 per cent of the 10,000 police officers and 2 per cent of the 80,000 military personnel.

The conception on the gender dimension of conflict is essential if peacekeeping and peace-building are to succeed in the long-term. Actually men, women, boys

and girls experience conflict differently, and hence they have distinct needs in the post-conflict phases. Women are both victims of and participants in armed conflict. As victims, women are particularly vulnerable to threats of violence including sexual violence. Women also participate actively in armed conflict. For example, one-third of FARC members in Colombia, up to 31% of the fighting force in El Salvador and about 13% of the RUF in Sierra Leone were women. For this, gender must be recognized as a vital component of plans and programs to avoid, mitigate and resolve conflict situations and to build sustainable peace. Gender mainstreaming concept is required in UN peace operations to realize that these processes are relevant to all stakeholders, responsive to their needs and effective toward equality. According to ECOSOC Agreed Conclusion 1997/2, gender mainstreaming refers to "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation, policies or programs in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."²

Women in Peace-building

Peacekeeping has evolved from its traditional role of monitoring ceasefire agreements and borders between independent states to bringing out a wide range of multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations frequently addressing civil wars. These newer missions are mandated to facilitate political processes through the promotion of national dialogue and reconciliation, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, support the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights, promote reform of the domestic security sector, and assist in restoring the rule of law. These expanded responsibilities make the need for more women peacekeepers more pressing than ever. In all of these fields, women peacekeepers have proven that they can perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts. In many cases, women are better-placed to carry out peacekeeping tasks, including interviewing victims of sexual and gender-based violence, working in women's prisons, assisting female ex-combatants during the process of demobilizing and reintegration into the civilian life and mentoring female cadets at police training institutes. Adding to the value of this contribution, female peacekeepers act as role models in the local environment, inspiring, by their vivid example, women and girls in the male-dominated societies where they serve. Demonstrating to these women and girls that they can do anything, in the realm of politics, security, law and order, medicine, journalism and beyond, the women peace builders efficiently uphold the theme "power to empower."

Women can play a vital role in peacekeeping and peace-building situations. According to the UNIFEM's 2000 Independent Experts Assessment on Women, War and Peace, the presence of women in peace operations (including female police, interpreters, and specialists) makes a positive

difference. The presence of women improves access and support for local women; facilitates communication with victims of assault, sexual abuse, violence, etc., can provide a greater sense of security to local populations (women and children), helps to create a safer environment for women in which they are not afraid to talk, makes men peacekeepers more reflective and responsible, broadens the repertoire of skills and styles available within a mission and can help to reduce conflict and confrontation. It is also important to recognize the crucial role of women in local communities. According to the report of the Secretary General on Women, Peace and Security in 2004, "Women can call attention to tensions before they erupt in open hostilities by collecting and analyzing early warning information on potential armed conflict." Women play a critical role in building the capacity of communities to prevent new or recurrent violence. Women's organizations can often make contact with parties to conflict and interface with Governments and the United Nations. The role of women is even greater when they are involved during the early stages of a mission.³

Evidence suggests that women could make a difference. In recent operations, just 1.7 per cent of military peacekeepers deployed by the UN were female. Yet in almost any conflict, 80 percent of the refugees are women and children. In many cultures, women are virtually prohibited by social convention from talking directly to male strangers though communication is indispensable for effective peacekeeping. It has been observed in Somalia that male soldiers caused considerable ill-feeling when they had to search local women for weapons whenever they entered into the refugee camps. However, the most notable UN successes have been found in Guatemala, Namibia and South Africa where a greater number of female are present. Women, it seems, are not only better able to control violent tendencies, but are also perceived as less of a threat by the local population and are therefore less likely to provoke violence. The women, in contrast, were better able to deal with the monotony that characterizes most peacekeeping operations.⁴

Women Peace-builders in Haiti

Tracing the history of Haiti it is evident that Preval became the President on 07 February 1996. It was the first time ever there was a peaceful handover of power. At midnight on 29 February 1996, most of the US UNSMHI (United Nations Support Mission in Haiti) troops returned home. The once greatly powerful dictatorship of Haiti has been removed, but 5000 ill-trained policemen must have to control a population of 7 million. The economic situation of Haiti was hopeless with virtually no jobs and electricity. Canada and the rest of the UN were committed to restoring peace in Haiti. On February 29, the set deadline for U.S. troops to be out of Haiti, the US handed over the job to Canada and the UN. Ottawa offered to bring 1200 UN personnel with 700 of its own soldiers. The 500 Canadian soldiers already on the island of Haiti were withdrawn in March. Canada provided 75 troops and 100 police officers to Haiti in July 1996. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police helped to a great extent in ensuring safety and security by training police officers. China, Taiwan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan also provided support to the UN mission.

Haiti's new democracy is facing problems standing on its feet. The problems are varied and are pretty big. It includes the new threat to the country like anarchy, the rising of common crime to uncontrollable amounts, the turning of ex-soldiers to crime, the lack of institutions to provide law enforcement and justice, and the high volume of political violence all over the country. Haiti's economy is a separate problem altogether. There is a lack of private manufacturing and export so Haiti makes almost no profit. Beyond these limitations the achievements that Haiti has made are replacing an airport fence, building a new road, disbanding the army and ridding the streets of paramilitary thugs. Peaceful elections were held in Haiti for municipal, parliamentary, and presidential offices. Above these barriers Haiti faced a vigorous earthquake in January 2010. Almost all the important structures like the Presidential Palace, Parliament and even UN Mission Headquarters in Haiti collapsed. In this situation people had to leave their houses and live in IDP camps where there was no security for lives. Men living together with women in congested accommodation facilities resulted in an increase in sexual crimes and diseases. To save the humanity and to protect the vulnerable groups, the UN asked for a female contingent over there.

Bangladesh Police marched into the UN peacekeeping arena in 1989 by participating in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia.⁵ Since then they have been participating in almost every peacekeeping mission undertaken by the United Nations. According to data available from the UN Women and the United Nations General Assembly, till April 2019, Bangladesh has sent 1551 female officials in the Peacekeeping Operations. Among them 1260 female officers are from Bangladesh Police. In 1999 the United Nations introduced specialized police units in their police component. These specially equipped self-sufficient police units are called Formed Police Units (FPU). Bangladesh police seized the opportunity of sending police officers in bulks to the Peacekeeping Missions at the earliest chance. Beginning in 2005, maximum police officers have been working in the FPUs. Bangladesh FPUs have been working in Timor Leste (East Timor), DR Congo, Ivory Coast and Darfur (Sudan). From May 2010 two FPUs have been deployed in MINUSTAH, Haiti. Of them, one unit is exclusively an all female FPU running with much name and fame.

Bangladesh became a part of the history by sending her first Female Formed Police Unit, specially equipped and self sufficient, in Haiti on 17 May 2010. The female FPU developed a good sense of understanding between local people, 6 multinational co-workers and UN civilian staff in MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti).⁶ They developed a good organizational relationship and friendly working environment in compliance with the SOP of MINUSTAH. They received the same responsibilities and duties like other FPUs, e.g. providing security to and protection of the UN personnel and installations. In Haiti, sexual and gender based violence is higher in number and frequency. The female FPU personnel worked on SGBV victims in the IDP camps and their presence gave the distressed especially women a peaceful feeling and strength to fight against the violence. Being the only

female FPU in Haiti, their activities were closely monitored and their performance and professionalism were highly appreciated. So many high officials from the DPKO like Military Police Advisory Committee members, Police Assessment and Monitoring Committee members, delegates from Jordan and Sri Lanka, Special Representative to Secretary General in Haiti and the US Ambassador to the UN had observed the activities of this contingent.

As per commitment to the MINUSTAH, the female FPU tried to give their level best to uphold the UN mandate and the image of Bangladesh. In times of President Election, the female FPU in coordination with local police and UNPOL did a lot to keep the situation stabilized and congenial for the mass people of Haiti. They took part in various anti-terrorism operations with military components in different parts of Haiti. They provided free medical supports to the distressed and took part in awareness building activities on HIV/AIDS and SGBV crimes. The Female FPU was responsible for several critical duties including Crowd Control Activities, Static Security in IDP Camps, Joint Patrol with the UNPOL, UN Installation/Property Security, VVIP/VIP Security, Coordination with Gender and Human Rights Units of MINUSTAH, Market Security, Emergency Equipment and Transport Services and Special Operations. During the mission in Haiti, they have arranged for some humanitarian activities beside their regular assignment with the MINUSTAH like community policing, free medical care for the vulnerable, free pure and safe drinking water supply in collaboration with other organizations, awareness on HIV/AIDS and SGBV crimes, and contribution to local mosques for the Muslim minority community in Haiti.

However, even with their remarkable participation and performance, UN efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in all aspects of UN peace operations, and incorporate a gender dimension to international policies, women in Haiti have to face the challenges like limited female leadership, lack of restorative justice system and refusal of female combatants during reintegration into the normal life. With all the limitations and flaws, Haiti will change as its people want a change.

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Brief Biography



Sahely Ferdous PPM Assistant Inspector General has joined in the Bangladesh Police as Assistant Superintendent of Police in 2001. She has served in different commanding positions in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna Metropolitan Police. She was in Narail and Kurigram districts as Additional Superintendent of Police and in-charge of Superintendent of Police respectively. She has achieved her Master degree in Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism from Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia with Australia Government's scholarship. She got the Master degree in Soil Science from University of Dhaka, MBA from Khulna University and Master in Disaster and Human Security Management from Bangladesh University of Professionals. She has served UN Peacekeeping Mission in DR Congo as Operation Officer in 2006-07. She was the contingent commander of female FPU in Haiti in 20011-12. She has received the prestigious Leadership Award from Bangladesh Police Women Network. She was also rewarded with the honour of President Police Medal for her unalloyed contribution to Bangladesh Police. She is serving as Assistant Inspector General in Community Policing at Police Headquarters.

'Protection of Civilians' in the MONUSCO, Democratic Republic of Congo: Role of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers

Shahanara Monica, Director of UN Wing, MOFA

[**Background.** From 30 July to 03 August 2018 a high level delegation led by Principal Staff Officer of Armed Forces Division and participated by officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, paid an official visit to the UN peacekeeping mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO). During the visit the delegation met with peacekeepers deployed in Goma and Bunia, the two most important stations in DRC for the peacekeeping missions. The team had interactive discussion with troops in Military Police and Engineer Contingent in Goma (BANMP), Air Contingent, Rapidly Deployable Battalions (RDRs), and Support and Signal Contingent in Bunia as well as with the Force Commander based in Goma, and local military leaders. The team also visited to Company Operating Base (COBs) in Bogora and Aveba and a standby Combat Detachment in Bulkwa. The visit offered an opportunity to learn how Bangladeshi peacekeepers are implementing their PoC mandate in a hotspot like DRC.]

Peacekeeping is a multi-dimensional instrument used by the United Nations primarily to preserve peace, under the terms of the UN Charter. Peacekeeping operations help the conflict-torn countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace and prevent relapse of conflict. The peacekeepers are expected to create conditions for political elements to fulfill their respective commitments. It was in Palestine in 1949, with the establishment of the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNSTO) that the UN's first peacekeeping mission was initiated. Currently there are 14 peacekeeping missions operating in various parts of the world.

Over the years the mandate and nature of operations of the peacekeepers have changed to adapt to the changing security dynamics of the world. 'Protection of Civilians' (PoC)¹ is one such inclusion in the mandates and responsibilities of the peacekeepers in many of its settings. Although "civilians continue to account for the vast majority of casualties in situations of armed conflict," including sexual violence and violence against children, the Security Council recognizing "the consequent impact of systematic, flagrant and widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law on international peace and security", has empowered the peacekeeping missions to take necessary actions to afford protection to civilians in the face of imminent physical violence.

In 1999, the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was the first peacekeeping operation to be mandated to this task. In the same year,

UN Security Council's first thematic resolution on the protection of civilians in armed conflict stressed the need to address the root causes of armed conflict, including that of gender inequality, to enhance the protection of civilians on a long-term basis. Since then, regular Security Council resolutions have further defined the role of peacekeeping missions in protecting civilians and the various mandated tasks that contribute to it. To fulfill the PoC mandate, peacekeeping operations are provided with the authority to afford direct physical protection, including through the 'use of force' under certain conditions, such as, within the limits of its capabilities and areas of deployment, without prejudice to the responsibility of the host Government. In fact the Security Council has consistently authorized the peacekeeping operations to "use all necessary means" or "all necessary actions," up to and including the use of deadly force, to implement the PoC mandate.

Photo 1: Civilians Displaced due to Conflict



Source : Author's Collection

'Protection of Civilians' in MONUSCO

UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is the UN's longest standing multidimensional peacekeeping operation. With more than 20,000 personnel deployed, MONUSCO is also the largest peacekeeping mission in the world.

Figure 1 : Number of Personnel Deployed as of January 2019 (Civilian data as of May 2018)



Source: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/monusco>

Protection of civilians is at the core of MONUSCO's mandate and is clearly manifested in the foundation of the Mission. Although it is the Government of the DRC that has the primary responsibility to protect civilians, MONUSCO has an important support role to play covering critical gaps remaining in the national security framework. When the earlier mission in DRC, known as UN Organization Mission in DRC (MONUC), was re-established in 2010 to reflect the new phase the country had reached following general election in 2006, it was authorized to "use all necessary means" to carry out its mandate relating, among other things, to the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and 'human rights defenders' under imminent threat of physical violence and to support the Government of the DRC in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts.

The PoC mandate in MONUSCO got further impetus in 2013, when following a framework agreement signed by representatives of 11 countries in the region, the Chairs of the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations Secretary-General in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a resolution was passed (UNSCR 2098) to extend the mandate of MONUSCO with a specialized "intervention brigade"² to strengthen the peacekeeping operation.

Usually the presence of peacekeepers itself in conflict areas is supposed to be effective for maintenance of peace. However, due to reduction of troops and difficulties in reaching various terrains in countries like DRC, the peacekeeping operations are required to use innovative means to fulfill their PoC mandate. In MONUSCO, the peacekeepers have been practicing both traditional and novel means to fulfill their PoC mandate,³ which include:

- a. Early warning and response as well as neutralizing armed groups through targeted strategies ("Protection through projection").
- b. Military justice for the prosecution of grave human rights violations by armed groups and security forces.
- c. Prevent supply of small arms and weapons by managing small arms and weapons for national security forces.
- d. Stop recruitment to armed group by strengthening prison security and minimizing prison breaks.

Bangladeshi Peacekeepers in MONUSCO

Bangladesh is one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations. First deployed in 1988 to help monitor the armistice between Iran and Iraq, the country, over the past three decades, provided peacekeepers in different parts of the world in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia and Americas, where along with infantry units artillery, engineers, signals, logistics, military police and medical units, naval forces, air force and police participated. Bangladesh is also pioneer in sending women peacekeepers and so far has sent two all-women contingents in Haiti and DRC.

Bangladeshi peacekeepers work in various roles - from protection to healing and designing roads. Bangladeshi peacekeepers has been working in

the face of high-risk environment in the UN Missions. Acting against rebels and militias in hostile and volatile environment with different culture and religion through professionalism, training and experience, Bangladeshi troops and police operated into such conflict areas and successfully achieved mandates set out by UN. Bangladeshi peacekeepers have assisted host governments as well as UN agencies in facing the deadly diseases and ensuring the health security of all. In MONUSCO, Bangladesh has been one of the top troops and police contributing country. According to the data available at the UN Web site, currently 1648 troops (3rd) and 180 police members (4th) are deployed in various units in DRC.⁴

The peacekeepers of Bangladesh are making critical contribution in fulfilling the PoC mandate of the UN peacekeeping. In general the deployable contingents are trained and organized to be agile and robust giving emphasis on protection of civilians, mission personnel including the deployed peacekeepers and to facilitate humanitarian assistance in the mission area. To that end, the peacekeepers are also generally equipped with modern and sophisticated equipment like Advanced IED Detection, Mine Resistant Vehicles and Surveillance and Intelligence gadgets. Bangladeshi contingents deployed in UN Mission are being instructed to be pro-active instead of being re-active and put special emphasis on gathering intelligence for the effective protection of those at risk in mission area.

With the reduction of forces in MONUSCO, a comprehensive approach has been taken with increased mobility and a proactive posture facilitating both civilian and military interventions in areas where the Mission does not have a presence – which is known as “protection through projection.” It relies on greater mobility and agility of military forces and civilian personnel, as well as an expanded and strengthened early warning system, allowing rapid deployments whenever and wherever needed either to prevent or respond to violence or conflict and provide physical protection to civilians. Bangladeshi peacekeepers, especially the RDBs, COBs and Standby Combat Detachments are particularly assigned to detect the early warning signs to support the “protection through projection” operations.

The Engineering contingent known as BANENGR plays an important role in peacekeeping operations by constructing and repairing the roads to ensure fast and timely passage of personnel, equipment and humanitarian assistance to remote places. In addition, they are also utilized for lifting of heavy items, UOD cleaning and sweeping of unexploded grenades/shells, firefighting and maintenance of equipment including hospital equipment etc. Bangladesh Engineering Unit has secured top position among all engineering contingents in DRC for 3 consecutive years.

Bangladesh has been maintaining several hospital facilities in mission areas of DRC where medical officers provide services to the injured soldiers as well as the locals. The contingents of Bangladesh maintains strong relations with the local police and armed forces which helps the peacekeepers address the emerging threats in a timely and coordinated manner. The BANMP particularly tries to maintain collaborative relations with the local law

enforcement officials to settle various disputes and disciplinary issues including cases of sexual exploitation and abuses.

Bangladeshi peacekeepers also provide security and assistance to civilian humanitarian agencies in their missions. The construction of roads by Bangladeshi peacekeepers in many remote parts helps ensure better physical access to many humanitarian actors including UN agencies and INGOs.

Due to the proactive and humanitarian role of Bangladeshi peacekeepers, a relationship of trust has been developed among the local civilians and Bangladeshi contingent members. New settlements are visible in areas where Bangladeshi peacekeepers establish their bases. It has been seen that many villagers – mainly IDPs, who were forced to leave their villages by the rebels, often return to their original places voluntarily when they come to know about the presence of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in that part. It is often heard from the locals that the rebel groups are often deterred when they are told about potential deployment of Bangladeshi peacekeepers.

DRC is one of the most difficult missions for the peacekeepers. Nine members of Bangladesh Armed Forces serving as UN peacekeepers in DRC were killed in a single ambush in 2005 in Ituri, which is considered to be the bloodiest armed assault on 'blue helmets' in the recent years. Yet Bangladeshi peacekeepers continue to perform with full professionalism and dedication. Bangladeshi peacekeepers have earned respect for their proactive role in determining and neutralizing threats.⁵

'Protection of civilians' is an area where Bangladeshi peacekeepers have shown natural strength, which may have connection with their disaster management and other humanitarian role in the national context. Bangladesh should continue to invest in strengthening the capacity of the peacekeepers in fulfilling the PoC mandate.

Notes and References:

1. Based on various resolutions of the Security Council and the well established practices, the DPKO/DFS has developed a policy for the implementation of the PoC Mandate, which is available online.
2. The Force Intervention Brigade is the first UN peacekeeping operation specifically tasked to carry out targeted offensive operations to "neutralize and disarm" groups considered a threat to state authority and civilian security. In this case, the main target was the M23 militia group, as well as other Congolese and foreign rebel groups. While such operations did not require the support of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), the Force Intervention Brigade (constituted of forces from Tanzania, South Africa and Malawi) often acted in unison with the FARDC to disarm rebel groups.

3. See David Grassley, 'Paper on MONUSCO,' Deputy Special Representative in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
4. DPKO/DFS Policy on Protection of Civilians(<http://providingforpeacekeeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2015-07-Policy-on-PoC-in-Peacekeeping-Operations.pdf>)
5. Interactions by the author with different stakeholders as a member of the High level Delegation to the MONUSCO (29 July – 03 August 2018)

Brief Biography



Ms. Mosammat Shahanara Monica has been serving as a Director, United Nations Wing, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh from November 2015 till date. She had also served as Director in South Asia Wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh. She has joined in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2006 as an Assistant Secretary and served in various wings which include UNCLOS, P&O and SSP wings. Earlier she worked in Bangladesh Embassy in Washington D.C. as a First Secretary (Oct 2012-Feb 2015). She obtained LLB (Hons) in 2002 and LLM degree in 2003 from the Department of Law, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. In her diplomatic career, she obtained professional training in the Institute of International Tribunal for the Law of the SEA, Hamburg, Germany (2007-2008) and New Edge, Singapore (2011). She is married and blessed with two daughters.



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