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# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS JOURNAL

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MAY 2022



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS, 29 MAY 2022





## *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  
29<sup>th</sup> session on 25 September, 1974*



# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS JOURNAL

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## EDITORIAL

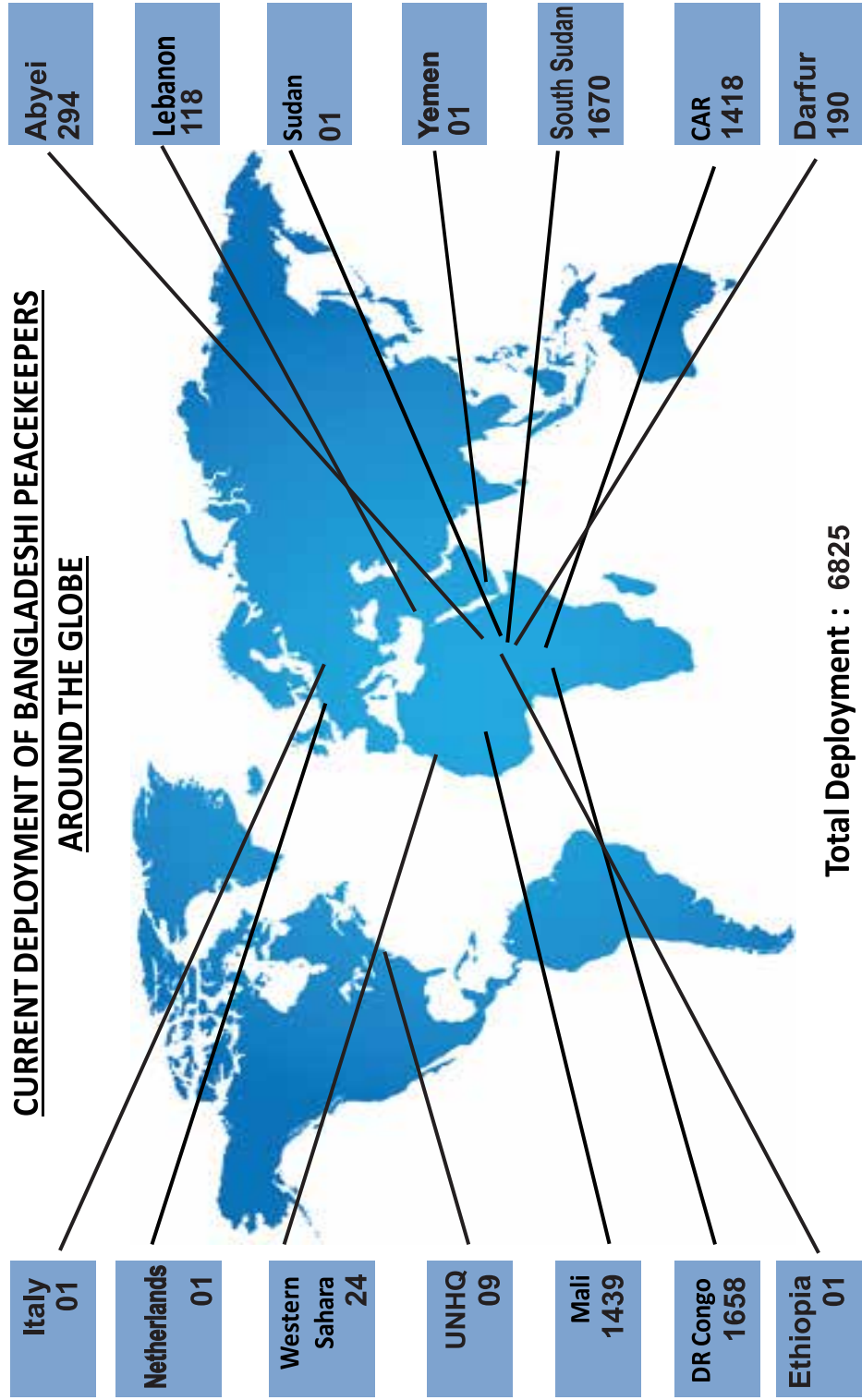
Keeping in line with constitutional obligation to maintain, promote and preserve international peace and security, Bangladesh started her journey in UN peacekeeping operations from 1988 with deployment of only 15 peacekeepers from Bangladesh Army in 'United Nations Iran Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG). Subsequently, in 1989 Bangladesh Police and in 1993 Bangladesh Navy as well as Bangladesh Air Force joined the UNPK operations. This year Bangladesh commemorates 34 years of dedicated and glorious service in UNPK having achieved the state of a leading 'Troops and Police Contributing Country (T/PCC). This pride came at a cost of 161 brave souls while 252 suffered major injuries for the greater cause of world peace. What is unique is that Bangladeshi Peacekeepers have earned the time-honoured credentials of a 'Role Model' in global peacekeeping by dint of proven 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. This year's theme is "People Peace Progress: The Power of Partnerships." To mark the contribution of our valiant peacekeepers and pay tribute to our deceased/injured peacekeepers, Armed Forces Division (AFD) is presenting the 8th Issue of *International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers Journal* in coordination with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladesh Police. Articles in this publication focuses mainly on the achievements of the UN Peacekeepers, varied experiences, hazards and challenges in multi-dimensional mission environment, gender mainstreaming and women in blue helmet.

Last but not the least, the Board of Editors deserve full appreciation for displaying spirited teamwork during the entire processes and thus ensure the timely publishing of this internationally recognized journal. The authors who are all busy service professionals have carved out time to contribute insightful and comprehensive writings which have food for thought for the keen researchers and inquisitive readers. For this they deserve a warm felicitation. The esteemed readers may be able to peruse wide-ranging issues which encompass the horizon of UNPK. We are optimistic to receiving spontaneous response, support and cooperation from all concerned in future as well.

## **COMPLETED PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS** **AROUND THE WORLD**

| <b>Ser</b>         | <b>Country</b>                    | <b>Name of Mission</b>     | <b>Total</b>    |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1.                 | Afghanistan, Afghanistan-Pakistan | UNAMA UNSMA/UNGOMAP        | 11              |
| 2.                 | Angola                            | UNAVEM & UNAVEM III        | 635             |
| 3.                 | Bosnia                            | UNMIBH                     | 177             |
| 4.                 | Burundi                           | BINUB                      | 06              |
| 5.                 | Cambodia                          | UNAMIC / UNTAC/UNMLT       | 1,301           |
| 6.                 | Congo                             | MONUC, MONUSCO             | 36,919          |
| 7.                 | Croatia/East Slovenia             | UNTAES                     | 76              |
| 8.                 | East Timor                        | UNAMET / UNTAET / UNMISSET | 2,718           |
| 9.                 | Ethiopia / Eritrea                | UNMEE                      | 1,108           |
| 10.                | Georgia                           | UNOMIG                     | 131             |
| 11.                | Haiti                             | UNMIH / MNF/MINUSTAH       | 5,382           |
| 12.                | Iraq                              | UNGCI/UNMOVIC              | 124             |
| 13.                | Iran                              | UNIIMOG                    | 31              |
| 14.                | Ivory Coast                       | MINUCI/ONUCI/UNOCI         | 32,850          |
| 15.                | Kosovo                            | UNMIK                      | 539             |
| 16.                | Kuwait                            | UNIKOM                     | 8,239           |
| 17.                | Liberia                           | UNOMIL/UNMIL               | 23,793          |
| 18.                | Macedonia                         | UNPREDEP                   | 07              |
| 19.                | Mozambique                        | ONUMOZ                     | 2,622           |
| 20.                | Namibia                           | UNTAG                      | 85              |
| 21.                | Rwanda                            | UNAMIR                     | 1,022           |
| 22.                | Sierra Leone                      | UNAMSIL/ UNIOSIL           | 11,981          |
| 23.                | Somalia                           | UNOSOM-I –II/AMISOM        | 1,973           |
| 24.                | Sudan                             | UNMIS                      | 9,023           |
| 25.                | South Sudan                       | UNMISS                     | 9,603           |
| 26.                | Tajikistan                        | UNMOT                      | 40              |
| 27.                | Uganda / Rwanda                   | UNOMUR                     | 20              |
| 28.                | Western Sahara                    | MINURSO                    | 387             |
| 29.                | Yugoslavia (Former)               | UNPROFOR / UNMOP           | 1,584           |
| 30.                | CAR & Chad                        | MINURCAT                   | 59              |
| 31.                | Darfur                            | UNAMID                     | 8,989           |
| 32.                | Lebanon                           | UNIFIL                     | 2,724           |
| 33.                | West Africa                       | UNOWA                      | 02              |
| 34.                | UNSOA (Nairobi)                   | UNSOA                      | 01              |
| 35.                | Syria                             | UNSMIS                     | 18              |
| 36.                | Mali                              | MINUSMA                    | 11,638          |
| 37.                | CAR                               | MINUSCA                    | 7,490           |
| 38.                | Somalia                           | UNSOM                      | 07              |
| 39.                | Office of the African Union       | UNOAU                      | 01              |
| 40.                | Sudan                             | UNISFA                     | 04              |
| 41.                | UNHQ                              | UNDPKO                     | 50              |
| 42.                | Cyprus                            | UNFICYP                    | 04              |
| 43.                | Yemen                             | UNMHA                      | 04              |
| <b>Grand Total</b> |                                   |                            | <b>1,83,378</b> |





### **Force-wise Total Completed Deployment**

| Ser | Bangladesh<br>Army | Bangladesh<br>Navy | Bangladesh<br>Air Force | Bangladesh<br>Police | Total    |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| 1   | 1,48,081           | 6,365              | 8,138                   | 20,794               | 1,83,378 |

### **Supreme Sacrifices for World Peace**

**(From April 1989 to April 2022)**

| Ser | Bangladesh<br>Army | Bangladesh<br>Navy | Bangladesh<br>Air Force | Bangladesh<br>Police | Total |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| 1   | 126                | 04                 | 09                      | 22                   | 161   |

### **Summary of Injured Peacekeepers**

**(From April 1989 to April 2022)**

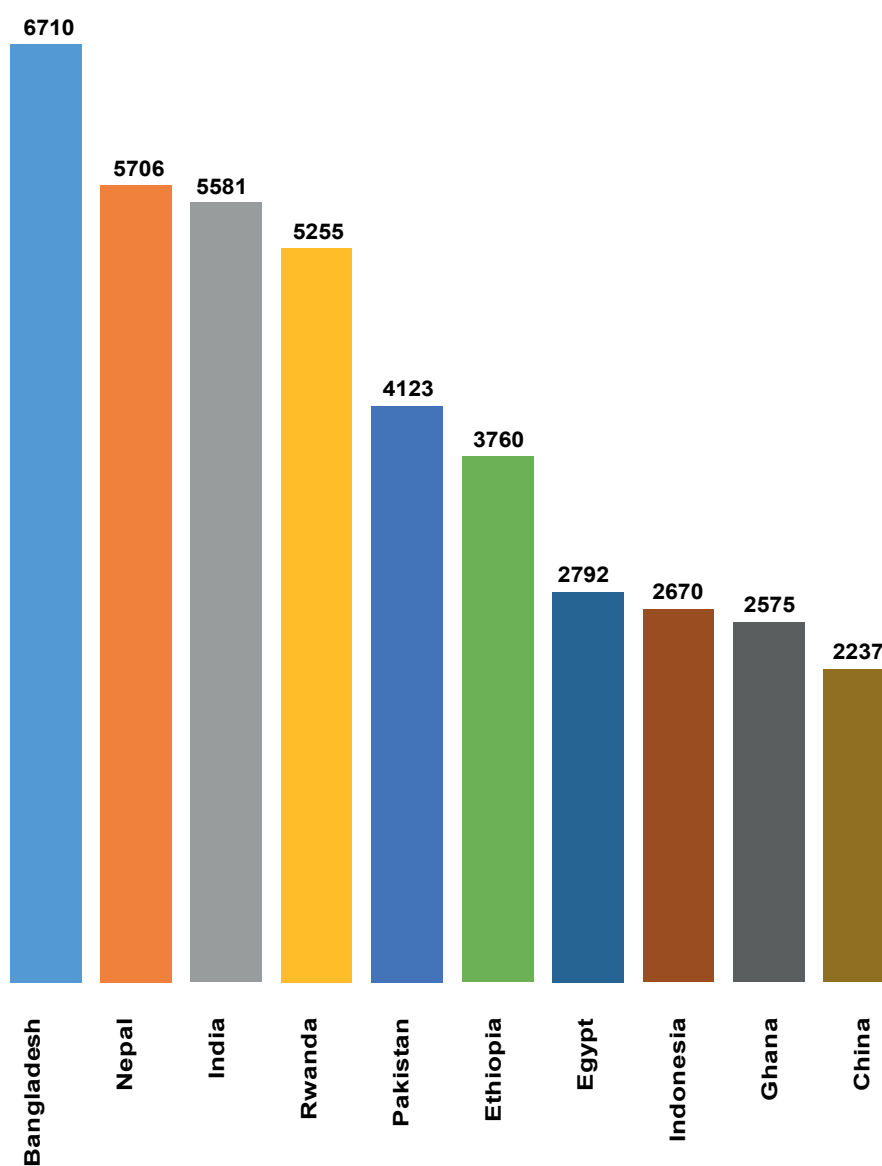
| Ser | Bangladesh<br>Army | Bangladesh<br>Navy | Bangladesh<br>Air Force | Bangladesh<br>Police | Total |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| 1   | 228                | 06                 | 06                      | 12                   | 252   |

### **Participation of Female Peacekeepers in UN Mission**

| Ser         | Forces    | Participated | Currently Deployed |
|-------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------|
| 1           | Army      | 553          | 348                |
| 2           | Navy      | 28           | 10                 |
| 3           | Air Force | 120          | 13                 |
| 4           | Police    | 1,621        | 148                |
| Grand Total |           | <b>2,322</b> | <b>519</b>         |

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(Report Date : 31 March 2022)



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## **The Dynamics of Contemporary UN Peacekeeping Operations for International Security and Stability**

Air Commodore Md. Mamunur Rashid, BUP, ndc, afwc, psc, M Phil, ADWC

### **Introduction**

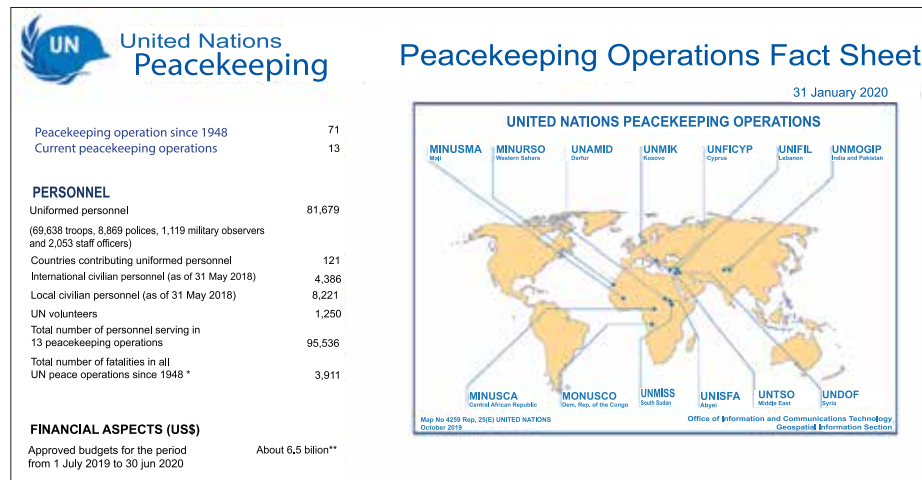
UN Security Council (UNSC) was formed on 24 October 1945<sup>1</sup> comprised of five permanent members and six non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two years term.<sup>2</sup> The UNSC which is responsible for establishing UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) by adopting a Security Council resolution, determines the size and mandate of the mission, monitors all the activities of UNPKO, holds discussion meeting regularly on the progress of specific PKO, votes for an extension, amendment, and end mission mandates as it feels necessary. In general, UNSC is the patron of international security and stability in today's world. Time has come to review UNPKOs, find out the exact cause of failure in not fulfilling the mandate and take necessary measures for plausible solution.

The issue of Non-State Actors (NSA) has surfaced considerably which has destabilized countries of Africa and the Middle East significantly led to asymmetric, unconventional, and insurgency war. Terrorist Armed Groups (TAG) got involved in these conflicts which have made UNPKO ever challenging and dangerous than before. Since 1948 till 31 January 2021, a total of 4,049 peacekeepers have sacrificed their valuable lives for establishing peace in the world, out of which 1,376 fatalities occurred in current operations.<sup>3</sup> United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has emerged as dangerous UN peacekeeping mission on earth because highest number of peacekeepers died in the hand of TAGs. Mali is plagued by intercommunal and ethnic violence for years, along with periodic attacks and violence committed by terrorist armed groups (TAGs).

Mali has become one of the dangerous peacekeeping missions, with 245 peacekeepers killed within five years. Mission in Mali is unique because MINUSMA is a fifth-generation robust peacekeeping mission where UN Peacekeeping Forces and French Forces are deployed in the same area of responsibility (AOR) with different mandates and command structure. UNPKO is being conducted in an asymmetric warfare environment first time in the history of peacekeeping and success in Mali would pave the way to deploy UN troops in the same kind of environment in the world.

## Dynamics of Contemporary UNPKO

Figure 1: Ongoing UNPKO and Fact Sheet



Source: [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/pk\\_factsheet\\_01\\_2020\\_english\\_2.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/pk_factsheet_01_2020_english_2.pdf)

With the advent of terrorism, peacekeepers face greatest challenges in human history from TAGs in asymmetric war scenarios where peacekeepers are dying in the hand of TAGs every day. UN peacekeeping has also transformed from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and finally peace enforcing. There were many challenges in UNPKO in the past and many reformations have been done in UNSC especially in DPKO to meet those challenges. Brahimi Report 2000, HIPPO Report 2015, and Action for Peace (A4P) contributed greatly to reform UNPKO. As UNPKO is the only option remaining in the world for international security and stability, all-out effort must be taken to make UNPKO successful anywhere in the world.

### Challenges

**The involvement of Neighbouring States and Regional Organizations in the Peace Process:** Neighbouring countries are having contagious effect especially if transnational or international TAGs create the conflict. Neighbouring countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger are the burning examples, suffering due to terrorist activities. On the other hand, regional bodies and neighbouring states can introduce local rivalries in any state.<sup>4</sup> The European Union (EU) was successful in maintaining peace among member states whereas South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was completely ineffective in resolving conflict between member states, India and Pakistan.<sup>5</sup> The ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) was formed to manage the security issues of the member countries, and they could maintain peace among ten member states successfully as of now.<sup>6</sup> The

Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) of Africa were largely ineffective and institutions whose effectiveness has changed in the different historical period are Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)/ Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).<sup>7</sup> In order to maintain regional security, ECOWAS and AU face the most challenging aspect of capacity building hence they need logistic and financial support to ensure their operational capability.<sup>8</sup>

**Critical Aspects of Robust Peacekeeping:** Robust peacekeeping was defined as 'a political and operational strategy to signal the intention of a UN mission to implement its mandate and to deter threats to an existing peace process in the face of resistance from spoilers.' Robust peacekeeping involves the use of force at the tactical level with the authorization of UNSC and consent of the host nation and/or the main parties to the conflict. Robust peacekeeping is challenged by the constant constraints of contemporary peace operations, weak political support, quality of troops and equipment, and the restraint of troop contributors to embrace a robust approach.<sup>9</sup>

**Critical Aspects of Hybrid Mission:** A hybrid mission is a joint effort where a regional organisation shares the political, financial, logistical, and military burdens with the UN. The UN AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is the first hybrid mission which started its operation in 2007 under Chapter VIII of UN Charter. In UNAMID, AU faces difficulties in providing the budget for running the peacekeeping operations. The efficiency of hybrid mission remained questioned by member states and millions of civilians on ground whose lives have been devastated by the conflict notwithstanding the presence of the mission.<sup>10</sup>

**Difficulties of Parallel Forces Operating in Same AOR:** In a crisis, parallel forces have filled the gap in the capabilities of a UNPKO during deployment period. Parallel forces can contribute to peacekeeping indirectly bypassing the command and control (C2) structure of UN. Both the forces often struggle to coordinate on a strategic vision, which can cause them to compete and undermine operational coordination. Both forces are unwilling to share intelligence information with each other. Actions of parallel forces can also threaten the legitimacy or perceived impartiality of UN operations, especially when the forces are not clearly distinguished. These challenges are worsened when peace operations are deployed alongside counterterrorism forces that affect the way local actors perceive and pose legal risks. Mali is the example of critical peace building operation of parallel forces where UN Forces and French Forces are operating in same AOR with different mandate.

**Bringing All Armed Groups and Community in the Peace Process and DDR:** Limited participation of all communities involved in conflict and not fulfilling the terms and conditions of peace agreements by all signatories are the

main reasons of failure in most of the peace accord. In Mali, peace accord was signed five times and reason of failure of all those are basically not fulfilling the terms and conditions of the agreement by all signatories and not allowing all parties to join the accord.<sup>11</sup> DDR has become the most challenging aspects for UNPKO because of the TAGs asymmetric warfare strategy and their frequent attacks on the DDR camps. Host nation plays crucial role in overall development of peace process where compliance to status of forces agreement (SOFA) by host government is very much essential.<sup>12</sup>

### **Budget for UNPKO**

The Secretary-General submits budget proposal to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The ACABQ reviews the proposals and makes recommendations to the General Assembly's Fifth Committee for its review and approval. Ultimately, the budget is endorsed by the General Assembly as a whole. Contributing countries become member of Advisory Committee on ACABQ (on UNPKO budget), they are not included in UNSC membership in any form.<sup>13</sup> The budget for UNPKO for the fiscal year 01 July 2020 - 30 June 2021 is \$6.58 billion. The budget for UNPKO increased on an average of 0.91% from last year. This amount finances all the ongoing UN peacekeeping missions, supports logistics for the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and provides support, technology, and logistics to all peace operations through global service centres in Brindisi (Italy) and a regional service centre in Entebbe (Uganda). The defence budget of the world is approximately USD \$1.9 trillion which is nothing in comparison with the expenditure of UNPKO.<sup>14</sup> The best way to make UNPKO cost-effective is to address the root causes of the crisis and UNSC must prioritize the political solutions of the crisis.<sup>15</sup> The top 10 contributing countries in funding UNPKO and their percentage of contribution are given in the table below:-

**Table 1: The Top 10 Contributing Countries to UNPKO for 2020-2021**

| SL No | Name of the Contributing Country | Percentage of Contribution |
|-------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1.    | United States                    | 27.89%                     |
| 2.    | China                            | 15.21%                     |
| 3.    | Japan                            | 8.56%                      |
| 4.    | Germany                          | 6.09%                      |
| 5.    | United Kingdom                   | 5.79%                      |
| 6.    | France                           | 5.61%                      |
| 7.    | Italy                            | 3.30%                      |
| 8.    | Russian Federation               | 3.04%                      |
| 9.    | Canada                           | 2.73%                      |
| 10.   | Republic of Korea                | 2.26%                      |

Source: UN Peacekeeping Home Website

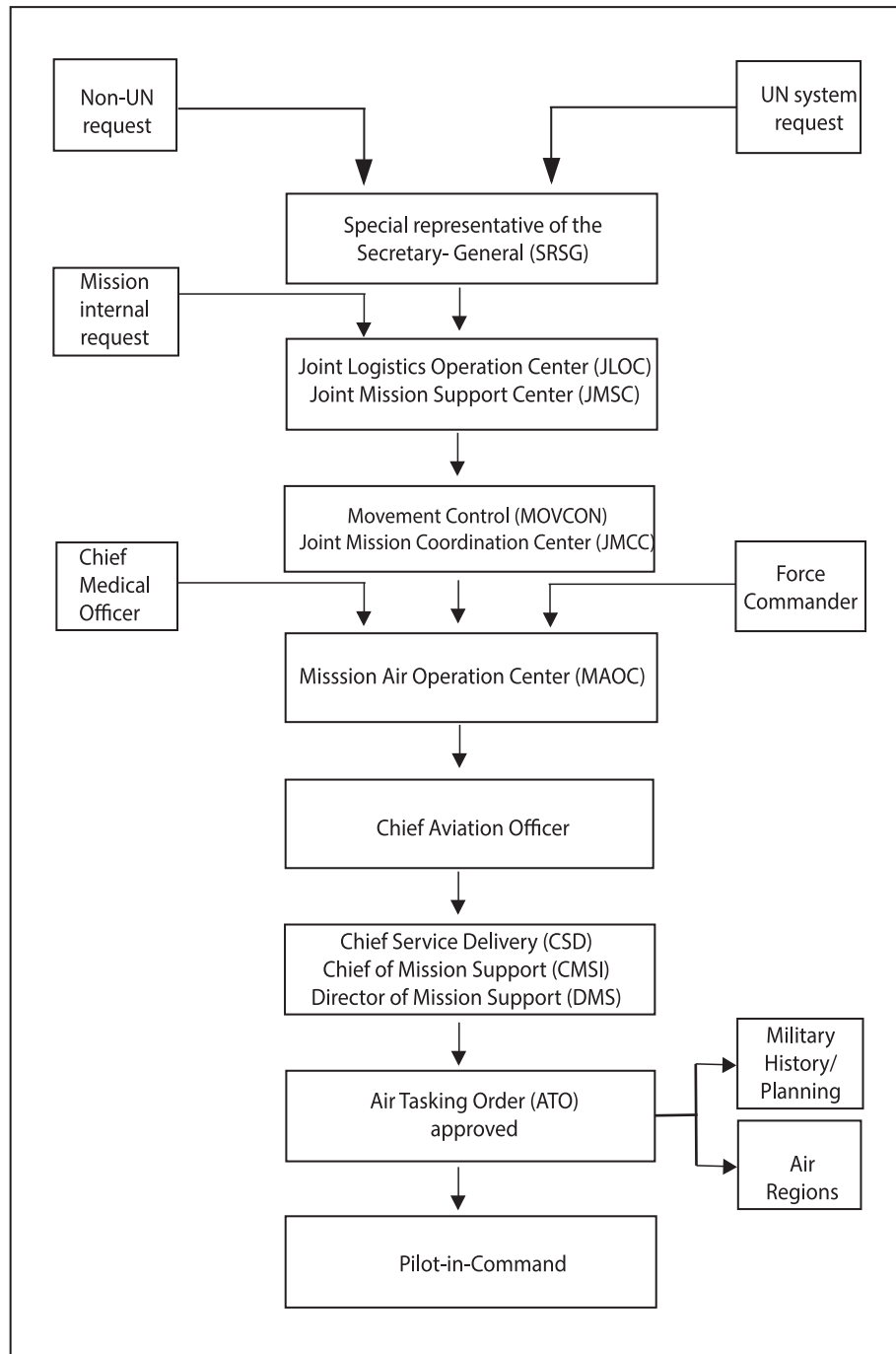


**Use of Technology:** TAGs acquire latest technology and modern weapons such as UAS, drones, improvised explosive device (IED) etc. They are using cyber warfare in internet domain. The way the TAGs are using technology, TCCs also need to acquire latest technology to counter those. Mine protected vehicles, high resolution surveillance camera, UAS, ISR equipment are the latest inclusion in UNPKO which is giving due dividend in tracking the TAGs movement in asymmetric war scenario.

**Training and Equipping TCCs for Asymmetric War Scenario:** TCCs deployed for land operations are not well trained on asymmetric warfare as most of the land forces are trained and experienced on conventional warfare. As Chad has recruited militia forces in their army after their civil war, Chad forces have some exposure to asymmetric war scenario.<sup>16</sup> As Bangladesh Army (BA) was exposed to insurgency operations in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) area, that is why they are performing well in asymmetric war scenario in Mali.

**C3 between Civilian and Military Components as well as Parallel Forces:** In UNPKO, civilians control logistics, air assets and TCCs related to air operations which create difficulties in performing tasks properly. It is very unfortunate that Force Commander (FC) does not have any authority to mobilize any force or air assets for operational purpose in time of need. Figure 2 below shows how military assets are being controlled by civilians where FC can request only. Many member states and regional organizations (e.g., NATO, the EU) also feel uncomfortable with civilian control over military assets in UN system. Excessive control of civilians on military assets and contingents is making UNPKO more ineffective day by day.

**Figure 2. Air Tasking Order for Military Assets**

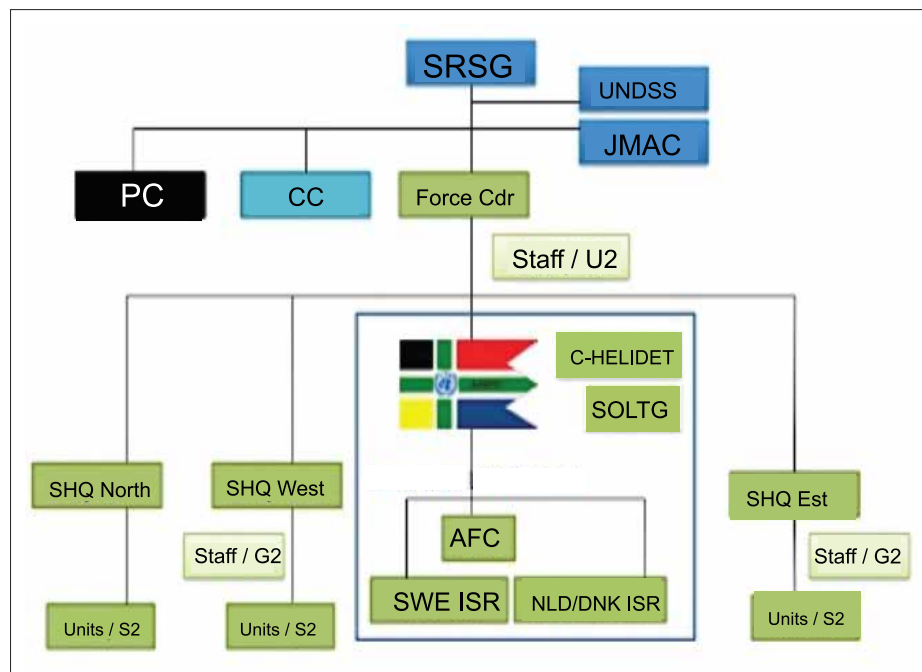


Source: Alexandra Novpsseloff, 'Keeping Peace from Above: Air Assets in UN Peace Operations,' *International Peace Initiative*, New York, IPI Publications, 2017, p.17.

**Frequent Change of Resolution and Vague Mandate:** It has been criticized that mandates set by UNSC were too ambitious, with a routine mismatch between resources deployed on ground and objectives. It was identified that mandates are articulated on the agendas of UNSC members instead of strategic level guidance that can enable mission success.<sup>17</sup> Since 25 June 2014 till 01 September 2020, 10 resolutions were adopted by UNSC on MINUSMA to adjust its UNPKO due to ground reality.<sup>18</sup> All these tasks are not sequenced, which raises concerns once again about the ability of the mission to meet such a detailed mandate.

**Sharing ISR information:** In Mali and DRC, a good number of ISR equipment such as surveillance and reconnaissance UAS are deployed from Germany, Sweden and Italy which play significant role in tracking TAGs and rebels' movement especially at night. There is a communication gap among TCCs in ISR information sharing. Although All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU) and Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) are positioned under FC and SRSG respectively, their responsibility is related to each other.

**Figure 3: Representation of MINUSMA's organisation structure, including ASIFU (the flag) and it's attached and detached intelligence sensors within the box**

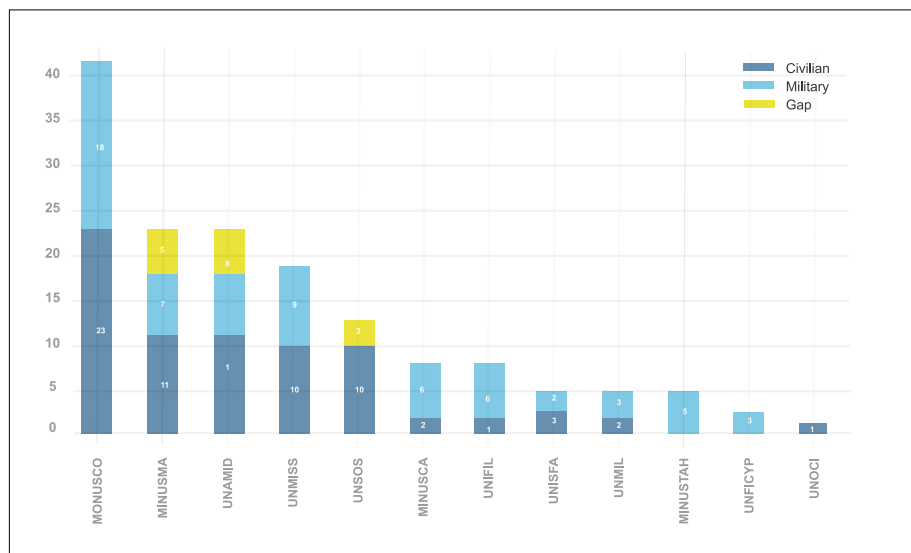


Source: Zomer Jelle, *The Integration Intelligence Structure of MINUSMA, One for all and all for one?*, Crisis and Security Management Department, Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, Leiden University, Netherlands, 2016, p.25

MINUSMA does not avail integrated intelligence structure and both JMAC and ASIFU must find their own informal way of functioning and fitting in within an intelligence environment that lacked structure.<sup>19</sup> Figure 3 above shows MINUSMA intelligence infrastructure. ASIFU is a new concept in UNPKO, and it has adequate capacity to contribute in MINUSMA to cover the full spectrum of intelligence information.

**Inadequate Air Assets for Air Land and Air Transport Operations:** Air operation in MINUSMA and MONUSCO plays a vital role in UNPKO in Mali and DRC respectively due to poor road communication as such UN aircraft and helicopter have become lifeline in transporting troops, equipment, and food in remote locations where troops are deployed. In 2017, only 11 helicopters were operational; MINUSMA authority considers the lack of helicopters and tactical air transport capacity to be one of the mission's major weaknesses.<sup>20</sup> In MONUSCO, at any given time, the military component of the mission has access to an average of 70 % of military air assets.<sup>21</sup> UNPKOs are also in dire need of air assets with night capability (for CASEVAC). Moreover, MINUSMA Aviation is operating in a challenging security environment and harsh climate conditions; its military air assets had been damaged by attacks in Kidal and Gao since deployment, and two attack helicopters (one Dutch Apache and one German Tiger) had crashed since 2015. Figure 4 below shows the number of helicopters in current UNPKM. Moreover, Mirage F1CR, Rafael and Mirage-2000 of France are deployed in Chad for close air support and air interdiction missions.

**Figure 4: Number of Helicopter in Current UN Peacekeeping Mission**



Source: Alexandra Novpsselloff, 'Keeping Peace from Above: Air Assets in UN Peace Operations,' *International Peace Initiative*, New York, IPI Publications, 2017, p.21.

**Deployment of Less Troops in Wide AOR:** Mali and DRC are very big country in terms of size, but UN deployed a smaller number of land troops in a very wide area. Limited number of troops deployed to cover the wide area creates unfathomable difficulties while protecting civilians from TAGs. UN tries to save money by deploying a smaller number of troops for a wide AOR which is not good for any conflict resolution.

**Use of Force:** Use of force has been authorized by UN since the beginning of UNPKO only in case of self defence. In the contemporary UNPKO, when the ways and means of peacekeeping has become colossal task due to devastating strategy of TAGs, spoilers, and rebel groups, it has become dire need for UN forces to use force for peace enforcement. The mandate under Chapter VII of UN Charter is also prepared authorizing use of force for the protection of civilians and their human rights. UNPKO mission in Mali and CAR are deployed under Chapter VII for peace enforcement. Clear understanding of rules of engagement (ROE) is very important for troops on ground. Mistake in applying ROE may create havoc in international arena.

### **Bangladesh Perspective**

Bangladesh is the highest troop contributing country in the world in UNPKO as of 31 March 2021. At present, 6,825 peacekeepers from Bangladesh are deployed in 10 UNPKO all around the globe. As of now, Bangladesh contributed in 43 UNPKO by deploying 1,76,669 (2,034 female) peacekeepers out of which 159 made supreme sacrifices and 240 got injured. Three helicopters of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) were damaged severely in Mali by TAGs IDF on 30 October 2016 costing US\$ 4.82 million. Bangladesh made good reputation in UN that is why, Armed Forces of Bangladesh have always been the first choice for deploying in any critical UNPKO due to their professionalism, dedication, and commitment.

### **UNPKO IN MALI**

#### **Background**

Mali located in Sahara Desert, got independence from France in 1960 and was known to be one of the democratic and politically stable countries in Africa. In January 2012, the political and security situation of Mali got volatile when transnational and local TAG led by Islamic Militant and Tuareg rebels occupied important cities of the North defeating Malian Armed Forces resulting 1,37,975 Malian to seek refuge in Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger and 99,039 people internally displaced. During that time, in March 2012, Captain Amadou Sanogo staged tcoup d'etat ousting President Amadou Toumani Toure from power. In April 2012, independent 'Azawad' state was declared by Tuaregs and TAGs. Other religious militant armed rebel groups wanted to implement 'Sharia Law' in Mali fighting against local Tuaregs who were against

it, which made situation the worst. Figures below show the location of Mali in African Continent, Mali with neighbouring States and Sahel Region of Africa.

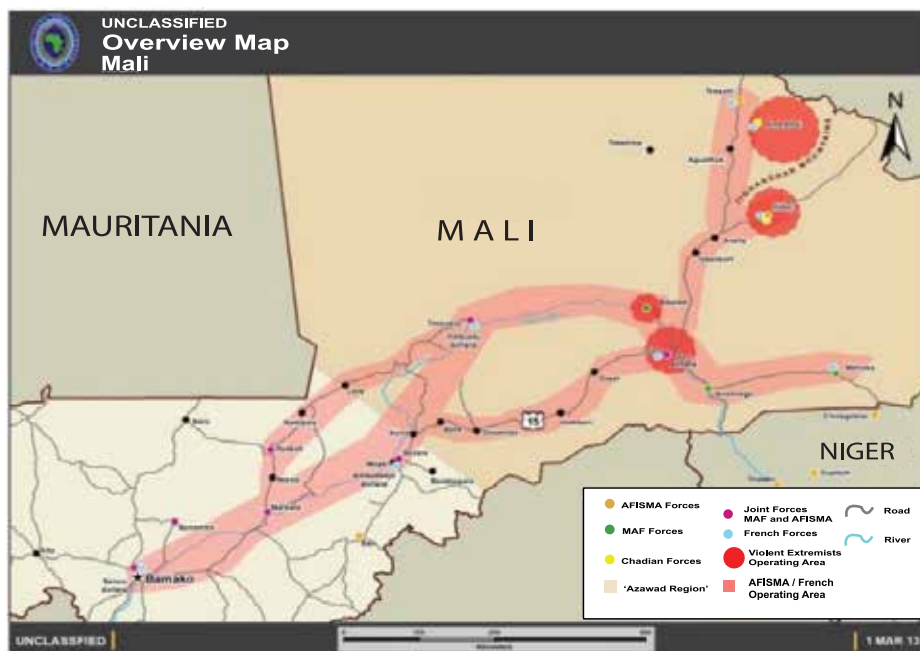
**Figure 5, 6 & 7: Location of Mali in African Continent, Mali with Neighbouring States and Sahel Region of Africa**



Source: Internet

Tuaregs living in the northern part of Mali are basically maternal ethnic relatives of President Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and many of them used to serve Gaddafi. After his fall, Tuaregs returned in the Northern Region of Mali with money, weapons, and ammunitions. They had political will to change the status quo in the country.<sup>22</sup> The Malian crisis has destabilized overall security and stability of Sahel Region.

**Figure 8: Area of Operations in Mali for Peacekeepers was Limited to Scarce Road Networks (as of 1 March 2013)**



Source: Internet

### **Role of France**

TAGs initially captured the North's important towns and gradually occupied Konna (in Mopti near Sevaré) and Giabaly (Mali Mauritania Border). This move towards the capital alerted interim President of Mali, Dioncounda Traoré and forced him to request France to stop advancement of TAGs and gain lost territories. On 10 January 2013, French Armed Forces were deployed in Mali. French Forces conducted 'Operation Serval' and regained all lost territories. Mali Forces and other forces from friendly countries participated in this endeavour.<sup>23</sup>

### **Role of UNSC**

UNSC formed UNPKO in the name of MINUSMA on 25 April 2013. MINUSMA officially started their mission on 01 July 2013, and it has become the most dangerous UNPKO of the world where 245 peacekeepers died as of now in the hand of TAGs.

### **Challenges of MINUSMA**

There are few challenges of MINUSMA which need to be addressed by Mali Government and DPKO, UNHQ for bringing sustainable peace in Sahel Region. Those are mentioned below:-

- a. The Islamic militants and extremists did not give up their arms and their countless attacks continued, to mark their presence. There are the internal problems in the country like the ethnic conflict and the deep economic disparity. There is regional instability with increasing extremism. The success of the MINUSMA mission is largely inhibited by the increased strength of TAGs in the region. MINUSMA works in parallel with the French troops because of the fragile security situation in the country. The French forces will continue military actions against the TAGs. MINUSMA will have to face complex attack and insurgency against peacekeepers.<sup>24</sup>
- b. MINUSMA is running shortage of air assets required for UNPKO. Providing adequate air support by air assets for operations has become a great challenge.<sup>25</sup>
- c. DDR process has become great concern for MINUSMA. To reduce fragmentation of actors, violent extremism, and organized crime both local and transnational, DDR process must be made effective. To establish rule of law in the northern region and to bring all rebel and armed groups in the Peace Agreement and DDR process have become great concern for MINUSMA.<sup>26</sup>
- d. Malian Government could not deploy armed forces, border guards and law enforcing agencies in the northern part of Mali resulting human



smuggling, drug and weapon trafficking in border areas, movement of transnational TAGs and lawlessness in the north.<sup>27</sup>

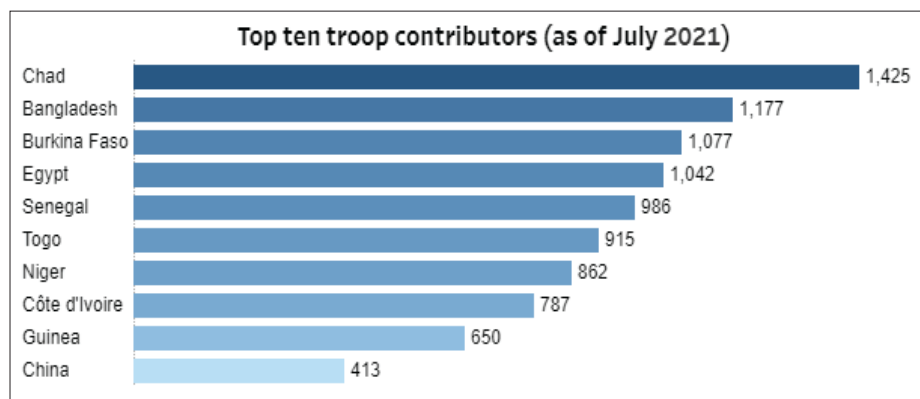
e. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM) got involved in socio-economic activities in the north by providing basic needs to the local population, supplying food, fuel, vehicle spare parts there. By recruiting locals as combatants and auxiliaries, AQIM is engaging them for hostage taking and keeping.

Due to absence of alternate livelihood opportunities, vulnerable groups are being targeted by AQIM. AQIM are providing their livelihood and marrying young girls. This has reduced the authority of traditional chiefs. This vulnerable groups got involved in organized crime for survival.<sup>28</sup> Mali Government is very reluctant to establish local government in the north, develop proper educational facility, put law enforcing agencies, protect border and start economic activities because they are being threatened by local leaders as well.

#### Contribution of Bangladesh in MINUSMA

Bangladesh Armed Forces and Police are involved in UNPKO in Mali since the beginning. Bangladesh Armed Forces are the second highest troop contributing country and third highest police contributing country in MINUSMA. At present, BA is providing one infantry battalion on same type of mission. One engineering battalion is providing engineering support and one signal battalion is providing communication support both from BA. BAF is providing one Airfield Services and Management Unit providing all kind of aviation management in Kidal and Tessalit Airport under Air Region 5 and 6. Peacekeepers of Bangladesh could earn the hearts and minds of Malian people and could successfully perform their mandate with professionalism, dedication and commitment. Figures below show Military and Police top 10 troop contributing countries in MINUSMA.

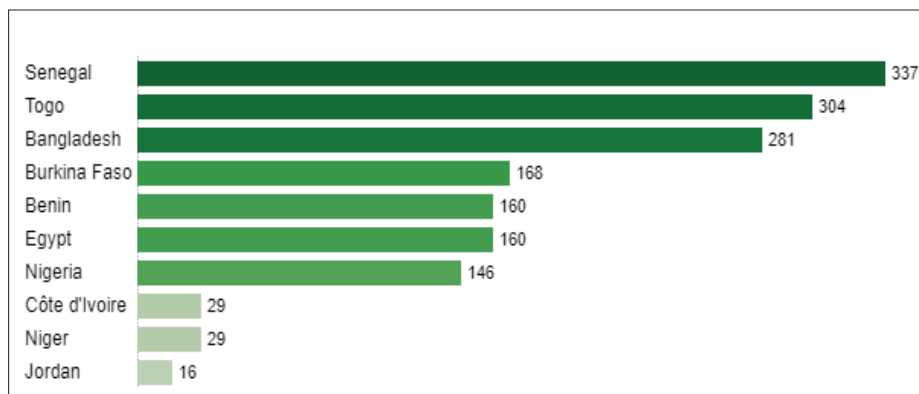
**Figure 9: Top 10 Military Contributing Country in MINUSMA**



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



**Figure 10: Top 10 Police Contributing Country in MINUSMA ( as of July 2021)**



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

### Findings of the Study

Following are the findings of this study:-

#### Challenges to Contemporary UNPKO.

- a. Neighbouring states suffer most due to peripheral effect on a conflict where international and regional TAGs are involved. Regional organization like AU and ECOWAS cannot contribute much in the long run in any peacekeeping operation due to limited capacity and financial constraint.
- b. Weak political support, absence of quality troops and technology based equipment, and restraining to embrace robust approach are challenging robust peacekeeping operations continuously.
- c. Hybrid mission is a new model of peacekeeping where regional organization face difficulties in bringing positive result and UN has to provide budget and logistic support.
- d. C2 in between forces are absent, blur and forces do not share intelligence information among them. Parallel forces involved in anti-terrorism operations threatens legitimacy or perceived impartiality on UN operations which have increased risk for UN forces.
- e. If all armed groups involved in crisis are not included in peace process, signatories do not comply with accords, it hampers DDR process and overall peace and security of the country.
- f. UNPKO budget is considerably less than world's military budget.
- g. C3 between civilian and military component weakens UNPKO. Military commanders do not have any control or authority on military assets. This reduces the effectiveness of military forces in UNPKO.

h. Resolutions of any UNPKO are being modified and updated subject to changing scenario and situation on ground in a crisis area or war zones. Mandates are very wide and it becomes very challenging for TCCs to fulfill all the mandates with limited resources. The pen holder responsible for preparing and implementing resolutions are from P5 who works for the national interest of own country.

i. Most of the TCCs are not well equipped and trained to fight against TAGs in asymmetric war scenario.

j. Lack of aviation assets is one of the major weaknesses of UNPKO.

k. AOR of UNPKO is very wide and number of troops deployed are very less compared to the big terrain they are deployed in.

l. Use of force in UNPKO was initially authorized for self-protection only under Chapter VI of UN Charter. However, due to changing war scenario, to face TAGs in asymmetric war condition, use of force has been authorized by UNSC in all recent UNPKO under Chapter VII of UN Charter for peace building and enforcement. Using force without clear understanding of ROE will be detrimental for the image of UN in host country.

m. In spite of limitations and resource constraint, Bangladesh being the eighth largest country, based on population, is contributing greatly in UNPKO.

#### **UNPKO in Mali**

a. MINUSMA has become the most dangerous mission on earth as peacekeepers are being targeted by TAGs. Parallel forces with limited communication, coordination and intelligence information sharing have added more challenges to UN Forces.

b. Participation of all parties in peace process must be ensured and all signatories must be sincere in their commitment on those provisions laid down in peace accord in Mali.

c. TAGs are taking advantage of weak border management, overall security situation, law and order, public service, and income-generating opportunities in the rural areas especially in the North.

d. For bringing sustainable peace in the country and keeping unity among people and land, crisis of Mali must be resolved politically, and Mali Government has a great role to play.

#### **Way Forward**

##### **UNPKO Operational Aspects**

a. **Critical Aspects of Robust Peacekeeping and Hybrid Mission:** TCCs are to train and equip their forces properly for robust peacekeeping.

UNDPKO can select troops from those countries who can perform well in that kind of mission. In UNPKO in Africa, instead of deploying troops from Africa only for hybrid missions, troops may be selected from other countries of Asia, South America, and Europe so that neutrality in UNPKO is maintained and mission can complete its mandate within shortest possible time.

b. **Parallel Forces:** Instead of deploying parallel forces, both forces may be deployed under one umbrella with comprehensive UNSC mandate.

c. **Participation and Compliance of all Armed and Ethnic Groups in Peace Process and DDR:** To make DDR and peace process more effective and participatory, all armed and ethnic group must be included in the peace process. Conducive atmosphere must be created. All signatories must be compliant to peace accord.

d. **C3 between Civilian and Military Components:** Military components must be commanded by military hierarchy and civilian component must be managed by civilian personnel of UN.

e. **Share ISR Information:** ASIFU and JMAC must share intelligence information between each other. At the same time, fused information must be disseminated to TCCs on need-to-know basis.

f. **Resolution and Mandate:** Frequent change of resolution due to ground reality, confuses field force greatly. Mandate must be written clearly and concisely so that it is well understood by all troops deployed in the field.

g. **Training and Equipping Troops on Asymmetric War Scenario:** All the TCCs are trained and equipped for conventional warfare but they are to be trained and well equipped so that they can face asymmetric war scenario against TAGs.

h. **Deploy Adequate Number of Air Assets and Troops for Effective Land Operations:** More number of troops may be deployed, and civilian participations are to be reduced in the field. An assessment may be made by the experts so that AOR and troop deployment may be standardized. Air assets must be increased in those UNPKOs where these are the lifeline of the mission.

i. **Use of Force:** Use of force by UN troops is very critical in nature and troops on ground must use judgement in applying force. ROE must be clear and well understood by all troops deployed on ground.

#### **Other Aspects**

a. **Involvement of Neighbouring Countries and Regional Organisations in Peace Process:** The involvement of neighbouring countries and regional organisations in peace process will give due dividend and UNSC must ensure their participation in the peace accord.

b. **Budget:** All member states of UN are spending maximum in buying arms and ammunitions. If they could spare a portion of their military budget for UNPKO, funding for development of peace mission would be very easy.

#### **UNPKO in Mali**

a. **Counter Threat against TAGs:** Troops must be trained and well equipped to face the threat of asymmetric war. French Forces must come under one C3 for more cooperation and information sharing. Armed forces, border guards and law enforcing agencies of host country need to be deployed for border protection and management.

b. **Peace Accord and DDR:** Participation of all parties in peace process must be ensured and all signatories must be sincere in their commitment on those laid down in peace accord.

c. **Develop Employment Opportunity:** Mali Government must urgently invest on alternate livelihood opportunities for groups vulnerable to organized crime. Local government needs to be established and proper education facilities need to be developed for employment generation.

d. **Political Solution of the Crisis:** For bringing sustainable peace in the country and keeping unity among people and land, crisis of Mali must be resolved politically, and Mali Government has a great role to play. Military solution can bring temporary solution only.

**Recommendations:** Following are the recommendations:-

#### **Effectiveness of UNPKO**

a. Neighbouring states and regional organisations need to take more responsibility in the peace process. All stakeholders must be committed to peace agreement and need to participate actively in the peace process and DDR for sustainable peace.

b. C2 of civilian over military components must be avoided. Instead of deploying parallel forces under different mandates, both forces may be deployed under one umbrella with comprehensive mandate covering both forces role and task. Resolution and mandate must not be changed frequently, and it should be specific and easily understandable by troops on ground. Use of force must be applied judiciously following ROE by troops on ground.

c. UNSC may select TCCs having technological age, training, equipment, and experience on asymmetric warfare. Adequate air assets and a greater number of troops must be deployed to cover wide AOR. ISR sharing must be ensured from Force HQ up to TCC level by ASIFU and JMAC. Otherwise, it would be very difficult for troops on ground to counter TAGs surprise attacks.

d. Mali Government must generate employment opportunities for groups vulnerable to organized crime. Local government needs to be established and proper education facilities need to be developed in the north. Law enforcing agencies including armed forces and border guards need to be deployed in the north and border must be protected. For bringing sustainable peace, crisis of Mali must be resolved politically. Mali Army needs to be abstained from frequent coup and let democracy to flourish in the country.

e. Armed Forces and Police of Bangladesh should train and equip their forces to meet future challenges of UNPKO. Peacekeepers of Bangladesh must take challenges of MINUSMA as opportunity for future deployment in UNPKO.

### **Conclusion**

In fifth generation robust peacekeeping, peacekeepers are involved in multifarious engagement. Peace enforcement for safety and security of innocent civilians has become a very risky task for them due to TAGs often encounters. Peacekeepers are also involved in nation-building activities such as construction of communication infrastructure, training security and law enforcement agencies, developing political and legal institutions, holding regular national elections, and disarmament of rebels under hostile environment. C3 becomes difficult if parallel forces are deployed and working in same AOR under different mandates of UNSC with no coordination between them. As French and UN Forces live inside same camp, UN forces must bear the consequences for actions of French Forces against terrorists. In peace process, it was found that all armed groups are not signatory to peace agreement as such DDR becomes difficult task for UN Forces.

Mali was one of the politically stable countries in the West African region, but Tuareg uprising for independent Azawad State in the North has brought the country under stalemate. The fuel was added by TAGs joining in the conflict which turned the crisis in armed conflict. Deployment of French boots on ground helped Mali from catastrophic defeat and subsequently deployment of UN has worked moderately in attaining peace. Time has come that all ethnic groups in Mali should resolve their differences and work for fulfilling peace accord with dedication. Local government must start functioning and all education institution must start their curriculum so that educated mass can be developed and employment can be generated. Armed Forces, Border Guards and Law Enforcing Agencies must be deployed in the north so that activities of TAGs can be stopped for ever. Economic activities in the northern region need to start soon so that people can get job to start a decent way of living. Malian Government must take a major share of workload in making all these things to

happen step by step. Unless a secured environment is created in the northern part of Mali, the country will not flourish in future.

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#### Brief Biography



**Air Commodore Md. Mamunur Rashid, BUP, ndc, afwc, psc, M Phil, ADWC** was commissioned in BAF on 03 January 1989. He has attained M Phil Degree from Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) in 2019. He is an Expert (Category 'A') Air Defence Weapon Controller who served in Air Defence Radar Units of BAF in different appointments. The author actively participated in United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia (2004), Democratic Republic of Congo (2012-13) and Mali (2019). At present he is posted at BUP, Mirpur Cantonment as Chief of Public Relations, Information, and Publications. Air Cdre Md. Mamunur Rashid is Senior Research Fellow of BUP under PhD Programme.



## The Challenge of Dealing with Change: A Sector Commander's Take from an Experiential Journey

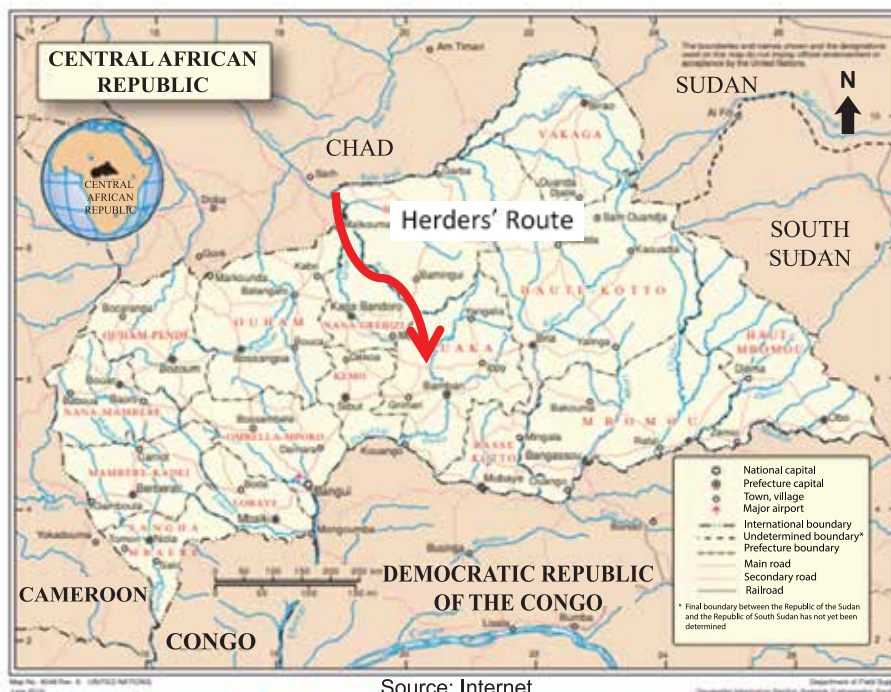
Brigadier General Mohammad Asadullah Minhazul Alam, ndu, psc, PhD

### Introduction

Many would term the very location of Kaga-Bandora as the centre of Africa. Geographically, there could be some truth in it; but what is more relevant is about its way of life. Kaga-Bandora (also called as Kaga, colloquially) bears a 'melting pot' type socio-ethnic heritage where religions, tribes and cultures amalgamate following their long course of history. It was an interesting place to work in.

In this write up there is a humble attempt to reflect on the experience as the Sector Centre Commander of the UN Force in MINUSCA which started in late October, 2020. At the beginning, during the yet-to-be-discovered phase, the place didn't attract much. It is a typical mix of not-so-high hills and barren lands with interspersed villages, where the vegetation lays scattered and the people are struggling to live and survive.

**Map 1: Central African Republic with a Prominent Transhumance Corridor near Kaga-Bandora**



In addition to this very usual Sub-Saharan representation, there was another element that had been shaping the life and livelihood of people for long: the armed groups (AG). Taking over of command and responsibility was immediately followed by visiting operational bases of the battalions, and there, it was found that armed group members were sitting just outside camp premise with weapons in hand, inside the civilian community. They had certain blank looks in their eyes where no hope or aspirations beamed. The commoners were busy with survival; the conflict was an additional burden on their already dilapidated living hood. Most of them including children had the blank looks too; they hardly smiled. The atmosphere of tension and uncertainties dominated, and all seemed to have accepted those as fait accompli. An almost decade-long UN presence did not make them very optimistic either.

The locals didn't believe that the UN mechanism could completely realize and address their issues - not at least at the root levels, where the Field Office was operating. A part of the system and apparatus (i.e. Force, MILOB, UNPOL etc.) didn't have enough time and scope to understand the fundamental complexities, which were persisting for long with deep-rooted and evolving socio-cultural- economic dynamics. But it was needed; a profound grasp was crucially important.

**Photo 1: Cattle Herds being Driven through Maize Cultivation**



Source: Author's collection

### **Contemplation and Comprehension**

Kaga-Bandora has been a great cattle trading hub. From time immemorial, Fulanis or Pheul Herders<sup>1</sup> (one of the largest ethnic groups in Sahel, Central and West Africa) used this as one of the halting places for the cattle caravans, traded here and then moved downwards to the southern basin of Congo. UN identified this as the one of the conflict-prone 'transhumance' corridors. Their routes were a constant source of clashes, killings and burning

of villages - especially during transhumance seasons (December to May). It was almost inevitable as the situation was at the crossroads of community's economy, livelihood and survival means. Farmers could not bear huge crop damage caused by passing livestock of the herders. On the other hand, intense growth of the rural populations was responsible for rapid conversion of the grazing land into farmlands. Both the groups maintained 'armoury' and armed guards to protect their interests. Sometimes they hired local armed groups. Sometimes traditional enmity between neighbourhood villages and communities combined. The armed groups and vested corners always exploited these clashes. For the UN, the clashes were big concerns as the dead bodies undermined the mandated task of protecting the civilians. During one year long stay, at least four major incidents were witnessed where the conflict of economic interest among the Fulani and Farmer were turned and translated as political/communal conflicts. The UN solutions were unfortunately myopic and trivial. Military instruments were applied to solve an immensely complicated, age old source of conflicts. Most of the UN forces and their commanders came only for one year or less. And many in the United Nations completed their terms even before understanding the complicity.

Mr. T M worked in Kaga for more than 14 years. The amount of experience he held along the ways was invaluable. He dealt with the political matters related to the conflict and was an important person to negotiate with the armed groups from the UN side. He once told me that the complexity of the inter-group conflicting issues vis-a-vis cross-cutting matters were difficult to comprehend even after so many years in the field. Indicating the fact that the Force gets rotated every after one year, his idea on the Forces' perception and knowledge of the affair was requested. However, not much was said, most probably not to embarrass the Sector Commander of the Force.

This article, therefore, is about introspection. It is about excavating and sharing how efforts to mitigate such conflict suffer from fundamental flaws, when military solutions are misguidedly considered as the key instrument. It is also about understanding how a contingent commander and his soldiers need to adapt to change where problems are far more graver than solving by 'one bullet, one enemy' theory.

### **Empirical Ride One: N'govota Burning**

Towards the end of December - a time that was determined as peak transhumance season - suddenly there were hues and cries. A village named N'govota, approximately 30 km south of Kaga, was set ablaze, and it got completely burned. Some unidentified number of villagers was killed. Initially people it was thought as ex-séléka versus anti-balaka<sup>2</sup> fight. Ex-seleka members came from predominantly Muslim community and anti-balaka was their counterpart. So there was this religious dimension to the issue. But in reality, ex-seleka did not exist significantly on the ground as an entity, especially

after their fall from power in 2013-14. The dominant groups in 2020 in Kaga were Al Khatim-led MPC and Nouredine-led FPRC.<sup>3</sup> By the end of December and closer to the date of national election of 2020, they formed an alliance named CPC<sup>4</sup> and declined to take part in the election. But here in this case, this was not a village-burning incident based on simplified understanding of the issue. In-depth investigation revealed the chronological context of the occurrence. In reality, it was a Fulani-non-Fulani issue. Fulani herders were passing by the village and they camped for one or two nights by the village perimeter. One day, one of their clan members was shot by the villagers and few cattle were looted. This was the initiation of the clash. In the following morning, the retaliation came tough; Fulanis launched a deliberate 'assault'. Ex-seleka members were hired and they joined the 'frenzy.' They made the entire village deserted and thousand plus people became internally displaced (IDP).

UN's immediate response came in the form of deploying a Temporary Operating Base (TOB) by the Force. It was done from the nearby African contingent and they did really well to stabilize. The Head of Office<sup>5</sup>, who hailed from an African country as well, was well-acquainted with such kind of conflicting scenario. But he continued to rely on military presence and not looking for other mitigation measures. Meanwhile, a considerable time had elapsed before the soldiers on the ground became exhausted, tired, and depressed due to the difficult living conditions. The battalion commander came down to Sector Headquarters a number of times and requested for pulling out of the TOB. But there was no approval from the Force Headquarters as the civilian authorities made no such recommendation. At least fifty houses were burned, compelling the displaced families living in the bushes, but there was hardly any effort to bring them back. Finding the ineptness of decision-making, the battalion commander was tasked to hold reconciliatory meetings among the groups. As this was initially portrayed as ex-seleka anti-balaka conflict, a meeting was held with both the communities outside the camp. As usual, it did not produce any results since the conflict was not between these two groups. The battalion commander and his soldiers, even being from a neighbouring country, could not communicate with the locals due to linguistic barrier. They also believed it to be a clash between two Muslims and Christians. As no answer to a request arrived from the Force Headquarters or the civilian authorities, a makeshift measure was adopted to rotate the soldiers after every fifteen days. After about three months, when the herders left the grazing area, the villagers automatically returned and settled down - the situation was under control. That was the time the reality and the underlying cause of the conflict became clear.

Thus lessons were learnt. The presence of military forces was only a temporary solution. The mitigation needed a pre-emptive socio-politico-cultural engagement where the economic interest of both communities could be



preserved better and well before. It was absolutely essential that the battalion commander and his battalion were aware of such kind of realities, training to deal with such complex situations.

### **Empirical Ride Two: Dekoa Killing**

The first phase of the election was held on 27 December 2020. On 15 December 2020, following a decree by the Constitutional Court rejecting the candidature of former president François Bozizé, major rebel groups (including Anti-balaka, UPC, FPRC, 3R and MPC) collaborated to form a coalition named CPC. François Bozize paid a visit to Kaga-Bandoro, met with the armed leaders and they took a vow to foil the election at any cost. UN was determined to support the election as part of the mandated responsibility. UNPK mission forces started escorting the electoral materials and election officials to risky and sensitive polling areas. Mahamat al Khatim, the leader of MPC, could successfully 'sneak past' the blocks and barriers raised by UN forces in Kaga city and orchestrated a deliberate attack on a major township named Dekoa. The area belonged to the same battalion that was dealing with N'govota village. The rebels almost captured the entire city, pushing back the UN forces. Meanwhile, a timely counter-measure of sending the Bangladeshi Light Quick Reaction Force (LQRF) helped restore the situation. By the end of the day, the battalion commander in place sent an all-correct report, without even knowing that three of his soldiers went missing. When the matter was revealed, a deliberate search was conducted, combining multiple forces. Three dead bodies were found lying scattered in the bushes – appearing as a surprise. The UN forces were fighting under the protection of armoured personal carrier (APC) and none actually understood how they went so deep inside the jungles. Later, after hearing from their fellow soldiers, it was understood that these soldiers formed an assault line like a conventional fight, and chased the armed groups when they were retreating. The contingent in question was also from a country which was conflict-torn a few years ago. They had brave, courageous and loyal soldiers. Some of them were battle-hardened, but unfortunately, the transition from their earlier mind to a 'peacekeeping force mind-set' did not happen. The battalion commander could not apprise as to what he did for adapting his soldiers to this new environment.

From this incident, it was well understood that the most challenging task for preparing a contingent associated the need for inculcating psychological adaptability. This has to be inserted into the spirit of individual soldiers. This is easier said than done, mainly because soldiers are normally trained to defend a piece of land at the cost of their life against some enemy. In the UN peacekeeping missions, the villagers and stakeholders are not necessarily enemies. As such, it is not demanded that every single one of them need to be chased and destroyed. The lack of adequate adaptive training caused the death of three brave soldiers in a foreign land. Their 'oath' never meant for such kind of losses.

### **Empirical Ride Three: Girimari Fight**

A month later, in another small township named Girimari, UPC<sup>6</sup> (a part of the armed group coalition) launched another major attack. Initially the attack was resisted by the government forces (FACA)<sup>7</sup>, supported by bilateral mercenaries. But soon, the UN operating base was under attack. The displaced people gathered around the operating base and reinforcements had to be sent from Bangladeshi LQRF. With additional APCs and manpower, the base seemed well-protected and the armed group coalition moved away. There was no sign of any attack for the next few days, so the base commander decided to conduct joint patrolling with the APCs around the camp premises. Perhaps, overconfidence clouded his thoughts and he was taken by surprise when seven of the APCs fell under a deliberate ambush by the armed group. The armed group did not have the luxury of superior vehicles and equipment like the UN forces. They were mostly travelling by foot or motorcycles and were using age-old weapons. But they had one overriding advantage – the area belonged to them and they knew it better than anybody else. The ambush was well-sited with a roadblock ahead and a cut-off mechanism at the rear. Seven APCs of the UN forces were stuck in a small area. Fighting continued for almost three hours; thousands of bullets were sprayed and fired. Thanks to armoured protection, no major casualties occurred to the UN forces. However, towards the end of the fight, one of the APC gunners was shot at the neckline, and he died. It is important to note that apart from his neckline, his entire body was under protection. He was killed by a sniper shot. Investigating the matter, it was revealed that the soldiers and the battalion were not trained on the nature and magnitude of the armed group's capabilities. Neither did they know about their tactics. Interaction with one of the company commanders of the battalion revealed that the soldiers were bearing the mind-set of peacekeepers – where the thinking of peace, rather than deadly fight, overshadowed their judgments.

### **Empirical Ride Four: Kaga Election**

In Kaga-Bandora, one of the contingents carried an interesting psyche. They were extensively 'socializing' with the rebels and managing to coexist by mutual understanding. There was an agreement between the government and the rebels named as APPR.<sup>8</sup> This was a UN recognized peace effort till an acceptable reconciliation was reached. But that arrangement did not suggest UN forces fraternizing with the armed group members. The soldiers of the contingent couldn't understand how they needed to remain neutral yet robust. Riding in their APCs it was found soldiers of the battalion waving hands towards the armed groups and getting a response. A briefing by the battalion commander about his operational responsibility, indicated the situation as a conflict between two religious factions. Kaga-Bandora Township was divided by a stream named Naka canal. The Muslim community lived on the northern

bank of the canal, while on the southern bank it was predominantly the Christian community. Their interests were interlinked by the economic activities, children's education, and common cultures. On and often along the course of the history, people tried to raise the religious issues, but the chemistry and culture of their neighbourhood remained the same. On the further north towards the Chadian border, the township of N'Dele was once a part of a Muslim kingdom Dar al Kuti.<sup>9</sup> However, commoners did not bother much about historical legacies and political divisions. It was an imposed segmentation by the vested interest groups that tried to keep them separated. It was surprising to see that over a period of seven years, the same contingents – that had been rotating there in the same place, carried along a faulty belief. The soldiers were told not to challenge or harm the MPC members and they were also very comfortable with given narrative.

During the second phase of national elections a nearby polling centre was found entirely empty. The Muslim community boycotted the election under pressure by the armed groups (that was religiously akin to them), while the Christian community was barred entering into the polling centre by a few gunmen who were shooting sporadically near the polling centre. It was literally shocking that not a single round was fired by the UN contingent, despite relentless orders from the command. However, the APCs moved and the battalion negotiated with the armed groups to leave the area. Even then, they were shaky and 'trigger-shy' to shoot. Having come back to the base the battalion commander was summoned and demand an explanation. The matter was also reported to their country senior, making a mention that such ineptness from the UN force was unacceptable. The reality was that the soldiers of the battalion inherited an idea from their predecessor about not shooting at the 'pious brotherhood' of the community. This idea was supplemented by the lack of instruction from their existing leadership.

### **Points to Ponder**

In all of the above cases, my personal realization centred around recognizing two crucial matters: adaptability and capacity to change. In the former three cases, there was a lack of adaptive postures, and in the last case, it was an example of wrong adaptation. All these incidents signify the basic necessity of incorporating adaptability in the training phraseology and doctrine. For this, it should not be a generic inclusion, but needs a mission-specific knowledge-focused emphasis. Three key subjects that demand enhanced attention in pre-deployment training for UNPKO should be: adaptability, innovation and initiative. The goal of UN deployment should not be mere positioning a force, but rather, effective-positioning that can contribute substantially to the improvement of the overall security environment. There are deployments across Africa where missions have been continuing for two or three decades without considerable progress. Following points need attention,

especially at the tactical level, while preparing troops and contingents for UNPKO.

a. **PKO is Not a War:** This understanding is absolutely vital. This is where change and adaptability comes into play. This is not about change of organization or equipment inventory, rather more about change of mind-set. Soldiers are trained to look for an enemy and shoot. The absence of 'enemy component' in UNPKO needs to be assimilated deeply.

b. **UN is Not a Party to the Conflict:** In any conflict, there are stakeholders and parties to the conflict. But it needs to be clearly mentioned that in any occasion, the UN should not be termed as a party to the conflicts. Rather, they are the one who are the negotiator and mediator bound by resolution and mandated tasks. Even if the government of the conflict-prone country signed an agreement with the UN in regards to cooperation, the government forces may sometimes become a party of the conflicts. UN forces, however, have to remain above any kind of partiality. UN forces have to maintain neutrality beyond religion, ethnicity, culture, or any kind of affiliation. Sometimes the country in conflict invites forces from neighbouring or other countries under bilateral basis, but not under UN umbrella. If the same country has provided UN force as well, then two contingents coming from the same country will have two types of rules of engagement and mandated obligation. One could even be a party to the conflict, while the other has to remain absolutely committed and neutral.

c. **There is No Enemy, but Threats against the Mandate:** There are opposing forces, not enemy, in a UN Peacekeeping Operations(UNPKO). It's better to term them threat. Threat to the goal of peace-making is the correct portrayal of 'enemy' in UNPKO. This is something, which was not even in the psyche of senior military staffs of the UN. Some of my staffs from the neighbouring African countries (born through similar fratricidal sacrifices and long conflicts) opined to eliminate certain elements of the armed groups by brutal employment of the UN forces. Even the force leadership sometimes stressed upon for arresting opposition political leaders. Those were grossly wrong. In a country where it is not certain who is on the right side of the history, in a country where nobody is in control and nobody claims absolute legitimacy, it would be a mistake to determine or brand someone as the 'enemy'. But definitely, there will be threats to the mandate and mandated tasks. These threats may comprise of individual components, armed groups, or situational phenomena (like herder non-herder conflict) etc.

#### **How to Go about It**

Based on the yearlong experience as Sector Commander in the UNPK mission suggestions are as follows:-

a. **Understanding the 'Gamut' by the Leadership:** The leadership has to be completely oriented with the socio-cultural and ethnic background of the conflict.



Any contingent leader must read primarily not the current situation, but the historical context. It is imperative for all commanders at all levels to recognize that the conflict may have a more important social, cultural, and economic dimension. And it is also important to understand that the forces are only a part of the instrument the UN applies to keep the situation stable. It is not the instrument to solve the problem. The commanders should also understand how at the sector level, different agencies collaborate and work together. The mechanisms of the UN are segmented and despite many efforts, they cannot be effectively integrated unless the battalion commanders (who only go for a year) understand the inherent *modus operandi*.

**b. Acquiring the Capacity to Change:** This is the most difficult part of the adaptation. Typically military units do not tend to change. Their approaches are very structured and formatted. Their institutional knowledges and memories are sometimes very outdated. And most of the units tend to do what the previous units did in any particular mission. Whereas, the situational picture in conflict-prone areas continues to change and evolve. For example, in the Central African Republic, the belligerent groups were ex-seleka – anti balaka until 2013. But within a couple of years, the dynamics changed and new groups like 3R, CPC, UPC emerged on the stage. Newer kind of affiliations and coalitions were created. A contingent still carrying the mind-set and knowledge of their predecessors will never be able to understand the gamut unless they acquire the recent knowledge before deployment. Here in such cases, institutional memories could be misleading sometimes.

**c. Proactive Adaptability:** This is connected to the evolving nature of the complex situation confronted in the UN mission. This is the most important part of the suggested ways. This is required while during the deployment. Deep knowledge on the area and continuous situation awareness by connecting to the locals are two keys in this regard.

## **Conclusion**

One common thing that nations in conflict in Africa lack, is unity. And one person they desperately need is unifier. In those conflict-torn areas, there is no shared platform where everyone agrees to stand together and build a nation. Based on visiting a couple of families in the neighbourhood of camp an interaction with the local indicates that many of the locals acquired great experiential wisdom. Their understanding of the prevailing situation, can best be expressed in Chinua Achebe's words "Things fall apart" which does not divulge any future hope, nor optimism with the UN effort. The locals were happy that some of the UN forces were doing great in humanitarian assistance, capacity building, and awareness enhancement of the locals but they blamed international efforts for deliberate procrastination, for lacking right kind of focus.

One area of frustration could be the way forces were being employed. Perhaps, there could be a better, cost-effective approach; perhaps the deployed forces could undertake more beneficial outreach efforts for the locals in difficult areas. Seeing the situation in CAR, one may recall the famous movie 'Hirok Rajar Deshe'(Kingdom of Diamonds) by Satyajit Ray (1921-1992) in which the plot renders a country full of diamonds, where people starve and cannot manage basic needs for the children. Likewise in CAR, with abundance of untapped resources and potentials, the fateful communities are deprived of a better life. What they endure today is perhaps none of theirs or predecessors' fault. In the past they obtained imposed demarcations of borders set by ridiculous Scramble for Africa. They were invaded, divided, and colonized; their natural harmony was eventually destroyed. Presently, they are on an arduous long safari across fratricidal conflicts and disunity.

Important for the rest, is to help repairing their fault lines, which were not created by them, but by a 'civilized world.' More important is to help restoring the human identity, as rightly pointed by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in his Ode to Africa:

“Underneath the obscurity of your dark facade  
lay unknown your human identity  
Degraded by the collective gaze of derision.  
And then they arrived, manacles in hand  
Claws sharper by far than any on your wolves;  
They arrived, human rustlers and traffickers all.”<sup>10</sup>

### Notes and References

1. Fulanis are traditionally pastoral traders who live a nomadic life by herding cattle and other domestic animals. They move across the areas of grazing lands together with the community as a whole. They often get involved in a collision course with the settled agricultural populations.
2. Composed of (almost) all members from Muslim community, Séléka was an alliance of rebel militia groups that seized the state power in early 2013 with its leader Michel Djotodia becoming the nation's President. After his resignation and official dissolution of Séléka, the remaining rebel groups became known as Ex-Séléka. The Anti-balaka is an alliance of militia said to be composed primarily of Christians, formed to counter Seleka.
3. MPC- Central African Patriotic Movement (French: Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique); FPRC-Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central African Republic (French: Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique).
4. CPC- In 2020, Coalition of Patriots for Change (Coalition des patriotes pour le changement), a coalition of major rebel groups was created to disrupt the 2020–21 CAR general elections.
5. HoO: The field representative of the SRSG in the Sector level.
6. UPC- Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC, French: Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique), led by Ali Darassa.
7. Central African Armed Forces (French: Forces armées centrafricaines; FACA).
8. On 6 February 2019, the Government of CAR signed the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR-RCA) with 14 armed groups. Under this accord, the armed groups agreed to a termination of hostilities in exchange for the inclusion of representatives in the institutions of the republic. The parties further reached an agreement on the parameters of a judicial and reconciliation process, the establishment of mixed security units and the participation of irregular combatants in a process of demobilisation and reintegration. See more at <https://www.hdcentre.org/activities/conflict-mediation-and-support-transitional-justice-central-african-republic/> Accessed 03 March 2022.
9. An Islamic state named Dar al Kuti existed in the northwest of the present Central African Republic that existed between 1830 to 1912. Available at Traditional States in the Central African Republic, [https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Central\\_African\\_Rep\\_native.html](https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Central_African_Rep_native.html). Accessed 03 March 2022.
10. *Ode to Africa*, University of Dayton, Translation available at [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/ece\\_fac\\_pub/368/](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/ece_fac_pub/368/). Originally: Rabindranath Tagore, *Africa*, Potroput, 1936.

### Brief Biography



**Brigadier General Mohammad Asadullah Minhazul Alam, ndu, psc, PhD** was born at Chattogram in 1971. He was commissioned on 20 December 1991. He holds an ongoing 30 years plus long career. His wide experience includes working as United Nations Military Observer (UNTAET), serving at the Chattogram Hill Tracts on five alternate terms including commanding a battalion, serving as Directing Staff in Defence Services Command and Staff College, commanding a contingent in Kuwait, founding Army War Game Centre, et cetera. Brigadier General Minhaz commanded 2 Infantry Brigade in Ramu, which was intensely involved in dealing with security management of Rohingya (FDMN) affairs. He also served as the Sector Commander of the UN force in Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Brigadier General Minhaz obtained MDS from DSCSC, Mirpur. He is also a graduate from Singapore Command and Staff College. In 2018, he obtained MSC in National Security Strategy from National Defence University (NDU), USA. In 2020, he was conferred upon PhD degree in IR discipline from Jahangirnagar University. His write-ups have been published in number of military journals and national dailies. He authored two books titled, *Band of Brothers* and *The Societal Debt* in 2010 and *Rhapsodies of Solitude* in 2021. Presently, he is serving as Director of Overseas Operations Directorate, Army Headquarters.

## **Counting on Subject Matter Experts (SME) for UNPKO in Bangladesh: Strength and Opportunities**

Colonel Md Ehsanul Haque, SUP (BAR), afwc, psc, PhD

### **Introduction**

As the leading troops contributing country (TCC), Bangladesh(BD) is making powerful contributions to world peace under the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) which is a constitutional obligation.<sup>1</sup> For over four decades, BD forces have been dealing with the growing and multi-dimensional challenges of UNPKO. Such experiences have developed enough expertise in the Bangladesh Armed Forces and other nonmilitary agencies to plan, support and execute peacekeeping operations in any part of the globe. The BD Armed forces have been providing troops, commanders, and staffs at different tiers of the United Nations (UN). However, so far there was no significant contribution of the BD Army at the UN HQs, particularly in the form of decision making. With four decades of experience, BD is now capable of developing enough 'Subject Matter Expert (SME)' to make a breakthrough in the decision-making level of various peace initiatives. Regrettably, BD contribution in this particular sector is almost nil.

Most of the officers of the BD Armed forces participate in a multinational culture and get exposure to the host nation's demographic values. All these, coupled with a fair understanding of the peace process provide them with a firm intellectual base for UNPKO. With the experience of the first one, all the officers are deployed for the second mission at the mid-career level. In the second deployment, a major portion of the officers is employed in different HQs as staff. At this stage, they gain firsthand experience in the decision making at the tactical level in UNPKO and oversee the complex peacebuilding process e.g., DDR, mediation, ceasefire enforcement, confidence-building initiatives, etc. This experience is further strengthened with the contributory training, seminars, joint exercises, and other events as they travel along with the career.

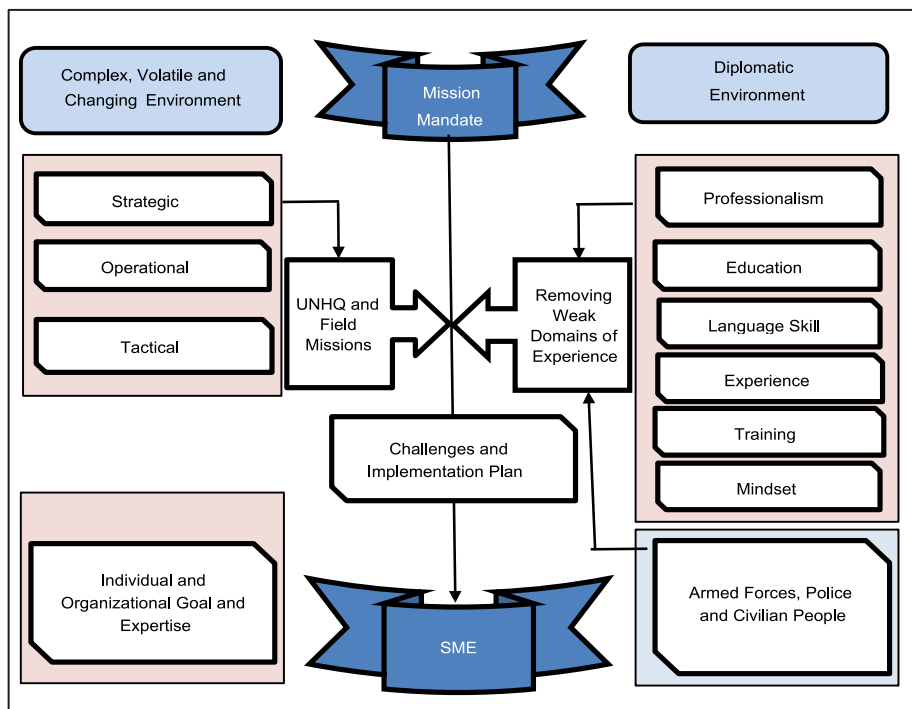
As such, by the time an officer reaches 20 years of service he/she gains the experience of two missions and exposure to different spheres of PKO. Those can be augmented with a few selected training, seminars, and interaction to produce a good number of SMEs for PKO. If utilized at the decision-making level, their expertise will contribute to both the UN and the nation. As such, developing SMEs is a need of time.

Developed countries provide candidates for leadership positions as they contribute more to financial aspects. Being an emerging nation, BD has hardly any role in selecting its candidates for a particular post. So, the country needs to carefully develop its SMEs in advance, to be enrolled in following the proper procedure of the UN. This paper aims to explore the strength and opportunities of deploying BD Armed Forces personnel as SMEs in UNPKO to add a new dimension to its contributions to the UN.

### Setting the Scene: Transforming SME as per Mission Mandate

BD has glorious success, and she has earned a very positive image for implementing peace in a different troublesome part of the world. The roadmap of BD for a deep engagement with global peace is firmly pronounced in the constitution. This hard-earned image must be upheld at any cost like experience and knowledge. Armed Forces have enormous peacebuilding potential for their vast experience of frequent deployment in assisting civil administration, pacification activities, preparation of electoral roll etc. BD can participate in SSR, DDR, supporting the electoral process, agricultural sector, and socio-economic development projects. A harmonized and prudent plan is needed (conceptualized in Figure 1) to explore the peacebuilding potentials of BD to develop SMEs.

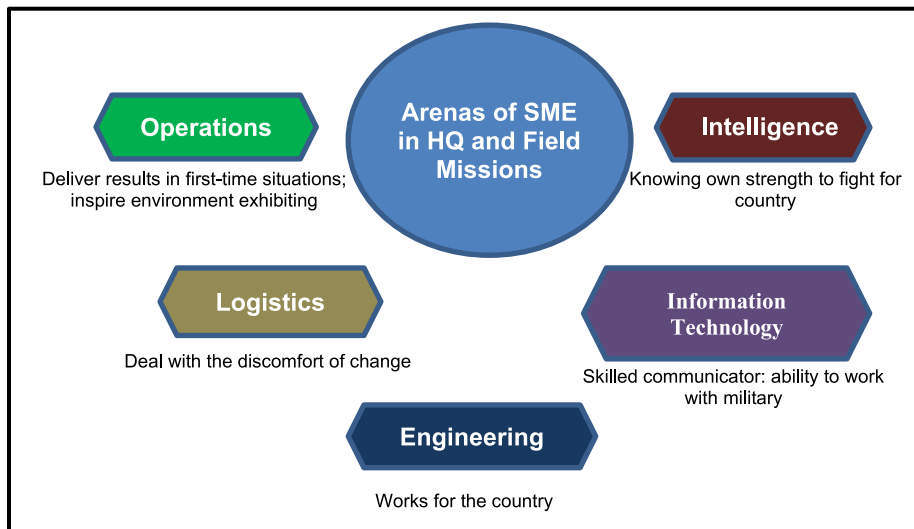
**Figure 1: Mental Construct of the Concept**



Source: Author's self construct

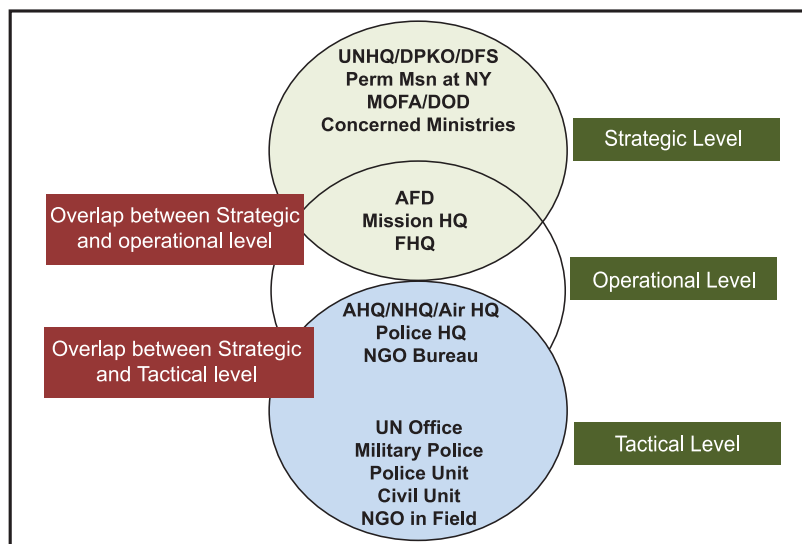
In present days PSOs, the intensity of conflicts could be rapid and unexpected and may vary from area to area and day to day.<sup>2</sup> In PSO, settlement, not victory, is the ultimate measure of success and is rarely achievable through military effort alone. There are three levels where SMEs can be developed in due course of time as shown in Figure 2 below:-

**Figure 2: Fields of SME**



Source: Author's self construct

**Figure 3: Level of Involvement to develop SMEs**



Source: Author's self construct

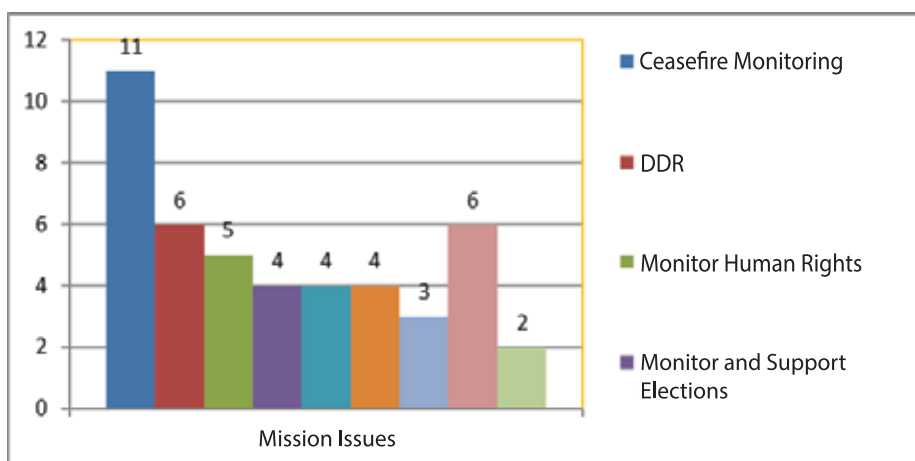
### Classical Challenges

The range of possible military tasks in the UN is broad and will often apply to an unstable, dangerous environment. Possible military tasks in the UN can be as follows :— <sup>3</sup>

- a. Assist in establishing law and order.
- b. Support Elections.
- c. Supervision of truces and cease-fires.
- d. Demobilization operations.
- e. Conflict prevention.
- f. Protecting Humanitarian relief operations.
- g. Establishment and supervision of protected areas.
- h. Mine awareness and mine clearance operations.
- j. Guarantee and denial of movement.

From mission mandates, it has been found that in most of the missions' ceasefire monitoring was the major issue followed by Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and monitoring of human rights. There are other issues like monitoring and supporting elections, supporting law and order, protecting UN personnel and civilians, supporting humanitarian assistance and security sector reforms, etc.<sup>4</sup> A graphical depiction below shows different issues of the mandate and the frequencies of the issues:—

**Figure 4: Expertise Required in UN**



Source: Data taken from survey

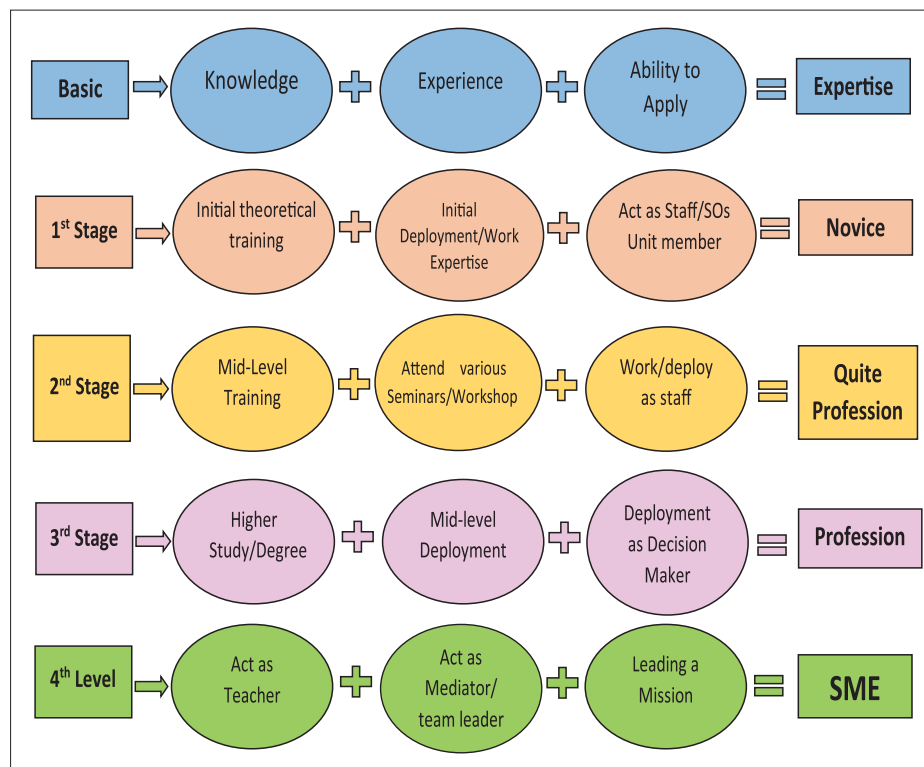


### Approach to Career Development as SME

Experience and qualification that contributed to their success in any appointments. From the study, it was found that highly professional and experienced officers of armed forces of different countries were selected for UN field and UNHQ posts. Some of the common qualifications and experiences are as follows:-<sup>5</sup>

- a. Individuals had experience in different appointments in previous UN missions.
- b. All of them have successfully commanded different military formations in their own country.
- c. Completed Staff Courses, ND Course/ War courses or both from home /abroad.
- d. Some of them have diplomatic exposure in different countries.
- e. Some have exposure to regional conflict as mediators.

**Figure 5: How to become an SME**



Source: Prepared by the Author

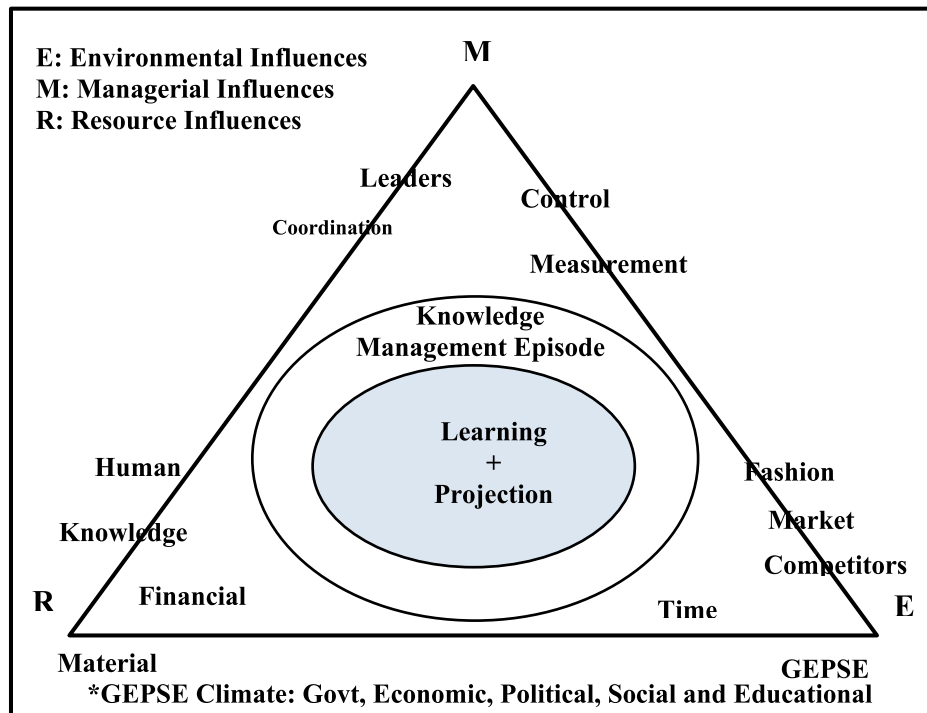
### **Milieu to Foster SME**

To assess this, comments of serving Generals, representatives of UNDPKO and officers of the Armed Forces were given due consideration. Several officers were interviewed to know their opinion regarding the employment and the preparedness of BD Armed Forces for providing leadership positions. Salient of the opinions of the officers are compiled below:-

- a. Training should include components that are conducive to the development of UN core values, core competencies and managerial competencies. The most effective training is participation in a UNPKO. Our officers are capable to hold leadership positions in UN PSO. Some training may be given in the form of seminars and visits.
- b. Full utilization of Bangladesh's diplomatic influence abroad to build political support for BD leadership positions in UNPKO missions is also very important. Efforts should be taken by the ministry of foreign affairs so that more number officers are posted in the UN. Permanent representatives of UN can take initiative and exploit the opportunities.
- c. PSO needs to win the heart and mind of the local population to establish its credibility as well as to be successful in implementing its mandate. Wide exposure of BD officers in problem-prone areas can enhance their knowledge regarding the causes of conflict.
- d. Officers of BD Armed Forces are performing well in the post-conflict phase of PSOs. But the representations of our officers in UN appointments are not that significant. The number may be increased as BD has qualified officers.
- e. Developing a good and professional working relationship with all UN employees (both male and female) will help in attaining success in a mission.
- f. A group of officers can be prepared for employment in leadership positions from the rank of Lieutenant Colonel / Colonel so that they get exposure to different PSO situations. Officers may be sent to different ongoing UN missions to gain experience regarding the strategic issues and the problems that are being faced by the units. Language learning by the competent / potential officers may be encouraged.
- g. More exposure in the PSO environment will help them to gain experience. Training in the form of seminars and mission visits can be arranged for mid and senior-level officers for enhancing their knowledge of PSO situations. UN sometimes asks for the extension of some experienced individuals. BD may allow those officers to continue the mission.

- h. Officers of different ranks may be allowed to apply for UNDPKO appointments. These officers will be able to contribute significantly to preparing the ground appointments in leadership positions.
- i. Language skills and knowledge of socio-cultural mileu play a very significant role. Most of the FC/Staff officers in UNHQ can speak in more than two languages. BD may train and maintain a pool of officers but it is only the UN authority who will ask for selection. There should be some mechanism to inform the UN regarding BD potentiality.
- j. From DPKO, the Department of Field Support (DFS) is created. In that number of posts are also created. Armed Forces Division (AFD) receives only a few per cent of total vacancies through DPKO. Other vacancies are filled by the Galaxy system. A separate policy may be formulated for employing BD officers at different levels of the UN system. A coordination cell for the Galaxy system is proposed by AFD, in future this may have a positive effect. Framework shown below in Figure 6 can be followed:-

**Figure 6 : Influences on SME**



Source: Author's self construct

k. Getting the appointment as Staff Officer in UNHQ or FC, besides qualification and competency, support of the financing country/superpowers is required. It should be superseded by Diplomatic engagement.

l. In the UN system only ten per cent of the appointments are on deputation and the rest 90 per cent are permanent. Other countries are sending their officers from different ranks as civilians, and they gradually climb the ladder. Officers may be allowed to avail this opportunity for future appointments. Moreover the policy of extending the services of the appointed officers may also be considered in the interest of the UN.

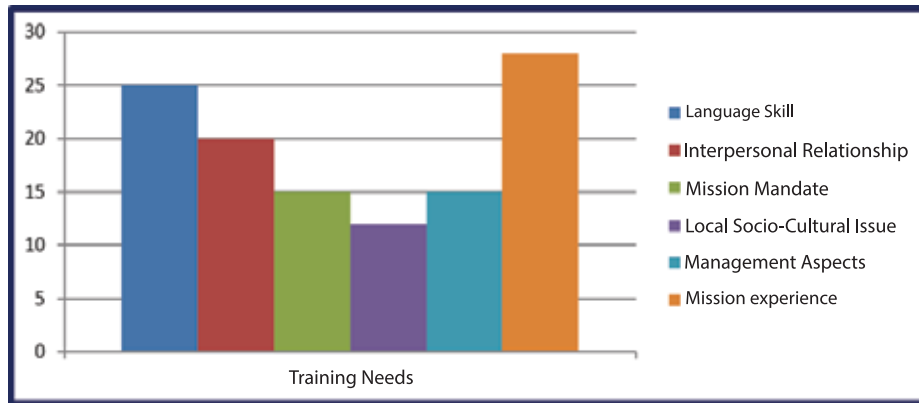
### **Underpinning the Officers as SME of BD Armed Forces**

Lieutenant Colonels of BD Army are getting the opportunity of completing two different UN missions. This gave them exposure and experience in different strategic issues in the post-conflict phase of PSO. They worked at tactical as well as operational levels. In most of the missions, there were no representations of Bangladeshi senior officers despite the presence of troops. From this opinion, it can be said that officers are proficient to perform in leadership positions. It appears that though the officers have the competency some other factor might be responsible for employing them as SMEs. Regarding the qualification, the important issues are language skills, interpersonal relationships, and understanding of the psychology of the local's needs for detailed experience regarding residents. Exposure to an international environment is insignificant for our officers. It can be mentioned that more exposure in an international environment will enhance the ability of officers.

Strategic issues that the officers identified during their mission tenure is the same as those identified from the mandate of the different mission and are mentioned in Figure 1. Officers could complete the missions and gained experience on those strategic issues. It can be said that these officers will be able to handle any higher appointment in UN PSO if appointed. Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels have had the exposure as an observer, staff officers or contingent members. Some of them got Bangladeshi senior officers in leadership positions as FC or DFC. In their opinion, Bangladeshi officers are capable and were successful to accomplish the responsibilities of leadership positions.

On the issue of types of training required for holding leadership positions the survey results are shown below:-

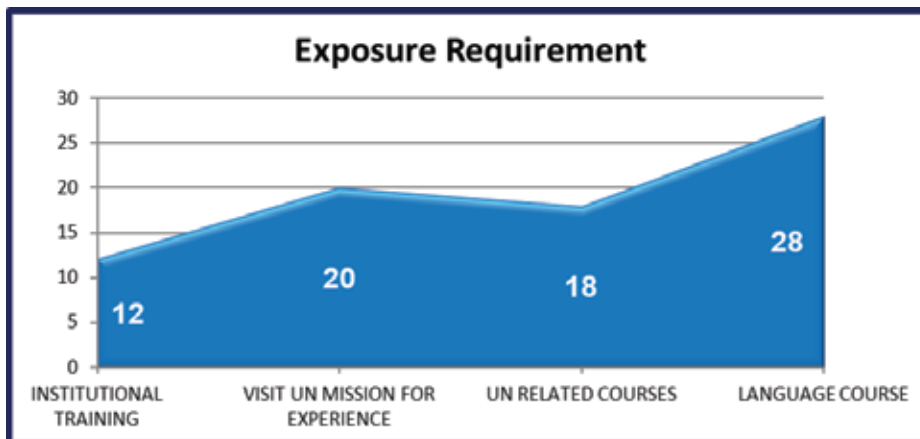
**Figure 7: Training Required for Leadership Positions**



Source: Data taken from survey

On the issue of availability of the training and the adequacy and not adequate the ratio is 7:9. Language and institutional training may be imparted to potential officers for subsequent employment in leadership positions. Seminar and UN-related courses were suggested for a group of potential officers. The emphasis was given to the language courses for those interested in a leadership role with the United Nations. Graphical depictions of the issues are as follows:-

**Figure 8: Acquaintances for Leadership Positions**



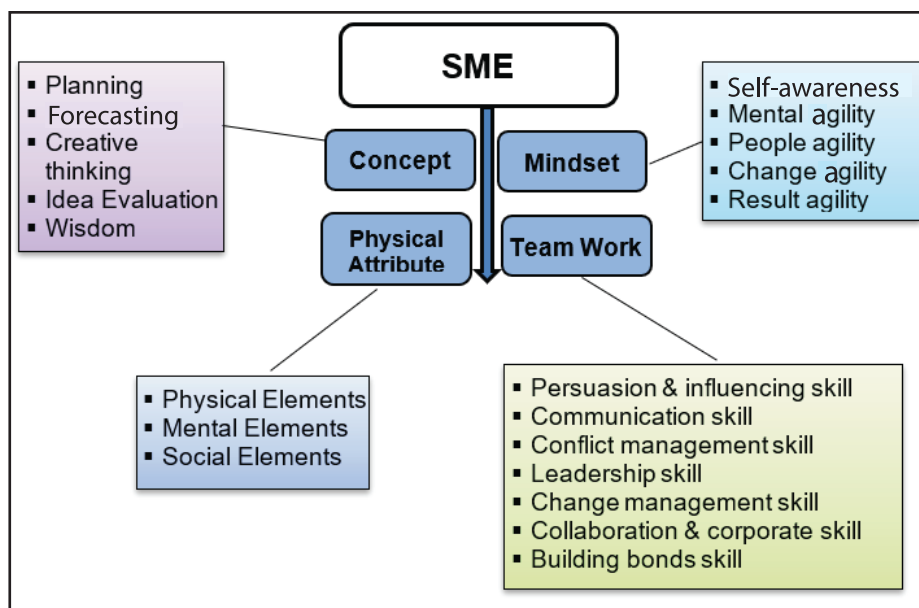
Source: Author's self construct with Data taken from survey

Bangladesh's Armed Forces should give more attention to the UN employment issue as this is one of the contributory sectors in the national economy. Officers may be allowed to join UN civilian appointments and formulate the base for subsequent leadership employment. BD may surely have

representation on mid-level appointments and can contribute to enhancing leadership positions.

BD is one of the top TCCs in the UN, but its representation in leadership positions is very less. Some officers may be encouraged to join the UN as civilian officers for strengthening the position of BD in the UN system. The simultaneously diplomatic effort may be increased for subsequent appointments in leadership roles. A few traits to develop SMEs as shown in Figure9 are furnished below:-

**Figure 9: Traits to Develop SMEs**



Source: Author's self construct

## Conclusion

Representation of BD in the hierarchy of the UN is not at all significant. BD needs to prepare all officers in advance, to be employed in those posts. These positions are distributed among the member states, troops contributing countries, by geographical locations and financing countries. Most of the Force Commanders can speak more than two languages. Our officers are fluent in English and need improvement in other UN languages. SMEs have professional competencies as well as exposure to the UN environment. They have the highest military and other related degrees in different subjects.

The capability of all officers of the BD Armed Forces may be enhanced by visiting different UN missions. Participating in UN PSO related seminars can

enhance the knowledge of the potential SME. The policy of extending the officers' services in different UN leadership positions may also be considered. An FC/staff in UNHQ needs to be charismatic. A successful FC/Staff needs to extend all-out support to other UN organizations. Developing a good and professional working relationship with all UN employees will help in attaining success in a mission. Fifty per cent of UN civil employees are female. Language skills and local customs must be considered when planning for the deployment of forces. Armed forces should give more importance to the UN employment issue. Less representation in DPKO, lack of diplomatic effort and problem in policy for UN employment is not allowing us to get more leadership positions.

BD may keep a pool of officers for these appointments. There are 193 member states of the UN and seventeen PSOs are in progress. It is expected that in future one or two such posts may increase. Representation in UNDPKO and enhancing diplomatic effort and reputation can greatly contribute.

### **Takeaways**

In future to remain prepared for providing SMEs in the UN following are recommended:-

- a. Full utilization of BD's diplomatic influence should be exploited to build support for BD's leadership position in the UN. Permanent Mission in New York should be strengthened to project our demand to the appropriate forum. Side by side strong rapport should be established with major financial contributors.
- b. Potential officers who may be selected for such UN employment must be allowed to learn and attain fluency in different UN languages specially French and Arabic.
- c. Frequent visits by officers to different UN missions and participating in UN PSO related seminars and workshops will give exposure to different Strategic issues. Our officers may be allowed to join those seminars both in-home and abroad.
- d. Officers from the rank of Lieutenant Colonel / Colonel may be prepared in advance with the skills required by UN DPKO so that in future they can be employed in the leadership positions. Extension of services of serving officers in leadership positions may be handled with due consideration if asked by the UN.
- e. Besides placing the senior officers, BD may try for other mid and higher-level positions in UN DPKO or Department of Field Support (DFS). Officers from different ranks are allowed to join UN civilian appointments for establishing the ground for future employment like many other member states.

### Notes and References

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### **Brief Biography**



**Colonel Md Ehsanul Haque, SUP (BAR), afwc, psc, PhD** was commissioned on 13 December 1996 with the 35th Bangladesh Military Academy Long Course as the second best all-rounder cadet receiving two gold medals. Officer completed Staff Course and War Course (AFWC) from DSCSC and NDC respectively. He is awarded two times with Sena Utkorso Podak (Army Medal of Excellence). He is awarded two times the Chief of Army Staff Commendation (Non-Operational). Besides serving in various Engineers Regiments, he also served as an Instructor in the School of Infantry and Tactics, twice as Grade 2 Staff Officer in MIST & Engineer in Chief Branch, at AHQ. He was the Assistant Military Secretary in Military Secretary Branch at AHQ and a Faculty member at National Defence College. Colonel Ehsan has participated in the UN as Operations Officer in Ivory Coast and Staff Officer in UNAMID, Sudan. He commanded the 6 Engineer Battalion. He completed his Master and PhD from BUET and was awarded President's Medal for being the best student. Ehsan visited USA, Chile, Saudi Arabia, France, Japan, Thailand, the UK, France etc. He has a keen interest in sports and reading.

## **UN Peacekeeping Operation During Covid-19 Situation: Bangladesh Perspective**

Colonel Abu Mohammad Mohiuddin, BGBM, PBGM

### **Introduction**

The UN peacekeeping force known as blue helmets is currently directed under the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO) founded in 1992. The core mandates of peacekeeping operations include upholding human rights, promoting women, youth, peace and security, managing cross-border conflict, solving geopolitical problems peacefully, establishing law in anarchic regions, and protecting civilians and children. In the last 76 years, UN peacekeeping has operated numerous missions in the regions with turbulent political conditions of America, Africa, Europe, Middle East, Asia and the Pacific. During Covid-19, the pandemic period, the operation pattern in the mission areas have changed significantly.<sup>1</sup> UN peacekeeping forces have actively engaged against the invasions of Covid-19 in the mission because the virus is a threat against the welfare of the civilians. Protecting civilians, upholding human rights including healthcare rights, is one of the core mandates of UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>2</sup>

The pandemic has posed many challenges to the peacekeepers before and after deployments. Worth mentioning is the fact that from the very beginning, the rotation flights have been delayed and fresh troops have been deployed behind schedules, affecting the operation mandates. The morale of the soldiers in the mission areas has adversely been affected due to staying away from home for longer periods. Overall financial aspects of the UN missions have experienced similar drawbacks. Many logistic supply network, such as commercial flights were suspended/rescheduled due to lockdowns enforced in many mission areas. As the mission areas were infested with Covid-19, maintaining the health safety of the patrolling troops became a matter of great obstacle. Local lockdowns made the operation harder to maintain. Moreover, after the imposed lockdowns, the movements became more restricted, further impeding the UN objectives to be achieved in time.<sup>3</sup>

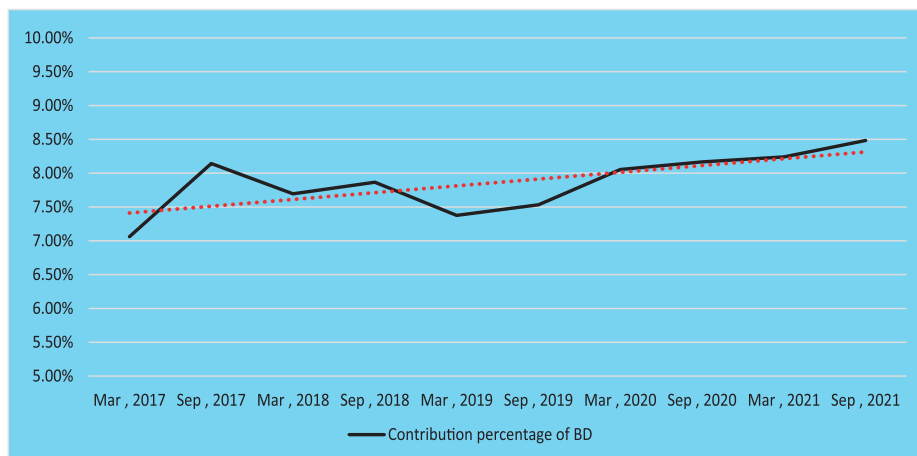
Bangladesh has always been on the list of the leading troops contributing countries. Since 2020, Bangladesh has proudly become the highest troops contributing country in the UN Peacekeeping Operations. It is undoubtedly an achievement and recognition for the Bangladeshi troops. As the top contributing nation, Bangladesh provides troops in maximum African countries to restore peace support operations, where contingents are deployed in crisis areas even under chapter seven. Some logistics contingents like Bangladesh Signal Contingent (BANSIG), Bangladesh Engineers Contingent (BANENGR), Bangladesh Military Police Contingent (BANMP) are also being deployed in

UN peacebuilding besides the army. UN observers are being deployed in mission areas where even the regular troops are not deployed. Observers are playing vital role in instituting peacekeeping operations and achieving the mandates and objectives of the United Nations Headquarters (UN HQ). In addition, some staff are performing in various UN HQ where they are assisting the mission leadership to fulfill the objectives.

The percentage of Bangladeshi troops in the total UN mission personnel over time is shown below in Figure 1. The trend of this figure clearly shows that the contribution of Bangladesh is increasing gradually.

In this pandemic situation, troops' contribution is hampered in many ways. Such as, preparation of the battalions is stalled because of Covid-19 situations and many troops are at the risk of being infected by the virus. The pre-training activities before deployment are being confined due to quarantine protocols, where mandatory Covid-19 testing interrupts timely deployments. After completing all the formalities of UN deployments, troops are again quarantined upon reaching the mission areas in one place before field deployment. In many instances, rotation flights became late and disrupted the troops' rotation schedules. The mobility barriers caused by Covid-19 prevention protocols have been handicapping the peace support operations, crippling the efforts of UNPKO to achieve the ultimate goal.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1: Contribution Percentage of Bangladesh in UN Peacekeeping Missions**



Source: United Nations Peacekeeping Website (UNPK 2021)

At present UN peacekeeping missions are being conducted in various countries and regions. Maintaining the missions during the global pandemic and post-pandemic crisis can be strenuous and trouble worthy at its best. To prevent the escalation of Covid-19 virus infection, troops deployment has to

follow strict Covid-19 protocols. For instance, troops have to abide by social distancing everywhere from the home country, use sanitizers to disinfect body parts, especially hands and wear masks. Complying with all these protocols poses manifold challenges and difficulties. This paper has systematically addressed the issues caused by the Covid-19 and its after effects and has attempted to provide the solutions so sought after in the days to come. This paper can be an invaluable guideline for the stakeholders who are involved in planning and executing the plans in the field.

### **Importance of Peacekeeping Operations: An Overview**

Currently, there are twelve active missions<sup>5</sup> of UN peacekeeping engaged in Western Sahara, Central African Republic, Mali, Congo, Cyprus, Lebanon, Golan, Kosovo, Abyei, South Sudan, Middle East, and India and Pakistan. 123 countries with a total of 74,438 troops, staff officers, and experts are engaged in the peacekeeping operations under the banner of the blue helmet over the mission areas.

**Figure 2: Active UN Mission Areas (2021)**



Source: United Nations Peacekeeping Website

Figure 2 shows the active missions of UNPKO in 2021. Usually, the majority of the missions are located in African regions. Geographical locations, nature of the ground, climatic conditions etc make the environment very effective for spreading the tropical diseases and especially in the recent days for Covid-19 infections. Insufficient medical facilities and paramedics make the situation more volatile. Therefore, it is also equally important for the Bangladeshi

UN troops deployed in the mission areas to be fit in all aspects.<sup>6</sup>

### **Present Scenario of Peacekeeping Missions Amidst Covid-19**

The essence of the post-pandemic peacekeeping missions is to install mitigating actions to uphold the safety, security, and health of all the UN personnel while continuing the operations smoothly. Mission Leadership<sup>7</sup> is in usual contact with the troop and police-contributing countries and works together closely with the Department of Operational Support, the Office of Military Affairs and the Police Division to monitor the situation and advise governments according to the latest developments. The dynamism of UNPKO has been radically altered during the last two years since 2019 after the Covid-19 outbreak.

The normal peacekeeping operations of the UN have been tremendously shaken. Many UN troops have been affected by the novel coronavirus and in effect it has slowed the routine work schedule. Affected personnel have been separated and isolated, which further undermined the manpower. Each personnel has been placed under medical care for at least 14 days to recover from the virus and only after getting a negative test report, they could resume their responsibility as UN personnel. Due to this protocol, naturally, the missions are delayed and some queues have been formed. Similarly, pre-deployment training (trg) in Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) is encumbered due to Covid protocols. Furthermore, troops have been segregated after being affected during training, delaying the overall rotation process.<sup>8</sup>

Covid-19 situation deteriorates the overall security situations in mission areas. Security patrols cannot be dispatched in the affected areas. Thereby locals antagonizing rebel parties get a free rein to commit violence. UN troops and other UN humanitarian agencies are facing difficulties to carry out their regular activities which may cause loss of many lives in the mission areas. Lack of humanitarian aid in the locality of crisis-prone areas have also created psychological back-drops in the mind of progressive locals. UN troops have failed to achieve their objectives in the UN estimated time frames. UN mandates are not being fulfilled due to the devastating situations. In addition, the cost incurred in each mission is skyrocketing to maintain Covid-19 protocols and preventive measures. All these have placed the UN at a financial disadvantage.<sup>9</sup>

### **Major Challenges of Peacekeeping Operations Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic**

#### **a. Maintaining Health State of the Peacekeepers Before Selection:**

One of the precautions against virus spread is 14 days quarantine. Even if the troops come in contact with questionable personnel then they must also go to quarantine. Moreover, if any troop of a platoon is infected then the whole platoon has to undergo 14 days of quarantine. This necessary

procedure has made the army highly susceptible to quarantine. As a result, the necessary number of troops are sometimes not found for the selection of the missions. The nature of work and family life makes it impossible for personnel to avoid any type of contact. Hence, maintaining the health of the potential peacekeepers before selection presents enormous challenge.<sup>10</sup>

**b. Keeping Peacekeepers Away From the Pandemic Situation after Deployment:** After peacekeepers are deployed in the mission areas, such as Democratic Republic of Congo and Republic of Mali, they have various duties that force them to engage in contact with local people. Patrols around the perimeter area sometimes lead to physical confrontation. Also often patrol party has to aid the locals in many ways. These duties of the troops make them exposed to the virus and increase the risk of being infected. Moreover, a number of peacekeeping operations require face to face communication with conflicting parties. It also raises the potential of coming into contact with the virus. This way, the nature of the activities makes it almost impossible for the peacekeepers to remain safe.<sup>11</sup>

**c. Conducting Operations in Covid-19 Affected Areas:** Sometimes the patrol party has to operate in areas where the Covid-19 outbreak is dire. Even though those areas are highly dangerous, the troops have no choice but to complete their objectives of upholding the mandates of UN Peacekeeping Missions. These situations, besides placing the blue helmets in danger, put tremendous mental pressure on them. These nerve-racking conditions are another challenge to overcome.

**d. Statistics of the Contingent Being Affected in the Mission Area:** The average daily positive cases detection rate is 26 in the six mission areas.<sup>12</sup> It may seem quite harmless but even if the rate holds constant for six months the number of positive cases becomes 4,700. The total number of fatalities in UN missions since 1948 is 4,161. So, a death toll of 180 in only six months is a daunting prospect indeed, which reinforces the challenges also.

**Table 1: Daily Covid-19 Statistics in Mission Areas (Bangladesh)**

| Name of the Contingent | Positive Cases | Recovered  | Deceased  |
|------------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| MINUSMA                | 07             | 38         | -         |
| MINUSCA                | 13             | 46         | 01        |
| UNMISS                 | 04             | 30         | -         |
| MONUSCO                | 02             | 25         | -         |
| MINURSO                | -              | 02         | -         |
| UNMHA                  | -              | 01         | -         |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>26</b>      | <b>142</b> | <b>01</b> |

Source: Army HQ Overseas Operations Directorate

e. **Psychological Impact:** Another psychological pressure comes not from the mission areas, but from the family of the troops. It is noted that the bad news caused by Covid-19 coming from homes demoralizes the personnel. Whenever the troops get notifications of their family members being affected by Covid-19, they start to worry and soon the whole contingent shares his/her anxiety, which reduces their ability to function properly. This anxiety over the loved ones also poses a serious challenge in the peacekeeping operations.<sup>13</sup>

f. **Ensuring Medical Support in Remote Locations:** Another disadvantage operating in the mission area derives from the lack of infrastructural support. Most of the rural areas in the mission region do not offer many medical and transportation facilities. Consequently, when the blue helmets are deployed in a particular backward terrain, they do not expect any medical support from the local resources. These also put a limitation in providing medical support to the forces.<sup>14</sup>

g. **Deployment of Troops from Home Countries to the Mission Areas:** International transportation has been restricted to mitigate the risk of Covid-19. Thereby, flights to and from mission areas have also been suspended for a period. During that time transporting troops and resources to the mission areas have become difficult and non-conventional methods had to be applied. Currently, there are some visa complications regarding vaccination conditions that also make transportations demanding.<sup>15</sup>

h. **Building Confidence through Virtual Interactions:** Many of the communications with local conflicting parties are now a days being held



by video conference. It is important in negotiations that peacekeepers gain trust of the local people, which with virtual meetings is very difficult. Also, the security of virtual conferences is not very secured, where the meetings are often very sensitive in nature. Any leak in the information from the meetings may jeopardize the whole mission. Also, not every area offers the necessary infrastructure of network carriers to accommodate digital communication. As a matter of fact, after the Covid-19 new normal, conquering virtual interactions is a significant task for the peacekeepers. The following table summarizes the points identified in the article.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 2: Challenges and Recommendations in a Nutshell**

| <b>Challenges</b>  | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintaining health state before the selection of troops .</li></ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Routine vaccination and booster dose to be given.</li><li>• Maintaining social distance and proper Covid protocol.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chances of being Covid-19 affected after deployment.</li></ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small group movement of personnel to the distant places and strict avoidance of gathering of personnel after deployment.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuing peace keeping activities by UN patrol in the infected area.</li></ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintaining strict Covid protocol while carrying out patrol and peace building activities.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Psychological impact of Covid-19 among the deployed troops in the mission areas.</li></ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Periodic testing has to be carried out in the mission areas.</li><li>• Counselling and motivation to be done at all level.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scarcity of medical facilities in remote locations in mission areas.</li></ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular vaccination and awareness campaign among the locals by UN troops under UN pacification program.</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transportation complications in carrying medical support in remote mission areas.</li></ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UN medical campaign may be increased and other UN agencies may be involved.</li><li>• Telemedicine system may be introduced by UN medical cell/Force Medical Officer (FMO).</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building confidence through virtual interactions among the UN troops and the locals.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular town-hall meeting.</li><li>• Covid medical bulletin to be published and distributed among the UN troops and locals.</li><li>• Local TV channels and radio stations (FM/AM) may be utilized in this purpose.</li></ul> |

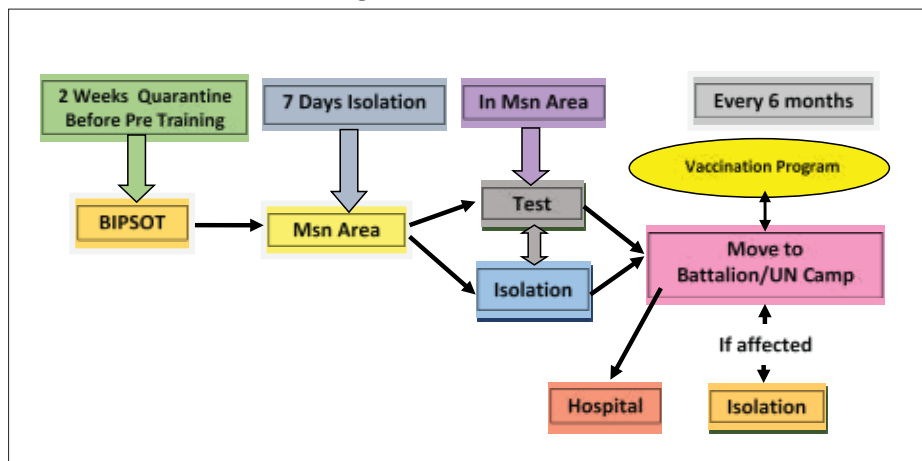
Source: Author's self-construct



### Roadmap Towards Effective Peacekeeping Operations Amidst Covid-19 Situation

a. **Covid Protocol Station:** Troops from different units gather in a pre designated battalion in one place. From there, in a group they move to BIPSOT for pre deployment training before finally deployed in mission areas.<sup>17</sup>

**Thematic Diagram 1: Covid Protocol Station**



Source: Author's self construct

Troops should be two weeks quarantined before BIPSOT training and sent there with a designated bus maintaining proper Covid protocol i.e. keeping distance in seating, wearing double mask etc. After these training, troops may be lifted to mission area. In mission area, they will be quarantined in UN transit camp before dispatching for Battalion Headquarters or UN Camps. After 7 days quarantined in transit camp, troops will be tested for Covid-19. Those who will be affected, will be separated and will be sent for isolation with proper medicine support. They will be sent to UN camp areas having tested negative after 14 days to isolation. Same system may be incorporated being affected in Battalion Headquarters or in UN camps. Serious patients must be sent to Covid hospitals with highcare protocols. As troops have to move in several places to ensure UN mandate, they must be vaccinated in every 6 months. Local habitants may/must also be vaccinated to enhance the health state of the locals as a pacification programme under UN health agencies.<sup>18</sup>

b. **Vaccination and Booster Doses for Effective Peacekeeping:** The majority of the troops have received vaccines as a priority after the vaccines were developed in April 2020. But none of the vaccines developed so far is permanent. The effectiveness of the doses does not

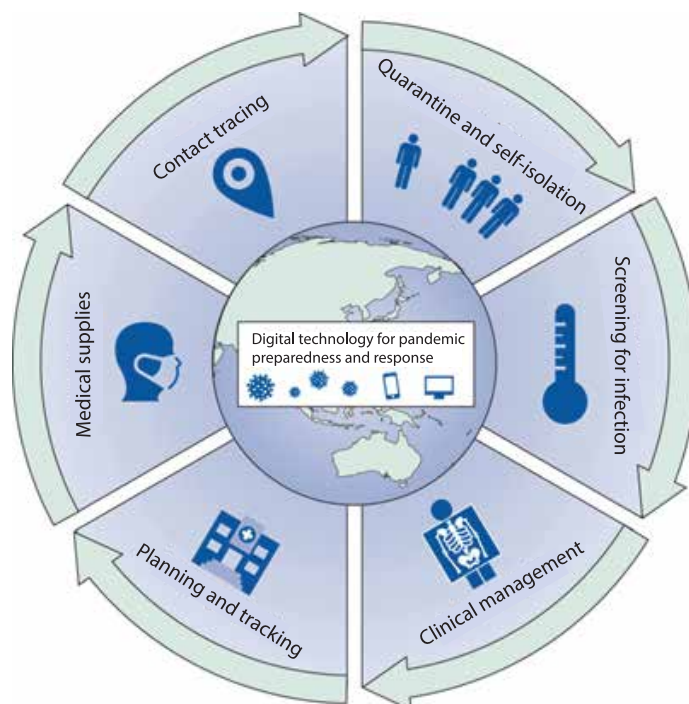
last forever. Vaccine producing company Pfizer has informed<sup>19</sup> that it is best for people to take vaccines each year as long as more lasting solutions are not devised. Moreover, the vaccines may not be as effective against the new variants of Covid-19. Such as the effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine against a newer variant of Covid-19 named 'Omicron' is only 22.5%,<sup>20</sup> which is not acceptable at all. But booster doses are noted to work fine against this variant. So it is advisable that since vaccination does not offer any absolute solution, a regular vaccination routine for the UN personnel is to be established where they will get booster doses and vaccines periodically for the time being.

**c. Concentration of Personnel Before Deployment as Per Contingent:** As mentioned previously, the selection procedure poses quite a problem due to health-related regulations. The troops have to undergo a two-week quarantine period before selection and need to have a clean history. So there should be a long time planning to ensure the availability of necessary troops. For that, the troops to be deployed have to be chosen at least one month prior to the deployment. After that, they have to be given tasks that will not risk them to Covid-19. Longer time in preparation and keeping troops on standby will remove the potential last moment shortage.<sup>21</sup>

**d. Periodic Testing:** Recent studies have proved that asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic people can spread the novel corona virus unknowingly like the infected people with symptoms. Asymptomatic refers to people who have been infected by Covid-19 but do not show any symptoms such as cold, fever, tiredness, loss of taste or smell etc. Similarly, pre-symptomatic people are those who have already been infected but have not yet developed any symptoms. Without symptoms, it is hard to identify who is carrying the virus and spreading it. Since the exposed nature of the peacekeeping duty often makes the UN personnel vulnerable to the virus, there has to be a mandatory routine of Covid-19 test for the personnel after every two weeks, even if they do not show any symptoms.<sup>22</sup>

**e. Digital Technology in Covid-19 Pandemic Planning and Response:** Digital health technology may facilitate pandemic strategy and response in ways that are difficult to achieve manually.<sup>23</sup> Many developed countries have integrated digital technology into various organizations and government-coordinated containment and mitigation processes that include surveillance, testing, contact tracing and strict quarantine management. All these warning systems and managements are associated with the early flattening of their incidence curves.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 3: Digital Technology as a Tool for Pandemic Preparedness and Response**



Source: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landing/article/PIIS2589-7500\(20\)30142-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landing/article/PIIS2589-7500(20)30142-4/fulltext)

This viewpoint provides a framework for the application of digital technologies in pandemic management and response, highlighting ways in which successful countries have adopted and integrated digital technologies for pandemic planning, surveillance, testing, contact tracing, quarantine, and health care. The panel provides a brief glossary explaining some of these concepts.

f. **Awareness Campaign:** Several awareness programs have been conducted to inform people about the Covid-19 and operating manuals have been supplied by the Office of Law and Security Institutions like DPO, UNPOL, UNITAR, and so on. However, since the virus in discussion evolves over time, the information like symptoms and precautionary measurements changes with variants.<sup>25</sup> For that reason, UN personnel have to be informed about the recent developments of the virus on a periodic basis. Hence, awareness programs like weekly briefings about the Covid-19 have to be integrated into the operations of UNPKO.

g. **Phase Wise Deployment and Withdrawal of Troops:** At the end of the tour of duty contingents may return to home country by phase and at the

same time new contingents may be deployed in phases not as a whole. However, this practice is in vogue and may continue like this.<sup>26</sup>

**h. Using Online Platform with Other Stakeholders:** Using online platforms as a medium of communication will reduce social interaction as well as the chance to spread Covid-19. To gain trust via virtual platforms, some troops have to be specially trained in long-distance communication. Research has shown that many gestures are received differently in virtual platforms than in actual face-to-face communication. Every contingent needs to carry one or two specialized Information and Communication Technology experts in their staff personnel. These experts will ensure the security of the meetings and handle technological problems.<sup>27</sup>

### **Conclusion**

UN peacekeeping missions, with a sweet and sour long history, have been endangered on the eve of the Covid-19 disaster like never before. The widespread outbreak of Covid-19 has hindered the schedule of the missions and exposed the UN personnel in the area to the deadly virus named Covid-19. The preventive and recovery procedures have delayed the troops deployment schedule at both national and international levels. Financial expenditures allocated to the missions have been way over the primary estimation and budget, which has created a resource scarcity in the mission areas. In addition, the logistics of the supply has also been interrupted due to the various mobility barriers.

This turbulent period is also significant as Bangladesh is the leading troops contributing country in the UN peacekeeping missions. As a result, by sending a large number of troops to the mission areas, Bangladesh has to face the challenges associated with Covid-19 more than as expected. To adapt with this situation, several actions are required to be taken. For example, periodic testing and booster vaccine doses are needed to be implemented. The preventive measures like wearing masks, using sanitization, social distancing should be taken into consideration for daily life for the peacekeepers. Special schedule has to be developed to reduce the delay before and after deployment. Taking the right step at the right time has the potential to bear great fruits. This paper may become the instrument that guides towards the right path.

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### **Brief Biography**



**Colonel Abu Mohammad Mohiuddin, BGBM, PBGM** was commissioned in the Corps of Infantry in June 1994. He attended number of courses in his military career. He served in five infantry regiments. He also completed three UN missions in Democratic Republic of Liberia (UNMIL), Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and Central Republic of Africa (MINUSCA) as a UN peacekeeper. He was the French interpreter of Deputy Force Commander in MINUSCA FHQ as MA. He served as Officer in Charge of Military Police unit at Dhaka, Assistant Provost Marshal at Personnel Services Directorate Army Headquarters. Colonel Mohiuddin obtained his Master Degree in Administration from North South University. He is pursuing M Phil research study program in Bangladesh University of Professionals. At present he is serving in Sector Headquarters BGB at Dhaka as Sector Commander.



## **Importance of Intelligence in Field Mission and Its Significance to Rapid Deployable Battalion in MONUSCO**

Brigadier General A B M Nowroj Ehsan, BSP, psc

### **Introduction**

Bangladesh Army has completed thirty years in UN peacekeeping arena. The journey started in 1988, and was not very pleasant all the times. Since its participation, Bangladesh Army could keep pace with all other Troops Contributing Countries (TCC) and maintained her position within the first few of top TCCs. So far, Bangladesh Army has participated in 54 different peacekeeping missions in 40 different countries.<sup>1</sup> General Brooks of US Army during his visit to Bangladesh in 2013 remarked that Bangladesh has become a global leader in UN peacekeeping.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, peacekeeping has become more complex with different scenarios where Chapter VII of UN Charter is still in vogue. The peacekeeping arena is not a battlefield for the peacekeepers, but it gives all the elements of a battlefield where different types of belligerents are fighting.

Intelligence is the product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations.<sup>3</sup> In order to implement the mandate of specific field mission, gathering intelligence is a necessity to achieve surprise and get the belligerents at a disadvantageous position. The strength of threat must be avoided and weaknesses should be exploited. To do this, commanders must know their Areas of Operation (AOP), nature, capabilities and activities of the threat. The aim is to forecast the likely future threat activities.

In the history of Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) the word 'intelligence' was somehow a forbidden one. During the Cold War era (1946-90), peacekeeping was limited to ceasefire and its monitoring only. In the second generation peacekeeping, the necessity of intelligence reached to a new dimension. In order to understand the intelligence systems, the concept of intelligence and its contribution to field mission should be learnt properly. The role of different key personnel would help getting the real intelligence in a field mission.

Induction of Rapid 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'. Bangladesh provided the third RDB in MONUSCO which was deployed under Northern Sector in February 2018. The main concept was to

dislocate the static force from different Company Operating Bases to deploy in the form of Standing Combat Deployments for shorter duration with lesser force. The RDBs are expected to be more robust, agile, mobile, flexible and capable in implementing MONUSCO mandate.<sup>4</sup> The success of RDB will depend on preparation during pre-deployment period and accurate action during execution.

The aim of this paper is to study the history of intelligence and existing intelligence system in UN field mission and its key features. There is also discussion about the intelligence preparation of BANRDB to operate in MONUSCO. Scope is limited to RDB and MONUSCO to keep the paper within a certain length.

### **History of UN Peacekeeping Intelligence**

The history of UNPKO includes failures that could have been avoided if there was a stronger mandate for collecting information, analyzing it expeditiously and thoroughly in the political context and acting decisively on the basis of such analysis.<sup>5</sup> The death of nine peacekeepers in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2004 and same number of peacekeepers in DR Congo in February 2005 are examples of such failures. Both the incident are grim reminders of the critical importance of information in peacekeeping and fatal consequences of failure to obtain accurate and timely information.

### **Cold War Era**

During the Cold War, peacekeeping was, by and large, a matter of monitoring agreements or stable cease-fires that had already been negotiated between the contending parties. Apart from the Congo Operation (1960-64), peacekeepers were seldom directly involved in military action. When the UN did not have better intelligence and was running inadequate arrangements, it was even reluctant to use the word 'intelligence', preferring the term 'information' in order to avoid the usual connotations of subterfuge and secrecy.<sup>6</sup> The situation has changed markedly in recent years.

### **Post-Cold War Era**

A second generation of PKO has emerged in response to a wide range of problems, particularly internal conflicts or the breakdown of law and order. In the Post-Cold War era, a new dimension for peacekeeping has opened. At this stage, robust peacekeeping started and need for intelligence was a basic requirement. Brahimi Report mentioned following intelligence related recommendations:<sup>7</sup>

- a. UN forces for complex operations should be afforded the field intelligence and other capabilities needed to mount an effective defence against violent challengers.

- b. A new information gathering and analysis entity should be created to support information and analytical needs of the Secretary General and members of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security.

In June 2015, the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) acknowledged the debate over intelligence in peace operations. The same was highlighted in the 'Santos Cruz Report' which emphasized collection of tactical intelligence by peacekeeping missions to prevent casualties.

### **Understanding the Intelligence System in a Field Mission**

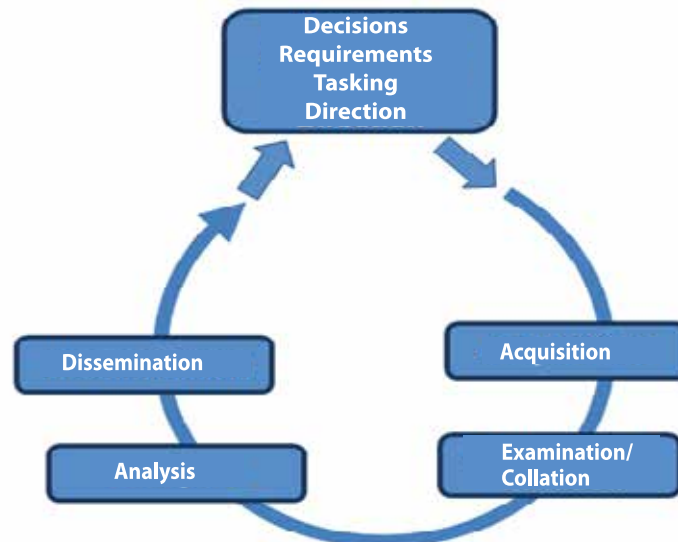
**Concept of Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping:** Peacekeeping intelligence is the non-clandestine acquisition and processing of information by a mission to meet requirements for decision making and to inform operations related to Security Council mandate.<sup>8</sup> In a field mission, past example, where the situation remains tense and volatile, the UN operational commanders need strong intelligence support to determine how the designs of belligerents and the political dynamics could affect the mission.<sup>9</sup> The same situation is prevailing in MONUSCO which is the largest UN PKO at present.

**Contribution of Intelligence in Conflict Resolution:** Intelligence support is valuable in both strategic and tactical aspects of conflict resolution. The overall effectiveness of field mission will depend on the quality of the information available by its strategic level.<sup>10</sup> UN forces with reliable and fast intelligence sources can locate and stop trouble to facilitate the peacemaking process. If the UN force is very efficient at stopping hostilities and monitoring settlements, it can only help in building peace.

### **The Peacekeeping Intelligence Cycle**

The peacekeeping intelligence activities will be fully autonomous and independent in all aspects of national intelligence systems or other operations and will maintain their exclusively international character.<sup>11</sup> The cycle shows how intelligence is acquired, examined, analyzed and disseminated based on clearly identified Intelligence Requirements (IR) is given below:-

**Figure 1: Peacekeeping Intelligence Cycle**



Source: DPKO, DFS Policy on Peacekeeping Intelligence

In short, the items of the cycle are described below according to the policy on peacekeeping intelligence:-

- a. Direction refers to the process of identifying questions that need to be answered, specifying outstanding 'Information or IR' in relation to those questions and seeking this information through various means.
- b. Acquisition refers to the process of obtaining data and information to serve as the basis for analysis.
- c. Data acquired by missions shall be recorded and stored in a manner that permits convenient comparison, evaluation, assessment, retrieval, analysis and reporting.
- d. Analysis refers to the methodical breaking down of information, examination of each to find inter-relationship, and application of reasoning to determine the meaning of the parts and the whole.
- e. Dissemination is the process of conveying intelligence to decision makers and other relevant mission personnel.

#### **Intelligence Organization that Prevails in a Field Mission**

A Field Mission shall establish a mission intelligence coordination structure to direct and oversee the peacekeeping intelligence cycle within the mission. The structure is composed of the participating mission entities responsible for the acquisition, collation, analysis, and dissemination of information with the role of meeting objectives of intelligence activities. The main components are Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC), Military Police

and United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). The Joint Operations Centre (JOC) is also a permanent member of the structure. Other mission sections such as the Political Affairs Section (PAS), Human Rights Division (HRD), and Civil Affairs Section (CAS) participate and shall be consulted on requirement.<sup>12</sup> The structure in a field mission is shown below:-

**Figure 2: Mission Intelligence Coordination Structure**

| Members | Primary Manager          | Planning responsibility                                    | Focus  |
|---------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Chair   | SRSG                     | Mission IRs<br>Mission Intelligence Plan                   | Medium-to-long term, threats to mandate<br><br>Safety and Security on UN personnel, premises, assets |
| JMAC    |                          | SRSG's IRs<br>JMAC Acquisition Plan                        |  |
| UNDSS   |                          | SRSG's IRs<br>Security Threat Information Acquisition Plan |  |
| JOC     | Chief of Staff           |  | Information management and flow  |
| U2      | Force Commander (FC)     | FC's IRs<br>Military Intelligence Acquisition Plan         | Military Intelligence Planning of operations   |
| Police  | Police Commissioner (PC) | PC's IRs<br>Criminal Intelligence Acquisition Plan         | Criminal Intelligence Planning of operations   |

Source: DPKO, Policy on Peacekeeping Intelligence

**Role of Special Representative of Secretary General (SRSG):** The SRSG is the primary patron of the peacekeeping intelligence cycle and is the most important client of the mission intelligence coordination structure. She/he is responsible for providing strategic direction to this structure that can be translated into IRs to drive the peacekeeping intelligence cycle. The SRSG will be responsible and accountable for decision-making on sharing of peacekeeping intelligence data, information and products within the mission and with non-mission entities.<sup>13</sup>

**Role of Chief JMAC:** The function of the mission intelligence coordination structure is played by the JMAC. The Chief JMAC chairs the structure and is supported by dedicated personnel to serve as the Secretariat for the structure. She/he is accountable to SRSG and is responsible for convening intelligence and ensuring the execution of functions. She/he is also responsible for maintaining ongoing awareness of mission acquisitions and analyzing assets, including their capabilities, areas of focus, comparative advantages, and workloads.

**Role at Operational/Tactical Level:** SRSG and Chief JMAC work in the strategic level of intelligence. The U-2 Staff at Force HQ and G-2 Staff at

Sector HQ and all military and police contingents act in the operational and tactical levels to collect information and execute the instructions given by the HQ.

### **Pre-Deployment Preparation (PDP) on Intelligence by RDB and Its Significance in MONUSCO**

RDB is required to be organized by TCC keeping sufficient time for its preparation. In Bangladesh, a contingent is concentrated before six to seven months. In most of the cases, the contingent members, especially the officers join the contingent at the last moment. Thereby, the PDP is hampered. In order to execute the role of intelligence in PKO, this PDP is very important. The execution phase starts when the contingent is deployed on ground in mission area. The success of RDB will depend on the PDP and its accurate action during operation.

### **BANRDB Intelligence Issues in MONUSCO**

The MONUSCO Core Mandate revolves since its transformation from United Nations Mission in the DRC (MONUC) to MONUSCO. With the deployment of RDB in MONUSCO the protection of Civilians in DRC is implemented through a concept of 'Protection through Projection'. The concept is to dislocate the static force by reducing the static bases (Company Operating Bases) to centralise the assets for quick deployment in different important places. From those static bases, some of its smaller elements are projected independently on ground as Static Combat Deployment (SCD).

The UN Infantry Battalion are required to positively acquire and analyze information about conditions in the AOR and ensure that such information is disseminated from the battalion to the Sector Headquarters and other relevant stake holders.<sup>14</sup> As such BANRDB having no or less experience tried to follow the intelligence gathering in its own way which are briefly given below:-

- a. BANRDB was permanently deployed in three different locations viz; Battalion Headquarters in a centralized position and two different COB's at important vantage points. Each COB's used to have its own Community Liaison Assistant (CLA) provided by CAS attached with them. These CLA's were part of any long range patrol or activities who continuously communicate with the local population and other stake holders. BANRDB used these elements to gather intelligence.
- b. Each SCD's that the BANRDB used to deploy had also its own CLA and Language Assistant (LA). They used to do the same.
- c. Whether it is COB or SCD, the BANRDB used to have FARDC (Armed Forces of the DRC) Liaison officer (LO) along with them who maintained close Liaison with local community as well as FARDC.
- d. SCD's used to have extensive patrolling in the local vicinity that used

to gather information through interaction with local population, NGO's, religion leaders, key leaders etc.

e. UAU's were part of BANRDB TO&E that used to gather the imagery intelligence.<sup>15</sup>

### **Function during PDP**

Experience has shown that peacekeeping missions are often destined to success or failure based on the scope and accuracy of the intelligence available for planning. At this stage, a proper training should be given to all the members of the contingents on the following:-

- a. Information related to belligerents, their structure, commanders, capabilities, and deployment.
- b. An idea on the topography, demography and geography of the area.
- c. A thorough briefing on the deployment of own troops, pre-deployment analysis of intelligence collection capability of the belligerents in the mission AOP.
- d. A comprehensive training on UAV's to gather knowledge on imagery intelligence.
- e. BANRDB patrols were completely dependent on LAs during their interaction with locals as they had language barrier. Interaction with the local population was really difficult by BANRDB. In order to overcome this, at least, the officers may be trained to develop elementary language skill of host country.
- f. Selected BANRDB people to be trained to extract intelligence smartly during their interaction with locals. Exercises on intelligence extraction may be carried out during pre-deployment training.<sup>16</sup>

### **Action during Execution Phase**

It is the time when the contingent needs to act as per the mandate. In order to fulfil the mandate, following postures will help in disseminating the tasking of RDB:-

- a. As the AOP of RDB is bigger than that of the framework contingent, it would be pertinent to have a clear idea on the whole AOP before deployment.
- b. Deploying an Advance Party to conduct reconnaissance and evaluate the situation on ground to determine exact AOP, phases of deployment and its expansion.
- c. Frequent patrolling within AOP to meet the belligerents, other stakeholders from UN and non-UN organizations.<sup>17</sup>



### Elements of the Intelligence to be Taken Care of by RDB

The elements of intelligence could be many. However, some of those are discussed below:-

a. **Necessity of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Section:** RDB should have an intelligence section in its organization which would be able to collect information from different sources. At least, the RDB should have a good HUMINT orientation and training programme in the PDP.<sup>18</sup>

b. **HUMINT Collection Capability:** The entire contingent should be HUMINT gatherers. A dedicated group of specialist HUMINT collector should be planned as part of the organization. At the same time, their charter of duties should also be specified.

c. **Understanding on Terrain and Geography:** It is very difficult to have Intelligence Preparation of Battlefield for a contingent which would be deployed for only one year TOD. However, the contingent should have proper maps for AOP, terrain, routes, effects of weather on terrain, land-mine data etc.<sup>19</sup>

d. **Security Threat:** The contingent is vulnerable in communications and data security. It has to be remembered that HUMINT, IT, documents; all are susceptible to security. Therefore, LANs, WANs, Servers, Share Drives should be handled very carefully.<sup>20</sup>

e. **Female Engagement Teams:** BANRDB may deploy stronger Female Engagement Teams. The interaction of these female teams with the local female population during patrols may improve information gathering and allow assessing the security situation.

### Conclusion

Bangladesh Army is one of the leading elements of PKO. So far Bangladesh had been providing framework Contingent in peacekeeping missions. In February 2018, Bangladesh deployed her first RDB in MONUSCO. RDB tasking is different from framework contingent in many folds. In any PKO, the Commander and his men must know the situation where the contingent operates. Success or failure of PKO depends on the ability to remain abreast of the situation.

Since the beginning of PKO, the word 'intelligence' was not viewed positively. On the other hand, due to lack of intelligence a number of UN missions were failed. Many of the peacekeepers were brutally killed by the belligerents for not complying with intelligence. A distinct difference is observed in the field of peacekeeping between Cold War and post Cold War era. In 2001, Brahimi report opened a new dimension in PKO.

In order to deploy in field mission, a clear understanding on intelligence system is a must. In a mission like MONUSCO, the Contingent Commander

and his team need strong intelligence support to fulfill its mandate. Intelligence is a very important element in resolving conflict between two belligerent groups or in any Civil War. Thereby, intelligence support is vital for success in UN mission. Direction, acquisition, collation, analysis, and dissemination are the elements of a peacekeeping cycle. Any information may turn into intelligence by proper acquaintance of this cycle.

Working in field mission is very challenging where knowledge on different intelligence organizations is crucial. Mission intelligence coordination structure in a field mission is very important to find out proper intelligence or information gathered to meet the objective of the mission. JMAC, JOC, PAS, CAS, HRD, Military and Police components are the main elements of the structure. SRSG being the head of mission is the main client of that structure. The Chair of the coordination structure is responsible for acquisition, analysis of assets, areas of focus etc.

In the time of budget cut, MONUSCO is planning to replace framework contingent with RDB. If the BANRDB cannot function properly during its deployment, there is no doubt that it would be repatriated. Thereby, to remain in mission strength and keep Bangladesh at the top of TCC's, the BANRDB has to prepare itself properly in terms of intelligence preparation during PDP and perform its best in the execution phase.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:-

- a. RDB needs to prepare its commander and men during PDP at BIPSOT in collaboration with School of Military Intelligence (SMI) on intelligence matters.
- b. A sufficient military information capacity to be provided to the contingent for the structure, assets, belligerents and geography.
- c. The HUMINT section is to be included in the organization of RDB and a proper training must be ensured during PDP.
- d. An advance party is necessary to deploy any element of RDB for ensuring early assessment of the situation and proper deployment on ground.
- e. The RDB should inculcate and maintain a very strong liaison with other UN and non-UN components, as well as within the contingent to have a quick flow of information/intelligence.

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### **Brief Biography**



**Brigadier General A B M Nowroj Ehsan, BSP, psc** was commissioned with 26 BMA Long Course on 09 June 1992. He is a graduate from the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, Dhaka. He also completed Masters of Business Studies from the University of Dhaka. Besides serving in different regimental appointments in various Infantry regiments, he also served as General Staff Officer Grade-2 in Training Directorate of Armed Forces Division, General Staff Officer Grade-1 in Overseas Operations Directorate in Army Headquarters, Commanding Officer in Rapid Action Battalion, Director in Special Security Force and Deputy Commander of President Guard Regiment. He also served as Col Staff of School of Infantry and Tactics. He was Region commander in Sarail Region, Border Guard Bangladesh and became Additional Director General (Admin) in HQ Border Guard Bangladesh. He had the experience of serving as contingent member in UNIKOM in Iraq/Kuwait and as Military Liaison Officer in MINURCAT in Central African Republic and Chad. He was also an UNMO in UNMIS in Sudan and later he commanded a military contingent in MONUSCO in the DRC. He attended a number of courses and seminars at home and abroad. Presently, he is serving as the Region Commander in Border Guard Bangladesh, North-West Region, Region HQ, Rangpur.

## **Contributions of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers in United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)**

Lieutenant Colonel Md Wadud Ullah Chowdhury, psc

### **Introduction**

United Nations peacekeeping<sup>1</sup> operations (UNPKO) is one of the most effective tools available to the United Nations (UN) for maintaining global peace and security.<sup>2</sup> Peacekeeping has unparalleled strengths, including legitimacy, and the capability to deploy and sustain military troops and police from around the world, integrating them with non-military peacekeepers to attain multidimensional mandates.<sup>3</sup> UN peacekeeping has not only become bigger, but it has become more complex than before. Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are not only monitoring cease-fires, but also facilitating, the political process through the enhancement of public dialogue and reconciliation, protecting civilians, assisting in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants, supporting the arrangement of elections, ensuring human rights, and assist in restoring the rule of law in different corners of the world.<sup>4</sup>

In 1988, Bangladesh first started peacekeeping by contributing a group of officers to United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observers Group (UNIMOG).<sup>5</sup> For the last thirty-four years, Bangladesh has always been keen on contributing to peace across the world due to its commitment to global peace. Bangladesh's role in UN peacekeeping has always been applauded by the international community for its professionalism, discipline, discharging assigned duties with impartiality, maintaining international standards vis-à-vis UN standards, and adherence to the mandate.<sup>6</sup> Several anecdotal pieces of evidence confirm that the Bangladeshi peacekeepers have developed extraordinary relations with the local communities based on trust and confidence. Besides conventional functions of peace operations, Bangladeshi peacekeepers have shown a high level of engagement in civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) activities, skills sharing in agriculture and related sectors, educational assistance, and providing medical support to the locals of different places of the world.<sup>7</sup>

Following the independence of South Sudan, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on 09 July 2011, under Security Council Resolution 1996 (2011).<sup>8</sup> On the same day, the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) also ended. Bangladesh, being one of the largest contributors to UNMIS, played a significant role in implementing peace in the whole area and became an onlooker of the peaceful independence of South Sudan. Bangladesh started contributing to develop the newest independent nation of the world - South Sudan by participating in UNMISS from the beginning.<sup>9</sup> Till now, Bangladeshi

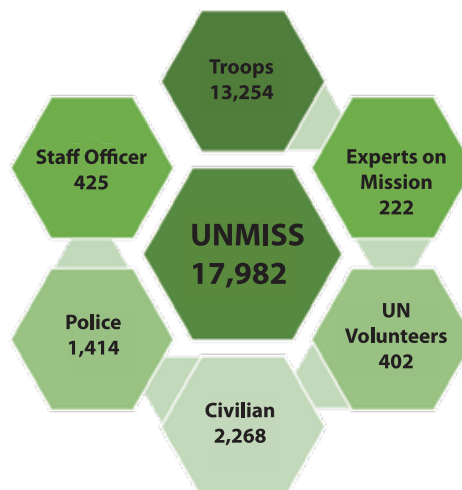
peacekeepers are playing an outstanding role in ensuring durable peace, protection of civilian, infrastructural development, monitoring and investigating human rights and humanitarian assistance in South Sudan.

This paper will first highlight the journey of UNMISS from 2011 to 2022 and then discuss the contributions of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in winning the hearts of the people of South Sudan which will be followed by the recognition of Bangladeshi peacekeepers' efforts to ensure durable peace in South Sudan.

### **UNMISS – Journey through a Decade**

In support of the South Sudan the UN Security Council established the UNMISS on 09 July 2011, under Security Council Resolution 1996 (2011).<sup>10</sup> Later, a nation-wide political and security crisis in the country resulted in South Sudan's civil war continued from 2013 to 2016 with serious abuses of civilians by both warring parties.<sup>11</sup> The conflict of more than three years displaced some 2.2 million people from their homes and plunged much of the population into a humanitarian crisis.<sup>12</sup> Later, Revitalized Peace Agreement was signed, and a transitional government of national unity was formed in 2018 which greatly reduced the political violence across South Sudan. As it stands today, the mandate of UNMISS includes four pillars, namely, protection of civilians; creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance; supporting the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement of 2018 and the peace implementation; and monitoring, investigating, and reporting on violations of humanitarian and human rights law. Under Chapter VII of the Charter of the UN, UNMISS is therefore authorized to use all necessary means to implement its mandate.<sup>13</sup> As of November 2021, UNMISS has almost 17,982 peacekeepers working throughout the country.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 1: Number of Peacekeepers Deployed in UNMISS**



Source: UNPKO Website, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unmiss>



Peacekeepers of UNMISS are working in locations right across the country. The mission takes a proactive and robust approach to protecting civilians, deploying troops rapidly to areas where there is a threat of violence or conflict. They have established numerous temporary bases and have increased patrolling in hotspots. Civilian peacekeepers carry out many activities to monitor and investigate human rights violations and abuses, to help prevent and resolve conflict, as well as support reconciliation and peace. The UN family is working alongside the government and people of South Sudan as a partner in this process, providing all possible support – humanitarian, peacekeeping, peace-building, recovery, and development. At least 21 UN Agencies, funds and programs are supporting millions of people suffering because of flood, violence, food insecurity and COVID-19.<sup>15</sup>

### **Bangladeshi Peacekeepers since Independence of South Sudan**

Bangladeshi peacekeepers had been playing a key role in implementing peace in South Sudan from the day of its independence. Bangladeshi peacekeepers who all had been working under UNMIS, continued to perform their tasks in South Sudan under UNMISS also. Several Bangladeshi contingents like Bangladesh Battalion (BANBAT), Engineer Contingent (BANENGR), Demining Unit (BANDEMINE), Transport Unit (BANTPT), Medical Contingent (BANMED – Level II), Military Police Contingent (BANMP), Force Marine Unit (BANFMU) and several SOs/ UNMOs had performed their responsibilities as per mission mandate with appreciation from all corners. Later, due to the restructuring of the mission, few of the Bangladeshi contingents were replaced by other countries. But BANENGR, BANFMU, and SOs/ UNMOs continued their activities from the first day and continue till today. In addition, one BANBAT of 850 manpower replaced Kenyan troops in response to request of UN Headquarters during the conflict in the Wau region of South Sudan in 2016.<sup>16</sup> Now, one BANBAT, two BANENGR, one BANFMU, eighteen UNPOL, and a significant number of SOs/ UNMOs of Bangladesh are accomplishing their responsibilities in UNMISS.<sup>17</sup> Presently, the Deputy Force Commander and one of the Sector Commanders of UNMISS are also from Bangladesh.

### **Winning the Hearts of South Sudanese People**

Various challenges like adverse weather, critical terrain condition, a vast area of responsibility, poor communication networks, et cetera couldn't stop Bangladeshi peacekeepers from performing their responsibilities with a high standard of professionalism. Bangladeshi peacekeepers displayed the same standard of professionalism during the Covid pandemic also. The professional attitude of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in times of crisis was highly applauded by stakeholders and senior leadership of UNMISS and South Sudan.

**Bangladesh Battalion (BANBAT):** Under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, Bangladeshi peacekeepers of UNMISS are therefore



authorized to use all necessary means to implement its mandate which includes protection of civilians, creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, supporting the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the Peace Process, and monitoring, investigating, and reporting on violations of humanitarian and human rights law. The sincerity, dedication, and professionalism of Bangladeshi peacekeepers since the first day of independence of South Sudan has created a positive image of Bangladesh in the minds of the South Sudanese people. BANBAT is displaying a high standard of professionalism in implementing the mission mandate. In addition, BANBAT personnel are winning the hearts of the locals of South Sudan by accomplishing various social development activities.

**Ensuring Communal Peace:** In addition to regular operational activities, Bangladeshi peacekeepers have taken several efforts to reduce the communal violence in South Sudan. BANBAT established several Temporary Operating Bases (TOB) in difficult terrains for conducting key leadership engagements (KLE).<sup>18</sup> Their role to ensure the security of internally displaced personnel (IDP) during the conflicts between communities was effective and praiseworthy. BANBAT has continuously engaged the local communities to avoid cattle raiding, revenge killing, communal conflicts, ethnic clashes etcetera.<sup>19</sup> Arrangement of peace dialogs, friendly games and sports, and community development efforts by BANBAT won the hearts of the locals. Taking extra effort for the betterment of the people of South Sudan was thoroughly appreciated by government officials, local leaders, higher leadership of UNMISS, and mass people. The reputation earned by Bangladeshi peacekeepers has effectively built a positive image of Bangladesh among South Sudanese.

**Figure 2: BANBAT TOB in the Remote Area Marial Lou of Warrap State in South Sudan**



Source: Bangladesh Battalion (BANBAT-5), Wau, South Sudan

**Educational Assistance:** Bangladesh contingents have played a significant role in supporting the local communities of South Sudan by providing books, stationeries, and other educational items regularly.<sup>20</sup> Bangladeshi peacekeepers also provided teaching assistance to the local schools including training for the teachers of various institutions.

**Medical Campaign and Health Awareness:** Bangladesh Medical Contingent (BANMED – Level II Hospital) had contributed a lot to raise the health awareness among the poor and distressed people of South Sudan in 2011-12.<sup>21</sup> In a similar way, BANBAT, presently deployed in Wau of South Sudan is also conducting several health campaigns to provide medical support and medicine to distress people of the area.

**Veterinary Support:** Livestock is widely known as part of the identity of South Sudan and animals are an important economic asset & central socio-cultural component for most of the people of South Sudan. Considering this, BANBAT is conducting veterinary treatment and deworming programs at Wau. In these programs, animals coming with various diseases were given the necessary treatment and management.

**Promotion of Sports:** Bangladeshi peacekeepers have distributed sports items to various schools, clubs, and communities which encouraged the young generation to participate in games and sports for their mental development, improve cognitive skills, teamwork, social skills, healthy habits, self-discipline, and sportsmanship.

**Significant Contribution of Female Peacekeepers:** Bangladesh has ensured women empowerment and gender mainstreaming by deploying female peacekeepers in volatile security situations in different parts of the world. Presently, 139 female peacekeepers from Bangladesh Armed Forces are employed in different peacekeeping missions who all are rendering significant support to attain the objectives of UNPKO.<sup>22</sup> Besides, Bangladesh Army has started the inclusion of the “Female Engagement Team” (FET) in BANBAT from January 2019. FET conducts various operational activities through interaction with local women and children without violating the cultural standards of the local population. Female members are engaging them in various activities like health awareness, educational assistance programs, and inspiring women in the communities to consider the country’s security forces as a career.<sup>23</sup>

**Bangladesh Construction Engineer Company (BANCEC):** BANCEC is working since the beginning of UNMISS, and this is the oldest Bangladeshi contingent of UNMISS. The company headquarter is located at Tamping of Juba. As per the UNMISS mandate, BANCEC mostly works for creating the conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and supporting the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and peace process. In doing so, the main tasks of BANCEC are main supply route (MSR) maintenance

including force protection, horizontal and vertical constructions, and field engineering tasks.<sup>24</sup> BANCEC has two TOBs. One TOB is established at Yambio UNMISS camp where BANCEC repairs roads and implements various development projects of the team site. Another TOB is established in different locations of MSR based on the requirement of MSR maintenance. Development projects of Tamping Juba are implemented throughout the year whereas MSR maintenance is done only during the dry season (November to April) of the year. BANCEC is capable of planning and executing the construction of physical protection for UN installations including POC sites, providing rehabilitation and maintenance of access roads and existing infrastructure, planning, and executing the building of rigid/semi-rigid and prefabricated structures, rehabilitation and repair of existing structures and surveying. They are also capable of providing logistic support elements, capable of supporting a platoon size sub-elements simultaneously in different locations, providing unit force protection including the use of personnel and crew-served weapons, providing integral maintenance support for unit owned vehicles and equipment, and counter-mine and CIED support, EOD and IED disposal. Through its commendable activities, BANCEC has earned high appreciation from the mission leadership and local authorities. In recognition of the contribution of BANENGR, the administration of South Sudan named the newly constructed road Hai Tiriri-Mundri-Maridi as ‘Bangladesh Road’ in July 2020.<sup>25</sup>

**Bangladesh Regional Protection Force (BANRPF):** After the July 2016 crisis in South Sudan, the UNMISS authority felt the necessity of forming a Regional Protection Force (RPF) around Juba for the protection of the city as well as its population. The main task of this force is to secure Juba city in case of any crisis arises in the city. In the structure of this RPF, an Engineer Company was included with integrated force protection elements of its own. This is how the BANENGR (RPF) came into existence. Since the beginning of its journey, BANRPF is performing its tasks very efficiently. BANRPF had established several TOBs in various locations to continue the MSR maintenance tasks. BANRPF is also wonderfully providing all kinds of construction and repair support inside UNH of Juba.<sup>26</sup>

**Bangladesh Force Marine Unit (BANFMU):** White Nile remains a prime and cheapest medium of transportation of goods and logistics items in South Sudan. In 2015, BANFMU took over the Force Protection (FP) duties of UN barges plying through the White Nile. Since then, BANFMU is efficiently performing diversified responsibilities as being the only marine element of UNMISS. Being located at Malakal, BANFMU covers an area of responsibility (AOR) of approximately 1,380 kilometers. Through the main effort Operation Lifeline (OLL), BANFMU provides armed escort to UN Barges, collects and reports intelligence, conducts medical evacuation, assists to protect designated

ports and riverine infrastructure, and provides fire support to ground forces. BANFMU also provides limited logistic resupply without contracted vessels, provides riverine transportation support to UNMOs and representatives of other UN pillars, and conducts search and rescue (SAR). In addition, BANFMU also conducts integrated river patrol, short-duration river patrol (SDRP), medical evacuation (MEDEVAC), casualty evacuation (CASEVEC), and CIMIC activities.

**Military Observers and Staff Officers:** Several Bangladeshi Armed Forces members are rendering significant support to UNMISS as SO and UNMO. As staff officers in various sector and force headquarters, the performance of Bangladeshi peacekeepers is praiseworthy. Bangladeshi Military Observers are performing the tasks of information gathering, situation monitoring, incident verification, and reporting. They are also conducting patrols to very remote places of South Sudan and interacting with the locals to know their problems. Conduct of patrols to remote places in adverse weather and terrain condition takes the UNMOs close to the mass people of South Sudan which brightens the image of Bangladesh to them.

#### **Recognition of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers' Efforts**

Bangladesh Armed Forces members have been playing a crucial role in upholding the name and fame of the country in South Sudan. The blue-helmet peacekeepers of Bangladesh have successfully established a people-to-people relationship and have touched the hearts of ordinary South Sudanese citizens as well as its political leadership at the root and national levels. Bangladesh recognized the independence of South Sudan on 20 July 2011, within only 10 days of independence of South Sudan.<sup>27</sup> Efforts of Bangladeshi peacekeepers were highly recognized during the mutual exchange of visits of ministerial delegations and top military leadership in both the countries.

Chief of Army Staff (CAS) of Bangladesh Army General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, SBP, OSP, ndu, psc, PhD along with a seven-member delegation visited South Sudan from 18 February to 23 February 2022. During the visit, CAS of the Bangladesh Army inspected the Bangladesh contingents deployed in South Sudan. The focus of his visit was to inspect the operational readiness of Bangladeshi peacekeepers and observe their on-ground activities. He also met with senior members of the South Sudanese government, leading military and civilian figures, and UNMISS leadership including the UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative. During the CAS's visit, the mission leadership and South Sudanese officials highly appreciated Bangladesh's commitment to establishing international peace and security. They also mentioned that Bangladesh is the leading troop contributor to UN peace operations worldwide as well as a signatory of the declaration of shared commitments on peacekeeping operations, part of UN Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative. The Chief of Army Staff's visit to South

Sudan is expected to boost the mental strength of the Bangladeshi peacekeepers and motivate them to continue their effort in ensuring durable peace in the world's youngest nation.

A high-level ministerial delegation of South Sudan comprised of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Deng Dan Deng Malek, Deputy Minister of Defence, Deputy Minister of Agriculture accompanied by a senior military officer, and other high officials have visited Bangladesh on 07-12 February 2022. The delegation met with the Bangladeshi Foreign Minister, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Commerce, state ministers and secretaries of a few other ministries, Chief of Army Staff (CAS) of the Bangladesh Army, and other senior military officials. During the meetings, visiting South Sudanese delegation highly appreciated Bangladeshi peacekeepers' engagement in South Sudan, especially in social development efforts in addition to peacekeeping activities.<sup>28</sup> Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP has also visited South Sudan on 19-21 August 2021. Foreign Minister paid a courtesy call on with His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit, the President of South Sudan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Acting Minister of Defense, and Deputy Foreign Minister of South Sudan. The President, ministers, and other high officials of South Sudan highly appreciated the contribution of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the development of South Sudan.<sup>29</sup> Foreign Minister highlighted the efficiency, acumen, and professionalism of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in UNMISS.<sup>30</sup> During his interaction with Bangladesh contingents, the Foreign Minister remarked that Bangladeshi peacekeepers have enhanced the prestige of Bangladesh internationally by dint of their dedicated and efficient services in the UN Peacekeeping Missions.<sup>31</sup>

## **Conclusion**

United Nations peacekeeping operations are guided by three fundamental tenets; political strategies drive peace operations, partnerships are essential for success and people are at the center of peace operations. These tenets underscore that lasting peace must be anchored in a larger social contract among the people and with their government and that this contract must reflect the fundamental aspiration of the people for peace and development. UNMISS operates at the intersection of these tenets. According to Security Council resolution 2567 (2021), the Mission is authorized to use all necessary means to protect civilians, create conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, support the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the peace process, and monitor and investigate human rights and violations of international humanitarian law.<sup>32</sup> Keeping these in consideration, since the beginning of the journey of South Sudan, Bangladeshi peacekeepers had been playing an extraordinary role in implementing peace,



protection of civilian, infrastructural development, monitoring and investigating human rights, humanitarian assistance, fostering a secured environment for the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of IDPs and refugees in South Sudan. The way Bangladesh had been beside South Sudanese during their independence in 2011, similarly, Bangladeshi peacekeepers are working day and night to implement the mission mandate till today. In addition to peacekeeping activities, various efforts of Bangladeshi peacekeepers to win the hearts and minds of South Sudanese people are also being appreciated by all stakeholders of both countries.

Since its independence, Bangladesh remained committed to upholding peace and security in the world. It has been vocal about the peaceful and legitimate resolution of international conflicts and, hence, accepted the opportunity to join the international peace operations when it was sent an invitation by the UN in 1988.<sup>33</sup> In present days, UN peacekeeping missions have emerged as an important aspect of Bangladesh's foreign policy in changing world.<sup>34</sup> Overcoming all hurdles, Bangladesh is contributing commendably to global peace. The creation of the Overseas Operations Directorate in Army Headquarters has boosted the coordination of peacekeeping affairs. Establishment of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) has taken the peacekeepers' training to international standard. Besides, Bangladesh has already set up the Bangladesh Peace-building Center (BPC) which will offer 'state-of-the-art' services in research, training, and policy advocacy in the areas of peacebuilding.<sup>35</sup> These steps will obviously make the Bangladeshi peacekeepers more confident and professional to undertake the emerging set of complex tasks to help build sustainable peace, including human rights monitoring, inclusive dialogue, post-conflict management, and security sector reform.

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1. Peacekeeping is an intervention into an area of instability to facilitate the transition of that area back towards peace. It is one of the UN's most powerful and historically effective tools for deescalating conflict and protecting civilians. Peacekeepers can be civilians and are frequently police officers, but most peacekeepers are armed military personnel. Peacekeeping is not only performed by the UN. The African Union (AU) has several active peacekeeping missions, in addition to joint missions with the UN. The EU, NATO, member states such as France, and ad-hoc coalitions such as the 'Multinational Force' in the Sinai have also conducted peacekeeping missions of one form or another; retrieved from <http://www.mission-justice.org/what-is-peacekeeping.html>, accessed on 24 December 2021.

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#### Brief Biography



**Lieutenant Colonel Md Wadud Ullah Chowdhury, psc, Infantry** was commissioned with 50 BMA Long Course. He is a graduate of Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, Bangladesh and Army Command College, Nanjing, China. He attended Junior Command Course at Army War College, MHOW, India. He has completed Masters in Military Studies from Bangladesh and Masters in Military Command from China. He commanded a Mechanized Infantry Battalion. He also served as Platoon Commander at Bangladesh Military Academy and as Scenario Developer at Army War Game Center. Presently, he is serving as Military Observer in United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

## **Force BANMP: Custodian of MONUSCO Discipline Working Principles, Roles, Challenges Faced, and Ways Forward**

Lieutenant Colonel Mahtab Khan, psc

### **Introduction**

Bangladesh has emerged through the struggle and essence of the war of independence, where three million Bengalees sacrificed their lives for the greater cause of peace and stability. Keeping that legacy enlightened, Force BANMP (MONUSCO) is deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 8000 miles away from the homeland, under Blue Helmet for ensuring world peace and stability. Initially, in DRC UN Military Police was deployed both from the Republic of South Africa and Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh Military Police (BANMP) with extraordinary professionalism, dedication, efficiency, flexibility, selflessness, effective and practical-oriented approach has achieved the trust of the United Nations (UN). Consequently, nowadays BANMP alone is proudly representing all UN MP activities in MONUSCO. In this circumstance, attributes of BANMP can be portrayed through the remarkable quote of UN Secretary-General António Guterres “The United Nations needs to be nimble, efficient, and effective. It must focus more on delivery and less on process; more on people and less on bureaucracy.”

The organization, authority, and responsibilities of BANMP are derived from the general responsibilities of the Force Commander (FC) for ensuring discipline<sup>1</sup> amongst all MONUSCO military personnel. BANMP acts as an important tool for FC by assisting him in enforcing discipline, command, and control over the versatile military troops deployed in DRC. Therefore, the mission of BANMP is “To maintain good order and discipline within MONUSCO and prevent violations of FC’s Directives and Orders as well as local laws and regulations.” It is no denying fact that BANMP is successful in accomplishing this mission as FC stated:

I am very impressed and honoured to be on the premises of the BANMP-16. This unit is one of the most efficient and professional units among all the MONUSCO Forces. Its job, especially the full professionalism, in maintaining the discipline of the Force; investigating and protecting the authorities are exceptional and very well appreciated in MONUSCO. A great asset of the Force. A great ambassador of Bangladesh. I am very proud to be their Force Commander.<sup>2</sup>

This paper shall try to analyze and discuss those factors that significantly contributed BANMP to be successful in MONUSCO for the last 19 years. A few of them are professionalism, impartiality, cooperative and humanitarian approach, respect for host nation laws, the practice of discipline and good conduct, accountability for own action, robust training, a proper sense of security, and assurance of sound administration. Alongside, an in-depth evaluation of salient aspects of this specialized contingent, as well as challenges faced, and ways forward also shall be addressed.

### Country Profile of DRC

DRC is a Central African country that is second-largest in Africa and the eleven- largest in the world, having 2.34 million SQ KM of area. The total population is 81.5 million and the major languages are French, Lingala, Kiswahili, Kikongo, and Tshiluba. More than 200 African ethnic groups habitat here such as Bantu, Mongo, Luba, Kongo, and the Mangbetu-Azande. The majority of the population is Christian 93.15% (Roman Catholic 29.9%, Protestant 26.7%, other Christian 36.55%), 2.8% is Kimbanguist<sup>3</sup> and 1.3% is Muslim. The Armed Forces of DRC is named FARDC.<sup>4</sup> Approximately 100000 active troops are serving in FARDC. This country is blessed with an abundance of natural wealth such as Diamonds, Gold, Copper, Cobalt, Cassiterite, Coltan, Coal, Niobium, Tantalum, Silver, Manganese, Uranium, Tin, Zinc as well as Timber, and Coffee.

**Figure 1: Map of DRC along with the Neighbouring States**



Source: Internet

However, these resources barely benefitted the Common Congolese as DRC continues to experience violence perpetrated by approximately 100 armed groups such as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), CODECO militias, and Mai Mai militias. The UN peacekeeping mission in DRC is deployed since 1999 and is the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world.

**Table 1: Significant Events of DRC with Timeline**

| Ser | Timeline                                     | Important Events   | Remarks   |
|-----|--|--|---|
| 1.  | 16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> centuries | British, Dutch, Portuguese, and French came and engaged in the slave trade           |   |
| 2.  | 1870   | Belgian King Leopold II colonized Congo as a private venture, named Congo Free State | Disease, exploitation killed millions of people |
| 3.  | 1908   | In response to worldwide outrage, Congo placed under Belgian rule                    |   |
| 4.  | 1960   | Got Independence, Joseph Kasa-Vubu became President                                  | Civil war broke out                             |
| 5.  | 1965   | Mobutu seizes power ousting Kasa-Vubu  | Military/popular move                           |
| 6.  | 1997   | Laurent Kabila seizes power ousting Mobutu   |   |
| 7.  | 1997-2001                                    | Civil war broke out  | UN military presence started in 1999            |
| 8.  | 2001   | Laurent Kabila was assassinated. Joseph Kabila appointed as acting President         |   |
| 9.  | 2006   | Congolese rejoiced first free election. Joseph Kabila was elected as President       |   |
| 10. | 2016   | President Kabila remained in power   |   |
| 11. | 2019 - till date                             | Mr. Felix Tshisekedi was elected as President  | Incumbent President                             |

Source: Author's self construct

### Deployment History of BANMP

This specialized unit was first deployed in DRC in the year of 2003. Initially, 128 BANMP members were deployed scattered amongst 11 Detachments such as Kisangani, Mbandaka, Goma, Kindu, Kavumu, Bukavu, Kalemie, Kinshasa, Likasi, Uvira, and Lubumbashi. The manpower of BANMP was increased to 164 in 2014. Again in 2020, due to the professionalism of BANMP, the UN assigned the responsibilities of Bunia, Entebbe, and Kinshasa detachments to BANMP increasing the manpower from 164 to 177.

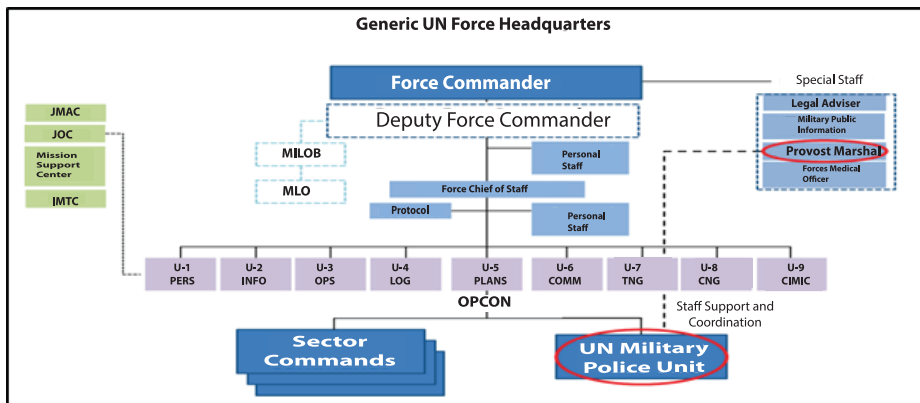
### Authority, Command and Control, and Organizational Setup of BANMP

The authority of BANMP derives from the general responsibilities of the FC for maintaining good order and discipline of troops performing under his command. BANMP is the only MP element with authority, responsible for all military personnel throughout MONUSCO. Moreover, MONUSCO civilian staff

## Force BANMP: Custodian of MONUSCO...

are also obliged to cooperate with BANMP, including identifying themselves with their ID Cards, responding to interviews, facilitating searches, and following directions when BANMP is conducting crime prevention. BANMP Unit is under the operational control of FC. MP detachments are deployed within AOR of different UN sectors. FC is advised by Force Provost Marshal (FPM) who also provides Force-level staff support to Detachment Commanders.

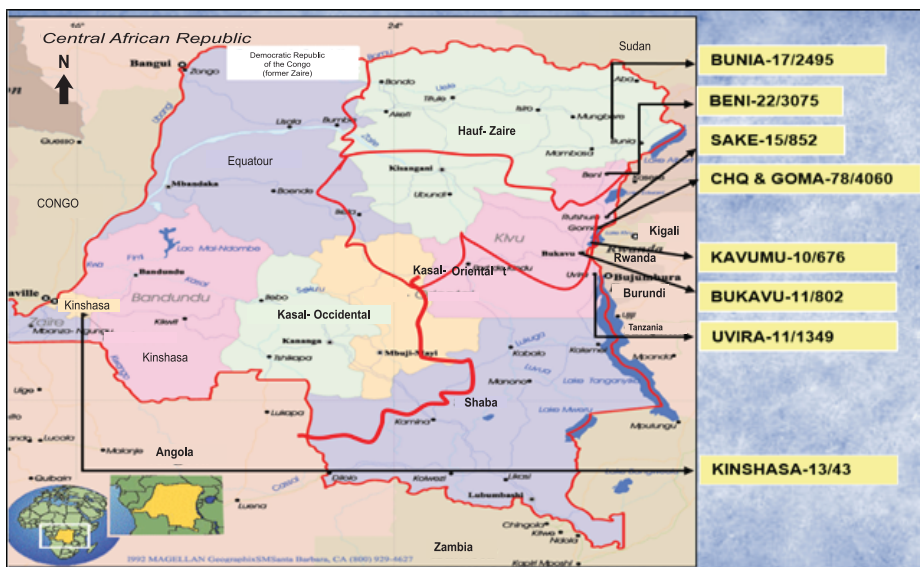
**Figure 2: Organizational Setup of BANMP in MONUSCO**



Source: United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Police Manual

BANMP is organized in various field detachments including CHQ. Currently, there are eight (08) BANMP Detachments deployed in DRC.

**Figure 3: Deployment with Own and Supported Troops Strength**



Source: BANMP Archive



Force Provost Marshal (FPM) looks after all the operational matters of BANMP detachments, whereas Contingent Commander (CC) is responsible for administration such as pay, allowances, and discipline of the BANMP members.

### **Dynamics of BANMP**

**Working Principles:** BANMP is centrally controlled and employed in close support to forward-deployed forces. Tasks are selected and prioritized by FPM following FC's guidance. BANMP performs keeping close coordination with Mission Security, UN Police (UNPOL), Formed Police Units (FPU), and local law enforcement agencies. BANMP follows the principles of centralized control, flexibility, unity of effort, the economy of force, cooperation, and mobility as briefly discussed below:-

- a. **Centralized Control:** BANMP is a highly specialized unit in MONUSCO. Effective coordination and maximum utilization of this highly specialized but limited resource are ensured by centralized control. Tasks are assigned by the FC through FPM. While dealing with any complicated case where expert opinion on ballistics, preservation of forensic evidence, or DNA sampling is required, BANMP investigation team seeks assistance through the FPM branch and BANMP CHQ.
- b. **Flexibility:** BANMP Detachments are integrated into MONUSCO Force Headquarters' plans when retained under the command of BANMP CHQ. Maintaining the original command relationship facilitates the rapid reallocation of MP resources for addressing ever-changing priorities throughout the Mission's AOR. BANMP Detachments have female provosts that enhanced operational flexibility as female suspects/victims feel more comfortable with female provosts. Besides, BANMP Detachment Commander enjoys flexibility while planning crime prevention programs considering the crime trends of his AOR.
- c. **Unity of Effort:** BANMP activities are well-coordinated and harmonized for attaining a common objective and avoiding duplication of effort. Detachments work under a single UNMP umbrella, therefore, detachments also help each other in the investigation process, if witnesses/suspects fall under that detachment's AOR.
- d. **Economy of Force:** BANMP detachments perform with limited resources, therefore, the economy of force is vital for attaining operational effectiveness. It achieves through the judicious deployment of MP resources. BANMP doesn't have the luxury to keep an uncommitted reserve. However, placing the right man in the right place also ensures the Economy of Force.
- e. **Cooperation:** A cooperative attitude is very important while working in a multi-national environment. Cooperation and interaction with different actors are regulated by MONUSCO SOP<sup>5</sup>, Status of Forces Agreements,



and legal provisions. Therefore, UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated, “We live in a complex world. The United Nations cannot succeed alone. The partnership must continue to be at the heart of our strategy. We should have the humility to acknowledge the essential role of other actors while maintaining full awareness of our unique convening power.” Approximately 13,401 military personnel from different countries having diversified cultures, languages, and religions are deployed in MONUSCO. Under these circumstances, BANMP’s stress management capacity, cooperative attitude, patience, and professional excellency ultimately break the ice while performing its classical role. BANMP accomplishes its task professionally and sincerely without any deviation and always remains strict against violators of MONUSCO SOPs.

f. **Mobility:** Mobility enhances command and control and gives BANMP the ability to react quickly to an operational requirement. Each BANMP detachment is equipped with three or four UNOE<sup>6</sup> vehicles. BANMP investigation team always remains in 10 minutes NTM<sup>7</sup> for handling any impromptu incident. A dedicated vehicle is allotted for the investigation team round the clock.

**Core Attributes of BANMP Soldiers:** The success of BANMP in MONUSCO largely depends upon the attributes of its members. The core attributes can be explained as follows:-

**Table 2: Core Attributes of BANMP in MONUSCO**

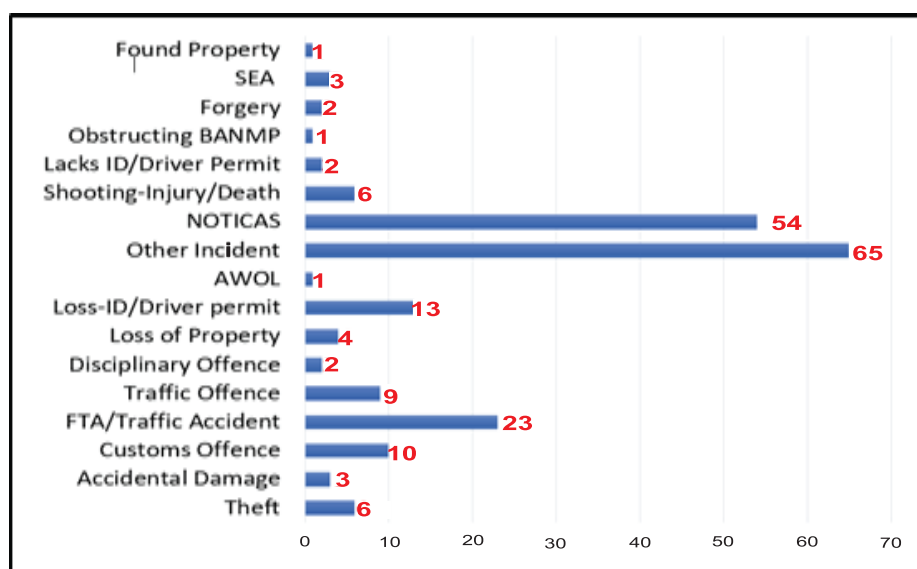
| Ser | Core Attributes                 | Explanations  |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|
| 1.  | Professional and impartial      | Professionalism and impartiality are paramount, Aware of ROE, Mission-specific SOP, and Status of Forces Agreements for application |
| 2.  | Humanitarian                    | Uphold human rights in all spheres of activities, prevent and report violations of international human rights and humanitarian law  |
| 3.  | Discipline and good conduct     | Zero tolerance for SEA, Military Discipline paramount, Violators are subjected to being repatriated                                 |
| 4.  | Respectful for Host Nation Laws | The classical role is performed by conforming local laws  |
| 5.  | Accountability                  | Accountable for own action subject to administrative, or disciplinary action  |
| 6.  | Well trained                    | Extensive pre and posted deployment Training  |
| 7.  | Sense of security               | Force protection is paramount for smooth flow of intelligence   |
| 8.  | Respectful to Mandate of POC    | A considerate and comprehensive approach to POC following MONUSCO SOP   |

Source: Author's self construct

**Responsibilities of BANMP:** BANMP performs a multitude of responsibilities such as investigation, traffic policing, customs regulation, conduct and discipline along with crime prevention. It is an offense to obstruct BANMP with the intent to prevent from executing their tasks. No military personnel can refuse BANMP if asked for cooperation for Military Police duties. BANMP's duties and responsibilities are denoted in MONUSCO SOP 600 and 612. Each BANMP personnel must possess sufficient knowledge of MONUSCO SOPs. Major responsibilities of BANMP are described below:-

a. **Conduct Investigation:** BANMP assists Mission leadership in decision making by investigating all incidents / accidents involving MONUSCO military personnel such as murder, manslaughter, assaults, sexual misconduct, possession, sales or use of contraband goods/narcotics, misappropriation, theft or attempts to theft, negligent acts, traffic accidents, complaints against MONUSCO personnel, Notification of casualty and et cetera. BANMP Investigates for establishing the facts of the case and following internationally recognized principles specifically quick response, prevention of further threats, thoroughness and accuracy, impartiality, due process, and comprehensive reports. Each detachment has a dedicated investigation team, formed on an individual's aptitude and capabilities. The investigation team always remains ready to face any impromptu eventuality.

**Figure-7: Traffic Policing and Discipline Checking Duty**



Source: Author's self construct using Statistics of BANMP CHQ

**Figure 5: Place of Occurrence Visit During the Investigation**



Source: BANMP Archive

Each investigation is documented by an official investigation report forwarded to FPM Branch for subsequent intimation to FC. The purpose of the investigation report is to provide the facts of the incident to competent stakeholders.<sup>8</sup> BANMP uses three types of investigation reports as shown below:-

**Table 3: Types of Investigation Report**

| Ser | Types of Report                    | Explanation  |
|-----|------------------------------------|--|
| 1.  | Initial Investigation Report (IIR) | 1. Based on the firsthand information received<br>2. Forwarded within 24 hours             |
| 2.  | Interim Report                     | 1. Update may be submitted prior FIR<br>2. If FIR is not possible to send after 14 days    |
| 3.  | Final Investigation Report (FIR)   | 1. Submitted within 14 days of forwarding IIR<br>2. Submitted after detailed investigation |

Source: Author's self construct

**b. Enforcing Customs Regulations:** For curbing custom offenses, BANMP performs spot-checking of UN vehicles and assists MOVCON<sup>9</sup> at airports by conducting passenger and luggage checks of UN military and police personnel during their rotation. From April 2021 to January 2022, BANMP investigated 10 customs offenses by confiscating live ammunition and contraband items from the personal luggage of UN members.

**c. Traffic Policing:** BANMP enforces traffic regulations of DRC and MONUSCO, and policies related to the use of MONUSCO vehicles amongst all UN military and civilian staff. MONUSCO vehicles' drivers and passengers must show their UN ID cards and driver's permit when asked by BANMP. Checkpoints are established at convenient places for checking and controlling speeding, reckless driving, carrying non-UN personnel in the vehicle, using mobile while driving, UN driving permit, the authority of movement, and trafficking contraband items. BANMP promotes defensive driving and conducts periodic breathalyzer tests for ensuring the sobriety of the drivers.

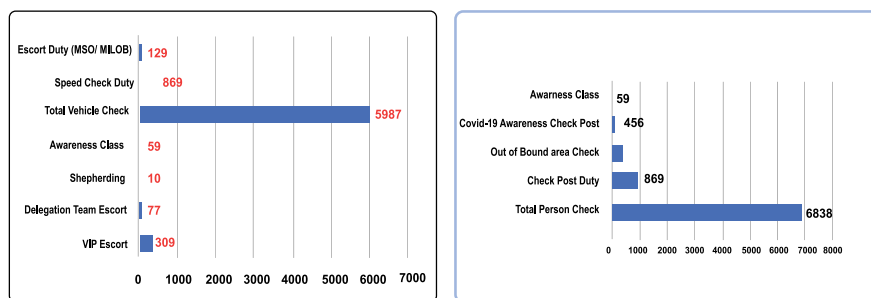
**Figure 6: Speed Check and Check Post Duty**



Source: BANMP Archive

In a few instances of check post duty, BANMP experienced aggressive reactions from counterparts. BANMP handles this type of awkward situation professionally with patience.

**Figure 7: Traffic Policing and Discipline Checking Duty  
(01 Apr 21 to 31 Jan 22)**



Source: Author's self construct using statistics of BANMP CHQ

**d. Maintaining Discipline:** BANMP acts as custodian of MONUSCO discipline by implementing the policies and directives related to disciplinary matters issued by SRSG or FC. To do so, BANMP conducts robust patrolling in out of bound areas, checks general behavior, enforces curfew hours, and conducts awareness classes for MSO/MILOB and contingents. Curfew hours for contingent members are with effect from 1800-0600 hours. Every first Monday of the month is observed as the MP Day for enhancing awareness amongst all MONUSCO personnel.

**e. BANMP in Ceremonial, Escorting Duties:** FC relies on BANMP to provide Guard of Honour to different high-level delegations due to high standard of discipline, drill, and turn out-bearing. BANMP detachments provide close protection to SRSG, FC, DFC as well as any high-level delegation authorize to receive MP escort. In the year 2021, BANMP conducted VIP escort 303 times and delegation team escort 77 times.

**Figure 8: Guard of Honour to President of Uruguay and Escorting to SRSG**



Source: BANMP Archive

### **Fearless BANMP during Natural Calamities**

BANMP CHQ and Goma Detachment are in Goma city, which is only 15 km away from the deadliest Mount Nyiragongo volcano. Mount Nyiragongo is considered one of the most dangerous volcanoes in the world because of its fast-moving lava. It can flow at a speed of about 100km/hour. Till now, Mount Nyiragongo has erupted approximately 34 times with the most severe eruption occurring in 1977, which cost 400 lives. The most recent eruption occurred on 22 May 2021, which led to the displacement of over 5,00,000 persons. The latest eruption was also followed by numerous earthquakes till 02 June 2021. Most of the UN staff had to be evacuated to Sake, Bukavu, Kavumu, and Rwanda. Fortunately, the volcanic lava flow stopped about 800 meters away from BANMP Goma camp. However, the brave BANMP members did not leave their camp, rather devoted to ensuring the smooth evacuation plan of MONUSCO staff along with local civilians.

**Figure 9: Nyiragongo from BANMP Camp**



Source: BANMP Archive

The Goma Detachment has fearlessly conducted the following activities during that catastrophe as briefly discussed below:-

- a. BANMP liaised with all civilian security agencies to monitor the situation of the erupted volcano and notify the updates to FHQ. They also performed border patrolling at the DR Congo-Rwanda border to prevent



untoward situations as the MONUSCO staff and local civilians gathered there for crossing the border.

b. BANMP provided MP escorts to the MONUSCO military and civilian personnel to reach the Goma-Rwanda border, Goma water port, and Goma Airport with the intent to evacuate them from Goma to a safe zone. BANMP also provided MP escort to different MONUSCO contingents during their evacuation process from Goma to the safe area.

c. Many MONUSCO civilian staffs along with their families gathered at the Goma logistics base for safety. BANMP was deployed there to monitor and control their movement for preventing any unwanted situations. Moreover, BANMP members didn't leave their camp but rather increased their routine patrolling inside Goma city for the protection of MONUSCO as well as local people despite volcanic eruptions and frequent earthquakes.

d. After the eruption, there was a continuous tremor for more than two weeklong. It was a new experience for BANMP. Even though all members of BANMP kept calm and dealt with the situation professionally. Goma Detachment constantly maintained the statistics of seismic tremors and notified FHQ. Moreover, there was acid rain and the flow of toxic volcanic ash after the eruption. BANMP acted promptly to raise awareness about this amongst the troops deployed in the AOR as well as the local civilians.

### **Challenges Faced by BANMP and Ways Forward**

BANMP personnel remains operational round the clock for implementing FC's directives as well as MONUSCO rules and regulations. While performing these classical roles, BANMP interacts with people who come from various countries having different cultures, languages, behavioural patterns, temperaments as well as unique character qualities of their own. Amongst them, a good number of peoples does not want to be checked by BANMP and quickly becomes impatient, considering it unnecessary. On a few occasions, the BANMP investigation team did not receive expected support from contingents during an investigation. The following aspects can enhance the operational efficiency of future BANMPs by eliminating the difficulties faced:-

a. On different occasions, MP must record the statements of locals as complainants or witnesses who do not speak English. So, BANMP depends on Language Assistant while interacting with local Congolese. This situation hinders investigation as investigators must be able to understand interviewees' kinesics,<sup>10</sup> way of talking, up-down of vocal pitch, frequency of using a particular word with the movement of eyes for revealing the real facts. Besides, MONUSCO troops are also inducted from different countries with different languages. To overcome

these, officers may be trained to have elementary language skills in the host country as well as French.

b. MONUSCO is a multi-national diversified UN Mission. The classical role of BANMP demands frequent interaction with different culturally motivated peoples. Cultural differences can create barriers between BANMP and its counterparts, as their different styles of approach can be misunderstood. To overcome these, all BANMP members must be open-minded and have due respect for different cultures and traditions. How to handle or cope with cultural diversity may be included in the pre-deployment and in-mission training syllabus.

c. Anti-MONUSCO sentiments amongst local communities are growing day by day. The local mob used to demonstrate against MONUSCO, asking for its immediate withdrawal. On different occasions, demonstrators threw stones/and vandalize the MONUSCO vehicles and properties. To overcome this, BANMP should establish rapport with local community leaders as well as law enforcement agencies to gain firsthand information about likely agitation. Moreover, BANMP must interfere in any discord surfaces between locals or local agencies with MONUSCO members. Here, BANMP needs to protect the rights of peacekeepers by amicably gaining locals' confidence as well as acting as a conciliator.

d. BANMP detachments are performing well since 2003 in MONUSCO. However, it is no denying fact that a detachment having the manpower of 10/12 personnel is difficult to maintain all operational and administrative activities. To overcome this, Detachment Commanders should appoint the right person in the right place and detachment members must be motivated to perform multi-tasks. Moreover, as BANMP detachments work under a single UNMP umbrella, therefore, assistance may be sought from different detachments if witnesses/suspects fall under that detachment's AOR.

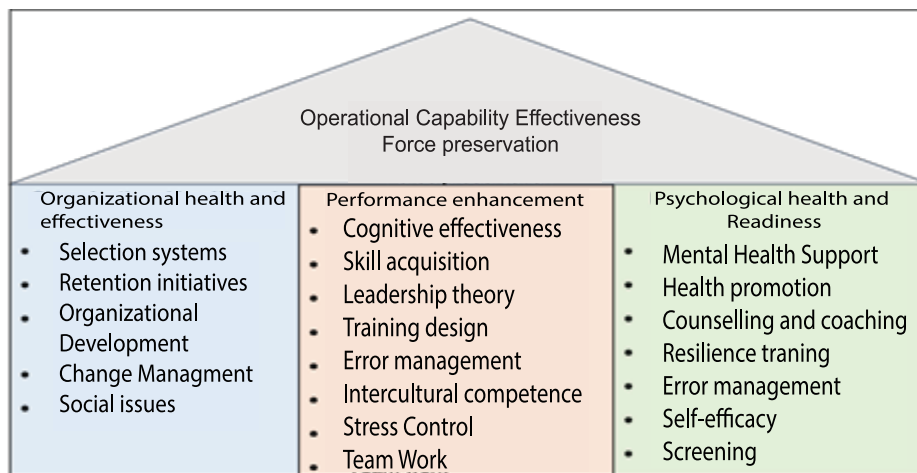
e. As per TO&E, BANMP is equipped with soft-skinned vehicles and small arms (Pistol, SMG). However, the AOR of different detachments may fall under RED ZONE, where they cannot move without armed escort. Moreover, it is a must for BANMP to visit the place of occurrence irrespective of the degree of offenses. Under these circumstances, the respective Sector HQ provides escort to the BANMP investigation team, which is time-consuming, therefore, the investigation team cannot reach the place of occurrence immediately for collecting the evidence intact. LAV along with heavy weapon operators may be authorized in the TO&E<sup>11</sup> of BANMP.

f. Human psychology suggests that a human doesn't want to be checked and tries to avoid such a situation. BANMP frequently encounters this sort



of situation which creates stress on MP. To handle such events, BANMP should behave politely, respond candidly, speak persuasively, and continue the mission tactfully.<sup>12</sup> These character attributes especially stress management capacity and psychological robustness can be achieved through the model of behavioural defence psychology where individual column contributes to the three primary outcomes listed at the top of the model shown below :-

**Figure 10: How to Enhance Operational Effectiveness**



Source: Author's self construct using statistics of BANMP CHQ

g. Many a time BANMP investigation team experienced rival attitudes from contingents. It is also found that contingents remake the place of occurrence by distorting evidence. Besides, witnesses also behave reluctantly while recording the statements. To overcome this, BANMP may conduct extensive awareness classes for gaining their confidence and establishing rapport.

#### **Sacrifices of BANMP Members on the path of Global peace**

On 04 April 2011, Maj Zia and Cpl Younus of BANMP-6 died in a plane crash at Kinshasa Airport, DRC on their tour of duties in MONUSCO.

#### **Conclusion**

MONUSCO peacekeepers come from diverse ethnicities<sup>13</sup> but share a common purpose such as the protection of vulnerable communities as well as ensuring peace and stability. Similarly, BANMP plays a very significant role in ensuring the overall discipline of MONUSCO military component and civilian staff through continuous check and balance which creates a sense of accountability and responsibility amongst peacekeepers and protects them from wrongdoing. The mission accomplishment of BANMP hinges upon the

operational efficiency of its personnel. Furthermore, BANMP personnel interacts with numerous peoples of varying character qualities, cultural diversities, diverse languages, and more importantly from different countries. Amongst them, a good number of people do not want to be checked by MP and quickly become impatient, considering it unnecessary. Therefore, patience, stress management capacity, and a healthy cognitive posture must possess attributes in BANMP duties; otherwise, altercations are likely to occur. Moreover, in an international arena, each BANMP member acts as an ambassador of Bangladesh. So, BANMP maintains the sanctity of its responsibilities understanding the very spirit of our foreign policy “Friendship towards all, malice towards none”. Therefore, the image of our motherland largely depends on BANMP’s overall performance and acceptancy amongst MONUSCO members.

BANMP has been extraordinary in MP activities having vast knowledge of MONUSCO mandate, SOPs, investigative procedure, traffic policing, innovative thinking, cooperative attitude, and maturity. Despite having cultural and language barriers, and other challenges, BANMP never faced serious problems because of their respectful approach to diversities, hard work, sincerity, tactfulness, impartiality, and professionalism rather BANMP gains the confidence of MONUSCO as well as winning the heart of local Congolese which uphold the image of Bangladesh in an international environment positive expression in the words of Dr. Delwar Hossain, honourable member of Public Service Commission Bangladesh:

It’s a great pleasure and rewarding to visit the BANMP-16 contingent. We have been thoroughly impressed by the excellent performance and high professional display of duties and responsibilities of members of this contingent. It’s making an outstanding contribution to the peace operations and positive image of Bangladesh. The contingent leadership and members have been profoundly committed to upholding the values of peace and the culture of Bangladesh. Please keep this up. Wishing continuous success of BANMP.<sup>14</sup>

### **Notes & References**

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13. A particular ethnic group or the fact of belonging to a particular ethnic group is a group of people with a shared culture, tradition, language, history, etc.
14. Dr. Delwar Hossain, an eminent scholar, Professor at the Department of International Relations, Dhaka University, and member of the Public Service Commission of Bangladesh who authors numerous articles, and research papers on world peace and international issues. On 03 July 2021, as a delegation team leader, he paid a formal visit to BANMP CHQ and BANMP Goma Det in DRC, and wrote these words in the visitor's comment book.

### **Brief Biography**



**Lieutenant Colonel Mahtab Khan, psc** was commissioned with the 55th BMA Long Course on 20 December 2006. He attended number of courses at home and abroad. He is a graduate of Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur. He has completed a Master of Science degree in Military Studies from the Bangladesh University of Professionals. His career saw a mix of staff, instructional, and command appointments. He has served in Infantry Battalions, Divisional MP Unit, and DAMS in MS Branch, AHQ. He was an Instructor in CMPC&S, and Platoon Commander in BMA. Under Blue Helmet, he served in Force BANMP-7 (MONUSCO) as Logistics and Operational Officer. Currently, he is the Commanding Officer (CO) of 36 East Bengal in Ramu Cantonment at Cox's Bazar.

## **Dilemmas of Asymmetric Threats in UNPKO: Preparedness of Bangladesh Police**

Shawon Shyla, ppm, Additional Superintendent of Police

### **Introduction**

In the landscape of global peace, security, and tranquility the nexus of asymmetric threats of various kinds is emerging as an unprecedented concern. Multifaceted asymmetric threats embedded in the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO) environments are becoming more challenging. These asymmetric threats have started taking a heavy toll on UN peacekeepers.

Each UN mission has confronted various forms of asymmetrical threat and in most cases, each is structured differently. The often-hybrid nature of UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) is continuously facing a plethora of challenges. These expound on growing attacks against the peacekeepers, multidimensional operational structure, complex mandates, hostile working environment, regional political complexities, and drying political support.

Though UN missions are not directly mandated to confront the threats posed by violent extremist groups, civil wars have weakened state institutions as well as hardened government positions against UN in Somalia, Mali, Central African Republic, and South Sudan. For instance threats addressed by United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), MONUSCO (DR Congo), South Sudan, the political mission in Libya, and the unarmed political mission in Afghanistan have minimal supports to combat rebel groups. The UN should prepare analysis upon configuration and size to match with the host government desire when deciding on the size and ambition of a peace operation.

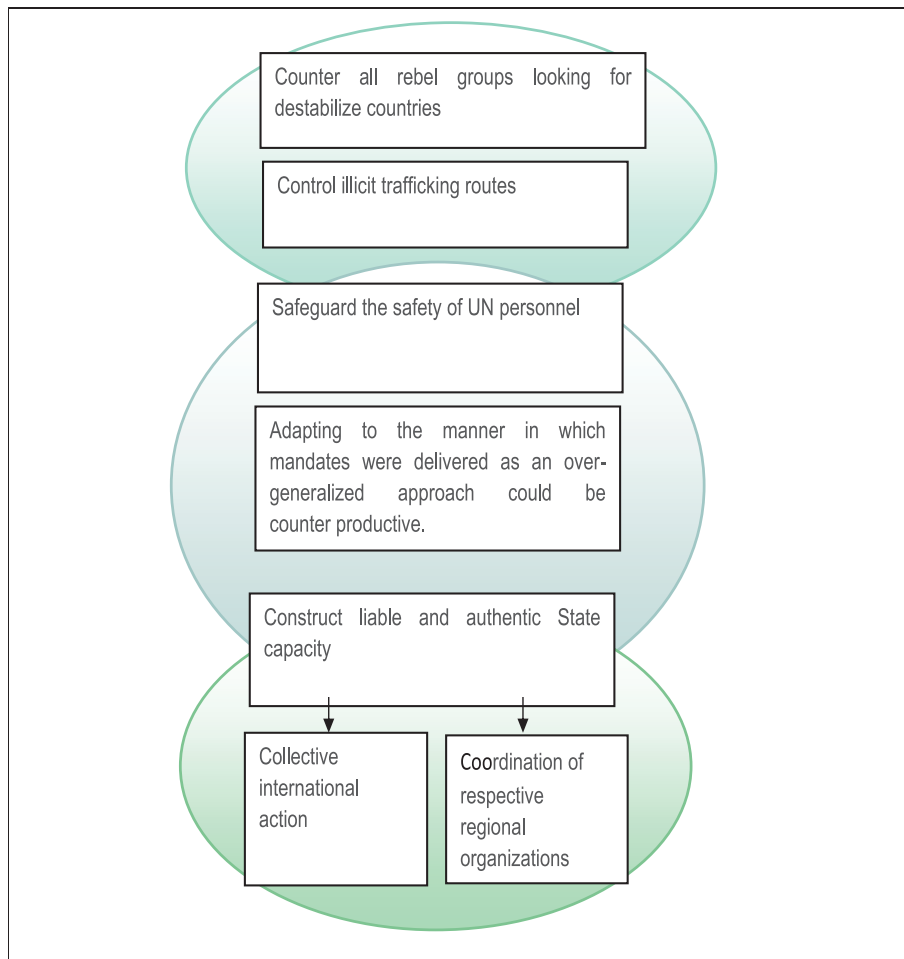
Therefore, keeping this in mind to prepare and equip our peacekeepers on asymmetric threats and corresponding countermeasures this paper will initially identify likely asymmetric threats in UNPSO. Subsequently, this paper will delineate certainly suitable modalities for operation. Afterward, critical challenges regarding Asymmetric Threats as well as required capabilities will be explored. Finally, some recommendations for preparedness including training requirements for Bangladeshi peacekeepers will be suggested.

### **UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) in Asymmetric Environments**

National security and human security can be endangered by two (NTS) threats. Any study on NTS threats demands a clear understanding of

both the traditional and non-traditional forms of threats. Traditional security threats involve threats to a state's sovereignty and integrity, warranting military responses. On the other hand, the NTS threats primarily emanate from non-military sources which affect the survival and well-being of the people, the state, the region, and often the entire world. It is imminent that the UN is not irrelevant in asymmetric threat environments and plays an unprecedented role in the core activities of protecting civilians and facilitating political processes. Though the UN is not the perfect role player for engaging in counter-terrorism operations, the presence of the UN alone is of significance and its activities are limited by security concerns, UN is working in a range of environments where it faces asymmetric and violent threats.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1: Priorities for Deploying Peace Operations to Mitigate Asymmetrical Threats**



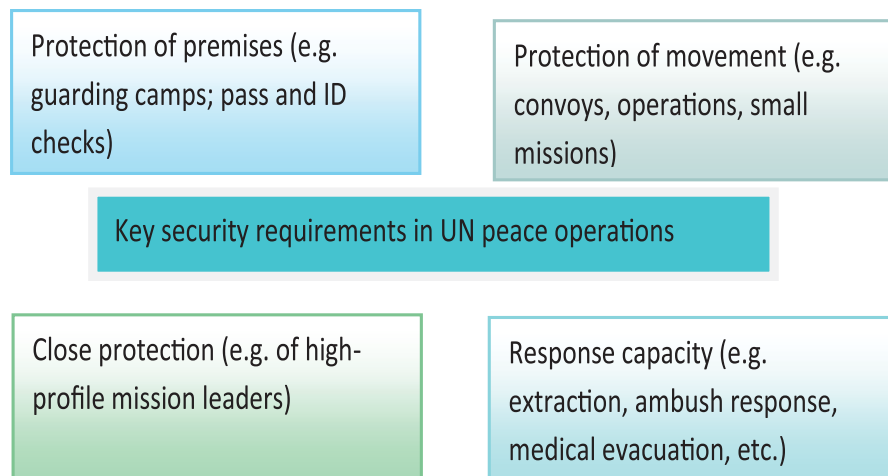
Source: Author's self construct

### **UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) in Asymmetric Environments**

Asymmetric threats to peacekeeping operations had been on the rise whether it is terrorism or it is Transnational crime. The NTS environment manifests unanticipated yet significant surprise events which may appear at any point in time. Asymmetrical threats pose a violent risk when it comes to the case of protecting civilians. The context in Mali is the true evidence in this regard.<sup>2</sup>

In Security Council resolution 2295 (2016), the Council conferred the necessary mandate upon MINUSMA in order to be able to respond to the threats it faces and to protect Blue Helmets. The adoption of a robust posture is clearly not just desirable, but indispensable. To protect themselves and the local population, where mandated Peacekeeping missions must have more vigorous capabilities, it is time to prepare missions effectively which encompasses advanced technology, increase resilience and robustness in terms of mobility and modify mandates to the operational environment.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 2: Key Security Necessities in UN Peace Operations**



Source: Author's self construct

Worldwide peace operations continue to grow and adapt due to the varying nature of the battle. The deployment of peacekeeping operations and to some extent their function depends upon how asymmetrical threats may affect several fronts. Three crucial areas are needed to be focused which include capacity building of peacekeepers as well as the capacity of peace operations; managing logistic facilities; and rapport building for enhancing the efficiency of peace operations in general and peacekeepers in particular.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 3: Benefits of improving safety and security in UN peace operations**



Source: Author's self construct

### Structural and Operational Challenges

To achieve their own objectives miscreants frequently use asymmetric threats. Various sorts of weapons like improvised explosive devices are considered asymmetric in nature around the globe. Some actors assume peacekeepers as licit targets when it comes to civilian and force protection and this trend is increasing significantly which creates newer challenges. To redraw peacekeeping systematically to identify substantive drawbacks is now a vital question. Since such numerous asymmetric threats trigger trouble to less effective host governments, political dialogue is imperative in this regard. Pitfalls similar to terrorism also present challenges regarding whether peace operations should operate counter-terrorism activities, or by other stakeholders. Situational awareness is inevitable in such a context to make a path for next-level peacekeeping. It is also mentionable that distinct agreement is demanded among peacekeepers and other stakeholders.<sup>5</sup>

- a. As UN operates in complex environments it is needed to give more emphasis to develop standards and guidelines on the collection, collation, analysis, and use of intelligence.
- b. To some extent, the ability of the UN to address logistical challenges is needed to be sorted . In some cases, due to geographical terrain peace operations are hampered coupled with other factors ranging from

environmental issues to less mobility of mission personnel because of the volatile nature of the mission area which hampers the delivery of logistics support.

c. Not defining the standards under which ad-hoc forces or peacekeeping operations may be used to “neutralize” or “deter” illegitimate transnational armed groups.

d. Lack of operational and tactical strategies which enumerate how to confront asymmetric threats with prevailing resources.

e. Needs of operational guidelines to be rapidly addressed for the safety and security of UN personnel.

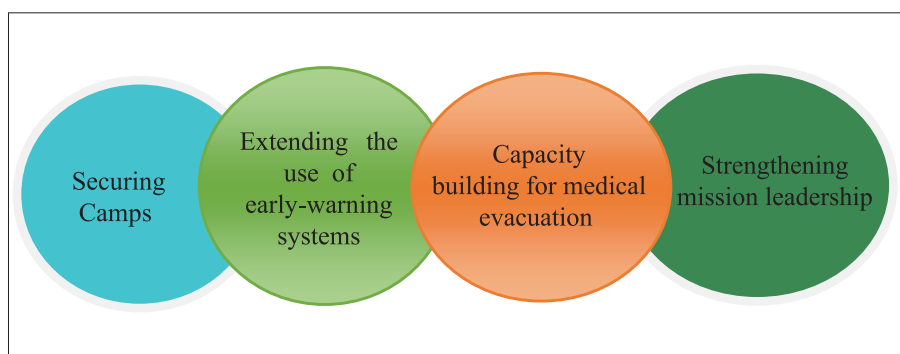
f. As a whole planning, satisfactory resourcing, and competent personnel should be more focused which can minimize the likelihood of deficiencies. As UN security arrangements are supposed to be custom-made the UN Secretariat should give more emphasis to set options in this regard.

#### **Suggested Proficiencies to be Focused in Asymmetric Threat Environments**

UN may conduct the threat assessment when any mission is discussed to be deployed. On the basis of that threat assessment proficiencies should be developed which may include three components of any mission consisting of Military, Police, and civilian. It is significant for any UN peace operation to be successful. To operate safely and effectively in risky environments the issue of intelligence bears an unprecedented status in this regard.<sup>6</sup>

It has great implications on how the performance of missions is reviewed and more to that peace missions having such capacities may protect the civilians in a better way. It may also be beneficial for the host community.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 4: Possible Domain of Focus to Operate Safely in Asymmetric Environments**



Source: Author's self construct

### **Suitable Modalities of Operation for Bangladeshi Peacekeepers**

#### **Models Followed by Various Countries for Preparation Against NTS Threats**

**a. Threat-Based Modality:** Threat-based modality is purely based on specific types of NTS threats. These specific threats are then combined and used for force structuring and developing an operational plan. It encourages a deliberate focus on the threat and on the corresponding capabilities and doctrines. However, this model has an inherent risk of losing sight of unforeseen potential threats.<sup>8</sup>

**b. Capability-Based Modality:** The capability-based modality focuses less on identifying specific threats. Instead, it relies more on analyzing its own capabilities that are required to be developed. It leads to a more forward-looking culture instead of a reactive approach to planning. It encourages a generic approach for outlining threats as such emerging capabilities of a particular anticipated NTS threat may remain unnoticed.

**c. Scenario-Based Modality:** The scenario-based modality aims to provide a concrete example to serve as a basis for threat evaluation and own capability development. It portrays precise situations and threats to evaluate its own capabilities and shortcomings.

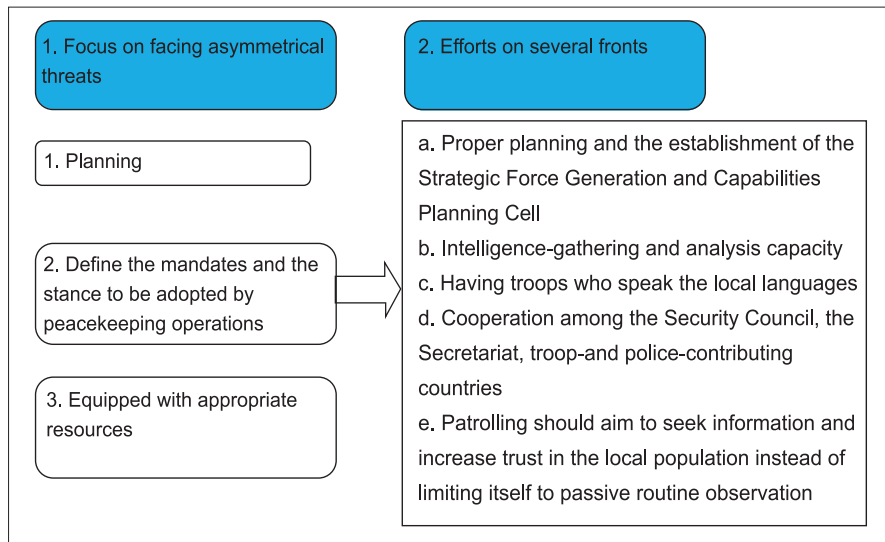
**d. Combined Approach:** A combined approach is the combination of previously discussed modalities. However, this approach is based on adaptability and resilience which determines the courses of action to prepare against current and perceived future threats. This approach discourages the use of a single set of threats, objectives, missions, or scenarios as the basis for preparation. Instead, it facilitates the preparation of a force against multiple scenarios with diversified threats.<sup>9</sup>

#### **The Existing Modality Followed by Bangladesh Police**

The COVID-19 response by Bangladesh Police requires no mention which surely complemented the existing reputation. The actions against COVID 19 was a combined approach where activities of the Police were directed and modified according to the scenario and the threat both.

In response to NTS threats emanating from non-state actors like terrorism, religious fundamentalism, and trans-border crimes in UN Mission Bangladeshi peacekeepers' response strategy was a combination of threat and scenario-based modalities.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 5: Required Approaches to Better Respond**



Source: Author's self construct

### **Bridging the Gap**

#### **Suggested Measures to Achieve Desired Preparedness**

**a. Provision of NTS Cell at Police Headquarters:** An appropriate NTS cell could be established at Police Headquarters to coordinate the efforts to prepare against the NTS threats. This cell can play a greater role in maintaining operational and training links as well as can research on wide range of primary and secondary sources to explain the existence and implementation of NTS government arrangements.<sup>11</sup>

**b. Inclusion of NTS Modules at the Training Centers:** Police Training Center, Tangail which impart pre-deployment training can play a greater role in developing a general understanding of the Officers and all ranks on NTS threats. Lessons related to NTS threats may be incorporated in the syllabus of mandatory courses conducted by the training institutions. In addition to that, some basic knowledge on such threats may be imparted to the officers in Bangladesh Police Academy and the training centers respectively.<sup>12</sup>

**c. Training in Collaboration:** The significant rise in asymmetric threats makes it vital that training needs are regularly assessed. Training officers and men abroad, joint exercises with other Police forces, sister services, and paramilitary forces may be arranged to develop Bangladesh Police's own expertise on NTS threats.

**d. Psychological Reorientation:** All members of the Bangladesh Police must

be sufficiently educated and trained to realize the nature, dimension, importance, and effects of NTS threats.

#### **Proposed Roadmap to Achieve the Desired Level of Preparedness**

a. **Immediate Measures (within One to Two Years):** Measures that merely need some decisions have been classified as immediate measures. For example, all ranks of Bangladesh Police need to be psychologically reoriented for adequate attention on NTS threats. This psychological reorientation needs a little more focus on training on NTS threats at different institutions.<sup>13</sup>

b. **Mid-Term Measures (within Three to Five Years):** Measures that may need further studies, policy formulation, and much coordination have been termed as mid-term measures. For example, modification in training considering specific vulnerabilities to different NTS threats needs further studies and analysis. Besides, new policies for recruiting officers with diverse talents need to be studied thoroughly before adoption.<sup>14</sup>

c. **Long Term Measures (within Six to Eight Years):** A period of six to eight years has been considered for the implementation of long-term measures like developing specialists on NTS threats, provisioning of NTS Cell at Police Headquarters, developing own capabilities et cetera.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Conclusion**

At the operational level, the overall preparedness of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in general, Bangladesh Police in particular to fight against any foreseeable NTS threats is praiseworthy. However, the better realization of the graveness of NTS threats and seriousness at the tactical level will surely make the peacekeepers better prepared to combat future contingencies. Understanding the asymmetrical pitfalls posed to PKO to prepare peacekeepers consequently PKO involves a wide range of military and civilian conditioning across the conflict zone together with several institutions working in parallel in peacekeeping and peacebuilding programs. Most of the UN peacekeeping personnel are serving in violent contexts and security threats against peacekeepers have intensified. To mitigate the security threats, some salient features can make a wonder which includes the use and application of advanced technology, improved policy, and planning processes, and capability-focused force generation processes. It also delineates the adoption of deterrent mission postures, capacity building on security-risk management, and strong leadership.

It is critical that Bangladesh imparts training and prepares peacekeepers, taking cognizance of the challenges of multidimensional peacekeeping in responding to armed conflicts that are changing quickly. Armed conflicts are substantially intra-state, rather than inter-state and peacekeepers are frequently called to engage a changing profile of armed groups who frequently resort to terrorist tactics, or are connected with the systematized crime. Peacekeepers

are also needed to neutralize groups and outfits in possession of a new generation of armaments. Peacekeeping camps also need acceptable protection, including the use of further advanced systems to ascertain pitfalls in advance and to discourage those to save the lives of peacekeepers effectively. Peacekeeping authorizations have grown broad and complex with operations given large tasks and wide-ranging liabilities whose performance necessitates well structured, equipped, and trained forces, including the participation of women peacekeepers and responsibility for perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of misconduct. To take a leadership part in peacekeeping, Bangladesh needs to understand all these complex marvels involving new-age PKO and make ready its forces consequently so that the Bangladeshi Peacekeepers, when and where stationed, can set up and carry their share of the responsibility with other mates to achieve peacekeeping excellence.

To respond to evolving challenges UN peace operations have been proved as a pliable instrument. However, It can be noted that member states must have responsibilities to maintain the required competencies and strategic aptitude. Subsequently, it will prepare peace operations to face twenty-first-century security challenges posed by asymmetric threats.

### **Recommendations**

Following recommendations are drawn in the light of the above discussion:

- a. To operate effectively to ensure a safe environment encountering asymmetric threats, a plethora of areas can be identified for the UN. For strategic and operational betterment before deploying any mission context analysis and prearrangement of missions which can be done through liaisons and cooperation with regional organizations.
- b. To address asymmetric threats peace operations should be adequately resourced and capacitated.
- c. Engagement, containment, and rehabilitation are three main actors which should be considered. Political leadership can be vital in this regard. Analytical ability should be enriched by member states through their praiseworthy commitment.
- d. By deploying intelligence capacities missions should enlarge their monitoring capacities of mission areas.
- e. More people-centric missions can make a wonder.
- f. Programs like Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) should be expanded.

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### **Brief Biography**



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## **An Introspective Study on Hybrid Peacebuilding Notion and Bangladesh Army's Posture**

Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Kamrul Hassan, SPP, afwc, psc

### **Introduction**

In the changing nature of peace support operation (PSO), 'Hybrid Peace-Building' concept has appeared as a relatively recent and emerging concept as has been narrated by Mac Ginty,<sup>1</sup> Richmond,<sup>2</sup> Mac Ginty and Richmond,<sup>3</sup> Simangan<sup>4</sup> and Zürcher.<sup>5</sup> Over the years, such a concept has been evolved through different approaches such as peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and peace building.<sup>6</sup> In the contemporary literature, the total approach has been termed as PSO as a single entity.<sup>7</sup> Wilkinson viewed PSO as an important tool, in resolving conflicts and disputes since the end of World War II (1939-45).<sup>8</sup> Pugh has termed the involvement of the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations to settle disputes as a blending of success and failure.<sup>9</sup> Over the years, the magnitude and dimension of such operations have become complex. Such magnitude and dimension entail the transformation of PSO from first-generation traditional peacekeeping missions to fifth-generation hybrid peacebuilding operations.<sup>10</sup>

The hybrid peacebuilding concept, as Mac Ginty has viewed in general terms, is a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to address a conflict. This emerging hybrid peacebuilding concept, according to Mac Ginty and Richmond, questions the effectiveness of not only traditional peacekeeping approach but also contemporary liberal peacebuilding concept. Though prior to the emerging hybrid peacebuilding concept, the liberal peacebuilding concept had been accepted in the realm of PSO, yet, this concept has been a subject of intense debate between liberalism and imperialism. Both Mac Ginty and Richmond, who are known as advocates of hybrid peacebuilding concept, have criticized liberal peacebuilding concept mentioning that the concept has caused a range of unintended consequences. When viewed from a range of contextual and local perspectives, these top-down and distant processes appear to represent power rather than humanitarianism or emancipation.

Within the umbrella of the UN, Bangladesh has active participation in various peacekeeping missions around the globe. Being a leading Troops Contributing Country (TCC), Bangladesh has attained a well-deserved reputation through its acceptance in the world of PSO. However, the complexity in PSO remains a significant challenge for both TCC and the UN. In recent days, Bangladesh has faced critical situations in many conflict-prone areas of

Africa while discharging duties under the umbrella of 'blue helmet.' Such challenge implies that even after years of peacekeeping experience with good reputation, the 'blue helmets' sufficiently could not comprehend the complicity of the prevailing peacekeeping dimension. Therefore, Bangladesh needs to address the complexity prevailing in the realm of PSO. This might be too early to regard that hybrid peace approach can bring great and better change toward the performance of Bangladeshi peacekeepers. However, it has the potential for being considered as an alternative to the existing PSO concept. As a leading TCC, it is of great significance for Bangladesh to understand the prevailing paradigm shift of PSO concept in general and for Bangladesh Army in particular.

### **The Historical Progression of PSO**

The Peacekeeping Operation (PKO) can rightly be called an invention of the UN, though the UN does not have the provision of PKO in its charter.<sup>11</sup> According to Murithi, the UN was formed for maintaining world peace and security since its inception, and it is continuously undertaking such responsibilities.<sup>12</sup> The provisions of the UN charter allow the UN to deploy personnel in specific circumstances as has been mentioned by Nagar.<sup>13</sup> It fetched a degree of stability in numerous areas of tension around the world. The first peacekeeping operation was the UNTSO, mandated to monitor an Armistice between Israel and its Arab neighbours in May 1948.<sup>14</sup> Dobbie has experienced a paradigm shift in PKO during the cold war due to the confrontation between members of the Security Council. The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of a new era to settle conflict through the 'Peace Enforcement' approach. As such, the UN peacekeeping mission experienced transformation in both methods and approaches.<sup>15</sup>

In last few decades, the UN peace operations have undergone a series of fundamental transformations from their original nature and purpose.<sup>16</sup> In terms of the practice of peace operations, it has become common to divide their evolution into subsequent generations. The progress of the UN missions has been cumulative: the generations are built upon one another, sometimes within a single mission. Changes to mandates have seen operational shifts from one generation to another. In fact, typical mandates of past generations have been issued well into the timeframe of a subsequent generation. However, this does not detract from their essential utility in the present context. In general, as PKO have progressed through the generations, UN peace operations have moved from a reactive stance to proactive.

Besides the functional transformation, intricacies in the nature of conflict have significantly changed the modality of the UN, which leads to increases in the use of force for implementing mandates. The last decades have seen the use of force between and even within states. The PKO's have also undergone processes of strong professionalization and systematization based on a culture

of building on past lessons learned. All these have initiated transformation of PKO through the generations as mentioned by Richmond, Wilson and many others.<sup>17</sup> The five generations of peace operations are as follows:-

- a. First-generation peace operations: traditional peacekeeping
- b. Second-generation peace operations: civilian tasks
- c. Third-generation peace operations: peace enforcement
- d. Fourth-generation peace operations: liberal peacebuilding, and
- e. An incipient fifth generation: hybrid peacebuilding

The transformation of PKO continued to expand, particularly after the Cold War era, following 'The Agenda for Peace' as initiated by the then Secretary General Boutros-Ghali.<sup>18</sup> This report argued that sustainable peace to be achieved through the building of sustainable institutions, an approach that became known as 'peace building.' Realizing the drawbacks of the UN approach in Rwanda and Somalia, efforts were taken by the then Secretary General Kofi Annan to form a commission for finding a suitable approach.<sup>19</sup> With the Commission's effort, the 'Brahimi Report' was formulated which established the Peace building Commission to support and integrate peacekeeping and peace building efforts.<sup>20</sup> In the following years, few more transformation took place as scholars and policymakers generated new concept to address dispute and establish peace. As a sequence of such transformation after the cold war, liberal peace concept had been taken as more accepted approach.<sup>21</sup>

'Liberal peace' concept is an international discursive environment that dynamically reproduces technical solutions of conflict in a given place. The liberal peace framework aims to regulate, govern and empower the individual in a more accepting environment. A shift from an understanding of peace as a state of affairs in a given territory, as explored by Boege et al. has changed to address post-conflict intervention. This liberal peace sets a standard by which 'failed states' are judged according to ethical, spatial and temporal markers. However, the apparent homogeneity of the model obscures the divisions and mergers that characterize the scholarship and practice of international peacebuilding. The political differences are retained in the evolving discourses of democratic peacebuilding, civil society and state-building. Moreover, the discursive mediation of their differences is the dynamic by which the liberal peace has been sustained, despite its detachment from the lived experiences of post-conflict environments. In light of this disaggregation of the discursive environment, a better understanding of the liberal peace can be attained. The discursive dynamics of international peacebuilding illustrate how peace has become ever more elusive in contemporary international politics as has been observed by Tailor. As a result, the ideology of the liberal peace has propelled

as an evolution of traditional peace concepts that has been existing in the war-torn societies.

Despite of setting a new standard in the literature of PSO, liberal peacebuilding concept has become the target of considerable criticism that has been observed by Mac Ginty and Richmond. Both of them have established that liberal peacebuilding is either fundamentally destructive, or illegitimate, or both. At a time when the future of peace building is uncertain, it is important to distinguish between justified and unjustified criticisms, and to promote a more balanced debate on the meaning, shortcomings and prospects of liberal peacebuilding. According to Richmond the 'liberal peace' has been undergoing a crisis of legitimacy in post-conflict environments.<sup>22</sup> In many such environments; different groups often locally constituted perceive it to be ethically bankrupt, subject to double standards, coercive and conditional, unconcerned with social welfare, and unfeeling and insensitive towards social stability. It is further tied to Western and liberal conceptions of the state, to institutions, and not to the local. Franks and Richmond have also observed that liberal peacebuilding has become susceptible to local cooption, particularly where one group can adopt the language of the liberal peace and has strong support and credibility from the international community. This has led to a focus on achieving statehood for one group and the marginalization of other identity groups, and consequently the undermining of the pluralist goals of peacebuilding with the implicit cooperation of liberal peace-builders.<sup>23</sup>

Stating the Serb opposition to statehood for Kosovo, both Franks and Richmond perceived the danger that liberal peacebuilding would encourage the partition of Kosovo rather than create a pluralist polity. Focusing on the relations between liberal peace agreements and its impact on the overall peacebuilding discourse, Selby has observed uneven application of such liberalism in case of Cambodia in the early 1990s.<sup>24</sup> Using historical and contemporary examples, Mac Ginty has also mentioned that internationally supported peace operations (the liberal peace) are promoting a standardization of peace interventions in civil war situations that often fails to deliver a widely enjoyed peace. Therefore, statements made by both Mac Ginty and Richmond, regarding the growing concern of liberal peace building approach, have established that liberal peacebuilding discourse overstates the liberalism of contemporary peace interventions, and fail to capture an enduring peace.<sup>25</sup>

### **Transformative Nature of PSO: Liberalism to Hybridity**

There is no mention about peacekeeping in the UN Charter, yet the UN had launched number of UN peacekeeping missions since its inception.<sup>26</sup> The first peacekeeping attempt established by the UN was an observer mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO), set up in 1948.<sup>27</sup> The UNTSO was a supervisory mission. However, Sankari had felt the

necessity of peace enforcement in Palestine, instead of UNTSO. Since then, the nature of peace missions has experienced different approaches such as preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping peace, enforcement and peace building.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, peace missions have also observed transformations in different generations of peace operation such as first generation traditional peacekeeping to second generation and so on. Such transformations indicate the challenges of multidimensional peace operations as have been felt by Mac Ginty, Richmond, Belloni and many others.<sup>29</sup>

During the initial days, the traditional PSO's had appeared as effective tools for addressing conflicts as have been opined by Caudwell. While Rikhye and Diehl have perceived these traditional concepts as tool for preventing conflict and violence in recent past, a number of scholars like Macginty, Belloni and Richmond have come to a consensus that such traditional concepts are found to be less effective in addressing present day's multidimensional conflicts. Being a relatively contemporary concept, the liberal peacebuilding concept has appeared to succeed all the previous traditional peace concepts. However, the outcome of the liberal peace building has also generated a mixed and twisted feeling among contemporary scholars and policy makers as Paris has strongly agreed that liberal peacebuilding approach has been successful in post-conflict situation. Indicating the liberal peace building as recent and contemporary concept, Lidén and Heathershaw have also favoured this concept as an effective approach for conflict termination.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast to Paris, Lidén and Heathershaw, many have criticized the hegemonic practices of the liberal peace building by interrogating its legitimacy, sustainability, and appropriateness. For instances, Chandler has shown in his exploratory study, in case of Bosnia, that the liberal peacebuilding has worked as an 'empire in denial' in which external actors tend to 'colonize' non-Western state institutions.<sup>31</sup> Pugh has criticized the liberal peace building, indicating it as a tool of dominant world powers. Similarly, Belloni has opined that the liberal peacebuilding project, undertaken in war-torn states, has largely failed. Its objectives to create a liberal and democratic political, economic, and social order have been proven counter-productive.<sup>32</sup> These views reflect that the liberal Peace-building, despite of its relative successes like the previous peace concepts, has reached its limit.

The transformations in PSO have witnessed a resurgence of interest in indigenous, traditional and customary approaches to peace-making, in the context of conflict. Using historical and contemporary examples, Mac Ginty has assessed the feasibility of a complementary relationship between customary and Western forms of peace making. Richmond has argued that much of the UN impetus is being trapped within the conceptual dilemma to approach the UN led PSO. In the article - 'The transformation of peace', Richmond has felt the necessity of addressing conflict and violence through more flexible approaches.



Such flexibility may entail different approaches, which tends to focus upon specific strategies to respond or prevent conflict. It posits that traditional peace missions that are promoting a standardization of peace interventions, often fails to establish peace. Mac Ginty has conceptualized how this hybrid or composite peace is constructed and maintained. He has argued that peace in societies, emerging from violent conflict, tends to be a hybrid phenomenon between the externals and the locals. Mac Ginty has highlighted conceptual scoping, which can also be considered as a critique of the traditional peace concept. Being notable proponents of 'hybrid peace building concept', both Mac Ginty and Richmond have mentioned hybrid peace building as an alternative to liberal peace building and other contemporary peace concepts.<sup>33</sup>

Richmond has also examined the development of the liberal peace, and identified its significant intellectual and practical shortcomings. In the book *Liberal peace transitions: between state building and peace building*, Richmond has identified the impasse of the liberal peace building theory for successful peacebuilding process.<sup>34</sup> Like Mac Ginty, Professor Richmond has also felt the necessity of hybrid peacebuilding approach to address the lacunas of previous concept. These explanations have been reflected in his formative articles such as 'Becoming liberal, unbecoming liberalism: Liberal-local hybridity via the everyday as a response to the paradoxes of liberal peace building,' 'Resistance and the Post-liberal Peace' and 'the dilemmas of a hybrid peace: Negative or positive?'<sup>35</sup>

The realm of increasingly volatile and conflicting environment argues for different peace building approach beyond notions of the liberal peace and constructions of the liberal state. On such reality, Bellamy and Hunt raises the question of what approach would be comprehensive to settle dispute if liberal approach fails to address such dispute? The search for ways to operationalize local ownership principles remains one of the key challenges of contemporary peacebuilding, and outlines a vision of peacebuilding. The hybridity in peacebuilding operations has answered that question for sustainable development and promoting peace as have been opined by Mac Ginty and Richmond. According to Richmond, it might be theoretically and practically more fruitful to think in terms of hybrid political orders. Similarly, Mac Ginty opines that re-conceptualization opens new options for peacebuilding and for state formation. Today, peacebuilding refers primarily to the non-military or civilian dimensions of international efforts to support countries emerging from conflict. However, the involvement of the international efforts, in regards to liberal peacebuilding approach, has earned considerable criticism as has been observed by Bellamy that compliments the argument of both Mac Ginty and Richmond, to introduce hybrid peace approach as an alternative to liberal peace approach. As an outcome of such criticism, hybrid peace concept has been floated in the realm of contemporary literature of PSO.<sup>36</sup>



### **Bangladeshi Peacekeeping through PSO**

Over the years, Bangladesh has earned a reputation of promoting peace across the globe that has been elucidated in different literatures by Krishnasamy, Thakur, Fortna, Zaman and Biswas, Singh and many others. In the present context, the pattern for preserving international peace is not the same as that had been in the past, as Zaman and Biswas have observed more challenges and complicity in present days PSOs. Conflicting parties are not much cooperative and considerate to the Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the existing PSOs as Singh has narrated these PSOs as multidirectional, multifunctional and multi-challenging. In practice, the role of the Bangladesh Army in maintaining peace is quite different from what had been experienced in the previous decades. Thus, it appears logically that Bangladesh Army is witnessing more changes, and likely to counter more challenges in the changing realm of PSOs.<sup>37</sup>

Complexity of these challenges in term of origins, operations and the search for effective ways of addressing them pose a significant challenge to the Bangladeshi peacekeepers serving as the same has been experienced by other peacekeepers working under the plummet of 'Blue Helmet.' With the increased number of internal conflicts, threat of terrorism and ignorance to the peacekeeping endeavors, the sagacity of traditional peacekeeping has changed in the recent years. Therefore, Richmond and Mac Ginty have sensed a strong demand for the UN to adopt methods that focus more on peacebuilding than peacekeeping. Bellony claimed that the transformational nature of PSOs would continue to challenge the texture of perceived peace concept. In this context, it is clear that the multifaceted nature of PSOs would require more pragmatic approach like hybrid peacebuilding concept in the foreseeable future.<sup>38</sup>

Hybrid Peace-building has become an integral part of UN PSOs, as Mac Ginty, Jarstad and Belloni and Richmond have realized that the termination of a mission without building peace reverts to hostilities. In such realization, Bangladesh Army also needs to be involved in such peacebuilding activities as has been witnessed by Anam. However, Zaman and Biswas have observed that Bangladesh Army has inadequate preparation for addressing the emerging trend of PSOs. Such perception of these co-author's to address the transformational shifting of PSOs, have been specifically termed by Mac Ginty and Richmond, as effective peacebuilding concept. Therefore, there is a need for preparing Bangladesh Army for rendering better service in PSOs. As such, an immediate approach may be taken to incorporate the emerging hybrid peacebuilding concept within the overall framework of PSOs. A country specific approach, such as Bangladesh, has not been contemplated in their academic analysis. As such, existence of hybrid peacebuilding concept, in the context of Bangladesh Army, has remained out of the purview of those scholarly studies.

Therefore, an in-depth study, regarding the involvement of Bangladesh in emerging hybrid peacebuilding approach, has been found necessary for both ongoing and future involvement in the PSO.<sup>39</sup>

### **Bangladesh Army in Hybrid Peace-building Environment**

Despite of global recognition in recent past, Bangladesh Army has faced difficulties in the transformational environment of PSOs.<sup>40</sup> After the Cold War era, such transformation has experienced the advent of liberal peace concept, which lately contested by Mac Ginty and Richmond, and promoted hybrid peace concept. Existing hybrid peace operation in Darfur (UNAMID) is a testimony to one such concept. In UNAMID, members of Bangladesh Army have been found not adequately familiar regarding the conceptual, functional and operational insight.<sup>41</sup> Due to the lack of discernment, the army personnel have faced numerous challenges while performing their duties in a hybrid peace operation environment.<sup>42</sup>

In Bangladesh perspective, the 'hybrid peacebuilding concept' has not been found quite extensively in contemporary literature. On the basis of the author's content analysis on various primary and secondary resources, not much has been found regarding the involvement of Bangladesh in relation to hybrid peacebuilding approach. The issue, due to its very nature, has remained within the military purview. The trainee officers of National Defence College (NDC) and Defence Services Command & Staff College (DSCSC) have conducted few research works, focusing more on peacekeeping missions. Hossain has emphasized organizational preparedness of Bangladesh Armed Forces on the context of peacekeeping mission environment.<sup>43</sup> Ahmed has highlighted impact of remittance, earned by the peacekeeping forces, on rural economy.<sup>44</sup> The paper was not focused on conceptual aspects and its attributions. Sikder has critically examined the nature of security threats to the Bangladeshi peacekeepers.<sup>45</sup> In all three cases, the focus of the research was only on field peacekeeping missions from security threat perspective. The theses, being conducted by Ahmed, examined preparedness of Bangladesh Air Force in the context of operational readiness.<sup>46</sup> The study was carried out on the UN peacekeeping contingents. However, a diminutive overview, regarding the transformation of traditional peacekeeping to peacebuilding approach, has appeared in the research work conducted by Hoque.<sup>47</sup> Though, the research work has extensively focused on the paradigm shift from the peacekeeping to peacebuilding approach, yet the concept of hybrid peacebuilding has not been reflected in that study. Hoque has also opined that the paper could not provide more insight on practical approach of peace building since Bangladesh did not step into peacebuilding missions in classical sense.

A comprehensive study appears that despite of a significant transformation in the PSO, the emerging hybrid peacebuilding concept has not been duly addressed within the organizational outfit of Bangladesh Army.

According to Nagar, the paradigm shift in the PSO has caused significant challenges for the peacekeeping forces who had been discharging their duties in the war-torn region of the world.<sup>48</sup> As one of the leading TCC, the Armed Forces of Bangladesh has also faced similar challenges during discharging their responsibilities. The challenges of Bangladesh Army, while performing their duty under the umbrella of Blue Helmet, have also been highlighted extensively by Zaman and Basu.<sup>49</sup> Despite of extensive work that has been conducted in the area of peacekeeping missions and their challenges, significant research has not been carried out on the transformation of PSO. As such, an emerging concept like hybrid peacebuilding has appeared to remain mostly ignored. The above-mentioned literatures reflect that the western scholars conceptualize most of the academic works, related to hybrid peacebuilding approach. Apparently, in the context of Bangladesh Army, not much work has been done to address the recently emerged hybrid peacebuilding concept. As a leading TCC in the globe, it is imperative for Bangladesh to conceive the contemporary literatures related to PSO. Bangladesh Army needs to understand the intricacy of PSO around the world. Therefore, understanding the latest and contemporary concepts is of immense importance for Bangladesh in general and Bangladesh Army in particular.

### **Conclusion**

The emerging trend in the PSOs literature reflects the necessity of understanding the overall PSO through more acceptable, reasonable and pragmatic approach. After the Cold War era, while the world had been experiencing a conceptual transformation from traditional peacekeeping to liberal peacebuilding approach, Bangladesh Army had ventured to promote peace following the traditional peacekeeping approach. Over the years, Bangladesh Army has been recognized as an important stakeholder of the UN as she has been a leading contributor for sending troops in the conflict-prone areas of the world.

The contribution of Bangladesh Army continues to provide peacekeepers to the UN peacekeeping missions. While being recognized as successful and leading contributor for the UN peacekeeping missions, Bangladesh Army has also experienced numerous challenges in different conflict-prone areas. Such experiences had been a combination of both success and failure. While the world had addressed liberal peacebuilding concept as more acceptable approach, Bangladesh Army remained to discharge its duty following the traditional peacekeeping approach. Fortna, Zaman and other scholars have observed that ignorance to such paradigm shift of PSOs had been a prime cause of experiencing such challenges by the Bangladeshi Peacekeepers.

In the changing nature of peace literature, 'Hybrid Peace-Building' concept appears to be an emerging concept. The concept has been considered

as an alternative to liberal peacebuilding and other contemporary peace concepts. Scholars, around the world, also advocate hybrid peace building as comprehensive approach for addressing conflict. Being an important stakeholder of the UN, Bangladesh Army also needs to conceive the concept. Through incorporating the concept, Bangladesh Army not only eradicates the existing challenges but also prepares herself to step into next generation of PSO.

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### **Brief Biography**



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## **Requirement of Technological Advancement and Digitisation for Safety and Security of the UN Peacekeepers: Ways Forward for Bangladesh**

Brigadier General Md Aftab Hossain, BSP, ndc, afwc, psc, M Phil

### **Introduction**

Since 1988, within a short span of 34 years, Bangladesh has participated in 55 missions in 40 countries and has emerged as leading T/PCCs. Due to the change in security environment of the world; the UN peacekeeping has become risky and hazardous leading it to be a threatened undertaking. The UN peacekeepers are experiencing persistent elevated rate of casualties in recent days. In last three years the number of casualty is comparatively higher, i.e. 103, 131 and 135 in the year 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively. Asymmetric threats, terrorist attacks, violent and malicious activities are the main concerns of UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) that is threatening the lives of peacekeepers. In 74 years of journey of UNPKOs, so far a total 4,179 peacekeepers, (including 161 from Bangladesh) have made supreme sacrifice of their lives for the peace and stability of the world and still the trend is upwards.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the necessity for devising the modalities for ensuring safety and security of the UN peacekeepers was felt by the UN, Troops/Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) and different stakeholders. Among the many measures, embracing the technological advancement and digitalisation seems to be one of the most effective tools to enhance safety and security of the UN personnel, i.e. uniformed and civilian peacekeepers. However, UN missions are multi-dimensional approach for peace under UN umbrella, and UN peacekeeping force is formed with the contribution of force from different countries.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, embracing digitisation and transformation of the peacekeeping is not as simple and easy as it appears rather encounter multifaceted challenges. With the aim to have a better involvement and collaboration in the partnership to employ the technology and digital transformation in the UN missions, there are series of seminar, symposium, debate, etc. since 2014. Considering the importance and necessity, participation in those seminars are also increasing, which was reflected in the symposium titled 'Predict, Prevent and Protect' - 2019, hosted by Kazakhstan where a total 266 delegates from 42 member states participated.<sup>3</sup> Number of evaluation, seminar, symposium and thematic debate have been conducted in last few years that concluded with the recommendation that to have a better involvement and collaboration in the partnership to implement the technological advancement, innovations and digitisation. In the field of UNPKOs it can work as a force multiplier and significantly enhance the security of the UN peacekeepers. The most recently conducted thematic debate under the

UN Security Council titled 'The Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping' in 2021, during which UN Secretary General Mr Antonio Guterres, aptly remarked, "Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping represents one of the greatest opportunities, but also one of the greatest challenges, of our time."<sup>4</sup> This may be an eye opener for the leading T/PCCs like Bangladesh to understand the importance of embracing the advanced technologies, innovations and digitalisation to continue with its noble responsibility of maintaining peace and stability of the world, which is a constitutional commitment of Bangladesh.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to suggest ways for Bangladesh to embrace the technological advancement, innovations and digitisation, while conducting UN missions. Initially, the paper has discussed about the necessity of the Bangladeshi peacekeepers to be modernised with technologically advanced equipment and digitisation. Thereafter, the paper has highlighted few challenges in implementing those followed by ways forward to embrace the technological advancement and digitisation. It is assumed that Bangladesh would be able to enhance its contribution in the field of UNPKOs by embracing the latest technological advancement and being digitised. It will surely enhance safety and security of the Bangladeshi peacekeepers -which are taking care of the different trouble spots of the world by risking their own lives.

### **Challenges in Incorporating Technologies in UNPKOs**

**Challenges from Global Aspect:** One of the reasons for shaky and slow adopting the technological changes in conducting operations and management of the activities of different departments in the mission areas may be that, "The UN peacekeeping infrastructures is chronically underfunded and face threats of future financial cuts."<sup>5</sup> The underfunding affect the technological advancement in two dimensions: firstly due to the scarcity of budget the UN peace effort cannot introduce the required modern equipment and secondly, the UN does not remain in possession of sufficient budget to reimburse for the highly sophisticated modernized equipment of the T/PCCs. Though there are few T/PCCs which are capable to use the latest technology and innovations, but it becomes very difficult for them to maintain that modern equipment due to shortages of spares and supplies in those countries where the missions are conducted. Because, most of the UN missions take place in the physically difficult environment and harsh weather conditions and it is very difficult for the users to maintain and keep the system functional all the time. As the UN force comes from different countries, there are also issues of interoperability of the equipment which also hinders the troop's contributors to use their modernised equipment. Most importantly, bulk of the T/PCCs providing troops of UNPKOs are from developing 'Global South' countries of Africa and Asia. Therefore, it remains a challenge for these T/PCCs of mainstream to embrace with the new technologically advanced system and equipment of the UN peace effort.

Side-by-side, it is also very difficult for them to procure technologically advanced equipment to keep at par with the UN requirement due to budgetary issues of their own countries. Another issue was also identified as mentioned by Hansen and Miyasita that there are difficulties in getting appropriate support of the equipment provider and the users, especially the forces deployed in the mission areas, i.e. T/PCCs.<sup>6</sup>

**Challenges of Bangladeshi Contingents:** Nowadays, the natures of conflicts have changed in manifolds and the capability of the spoiler of the peace and warrior factions have increased significantly. At this age of globalization, they remain connected with trans-border terrorists and armed groups to prepare themselves against the national armies and the UN peacekeepers. Gowan has mentioned that it would be difficult for Bangladesh to remain as the largest troops contributors due to the requirement for increasingly sophisticated technology.<sup>7</sup> Bangladesh is considered to be one of the most ideal T/PCCs in terms of providing Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) according to the requirement of UNPKOs. Bangladesh needs to pay due attention to acquire the equipment and gadgets and acquaint the peacekeepers with those. It is worth mentioning that worldwide many peacekeepers face difficulties to be accustomed with the new type of technology and digitisation. According to Hansen and Miyasita, “A serious gap exists between the T/PCCs with widespread digital access and acquisition of skills, and the majority of TCCs where digital access and skills are limited.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it is important to accept the new technologies, innovations and digitisation by changing the mind-set. It is to be kept in mind that technology itself cannot do anything unless it is being properly utilised and integrated.

### **Enhancing Technological Advancement and Innovations**

The UN peacekeepers are facing multi-dimensional challenges while conducting operations. To help the peacekeeping efforts, the UN leaderships have emphasised on embracing the technological advancement and digitisation where applicable. “The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has stressed his commitment to a ‘culture of prevention’ to bring about peace where technology can play effective role in supporting the UN’s endeavour.” Different expert panel suggested about embracing the digitisation and technology in the UN peacekeeping. This has opened up opportunities for the T/PCCs in different dimensions. It has brought scopes to enhance the security of the peacekeepers while conducting operations for implementing the mission mandates. Side-by-side, it has grown awareness among the T/PCCs to train and prepare them with modernised equipment so that they can face the warring factions, and the images of the UN peacekeepers are upheld. In this regard, it may be mentioned that in United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the peacekeepers have been facing serious threat of terrorist activities and use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) which has

severely restricted the movement required for implementation of the mission mandate. To overcome the difficulties in MINUSMA, Mali 'All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU)' was established in 2014 to provide with fused data. "It is providing relevant, timely, actionable and integrated intelligence analyses to the force commander."<sup>10</sup> It has decentralized deployment of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance companies in different locations with both military and civilian personnel with sensors and other apparatus. The unit collected information from open sources and different components of the mission also. In fact, the concept of ASIFU is a new one which is immensely benefiting the UN personnel, especially the peacekeepers conducting operations in a difficult environment. The nature and responsibilities of this type of units require modern and sophisticated equipment which is basically in the domain of technologically developed countries. However, the developing countries like Bangladesh can take the advantage of 'smart pledges' to contribute in the mission in collaboration with those countries interested to provide the modern equipment and gadgets not available in Bangladesh, and Bangladesh can provide tech-savvy personnel to operate those. Before deployment of the contingents, Bangladesh should prepare the peacekeepers accordingly. In this respect, the advancement and experience of Bangladesh as 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021 can be incorporated while participating in the peacebuilding phase and assisting the war-torn nations' socio-economic development programmes for the general mass.

#### **Ways Forward for Embracing the Technological Advancement and Digitisation**

**Bangladesh in UNPKOs:** The Article 25 (1) of the Constitution of Bangladesh regarding promotion of the international peace and solidarity, support Bangladesh's initiative for world peace and stability.<sup>11</sup> It clearly stated "...support the oppressed peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism."<sup>12</sup> The UN had conducted more than 70 UN Missions in different region of the world and had gained considerable experience on conducting peace operations and Bangladesh has participated in 54 of those. The lessons learnt shows that by and large the UN force lacks in technology and innovations while operating in the field. The technological advancement has changed the security environment of the world and has directly impacted the peace and stability of the world. It is no denying the fact that the warring factions are incorporating the latest technology in their activities that are directly increasing threat to the UN personnel and installations. To cope up with the changing threat perception, the realization for embracing the technology, innovations and digitisation in the UN peacekeeping to enhance performance of the peacekeepers in the field has been aptly felt much before. Therefore, in 2014 the UN Secretariat convened a panel, named 'The Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in the UN Peacekeeping' to recommend the ways by which the technology and innovations can enhance effectiveness

of the UN peace effort.<sup>13</sup> It is worth mentioning that the panel had very comprehensive recommendations to introduce latest technology and innovations in the UN peacekeeping to keep pace with the contemporary world and especially to outsmart the spoiler of the world peace and stability. The panel has categorically mentioned about the technology and innovations that should be incorporated in different fields of the UN Peacekeeping. The panel especially emphasized on technology in conduct of the operations, establishing communications, management of the activities amongst different departments, enhancing safety and security of the UN personnel in the field and so forth. Therefore, to enhance the capability of the UN peacekeepers and successful conduct of the mission mandate, the modern equipment, latest gadgets and other modern apparatus are used in day-to-day peacekeeping affairs under the UN umbrella.

Notwithstanding the fact that UNPKOs have a poor technology track record, the relevant departments of the UN are trying to improve the situation so that the deployed peacekeepers in the fields, should no way fall short of their capabilities to respond to the warring parties and spoiler of peace. In addition, the employment of technology for ensuring human rights, assisting in better healthcare, providing better educational facilities and improving socio-economic development of the locals are also taken into considerations. Therefore, there are huge tasks on the part of T/PCCs to train and accustom their peacekeepers with the new systems and modern equipment used by the UN forces deployed in the mission areas. The evaluation shows that the mission lacks capabilities which is considered minimum necessary for most of the militaries, law enforcing agencies and international organizations to operate.<sup>14</sup> The gap between the requirement and minimally essential technology and innovation in the UN peacekeeping is very large. Therefore, most of the capable military and police forces of the developed countries are reluctant to participate in the more difficult and challenging peacekeeping operations, especially in the African region. Considering all these factors and to make the UN forces capable of tackling the situation better by taking control over of the warrior factions, embracing latest technology in the UN peacekeeping is a need of time. It is well understood that incorporation of technology is likely to enhance the safety and security of the peacekeepers serving in difficult, remote and dangerous environment. All the T/PCCs including Bangladesh may not have all required advanced technology in possession, but they should focus on preparing the contingents with the technology and innovations while conducting pre-deployment training.

**Bangladesh in UNPKOs- Being Technologically Advanced:** Presently, Bangladesh is the top most T/PCCs with deployed 6500 peacekeepers in nine missions which are about 8.04% of the globally deployed peacekeepers. As discussed earlier, the nature of conflict has changed in manifolds and the capability of the spoiler of peace and warrior factions have increased

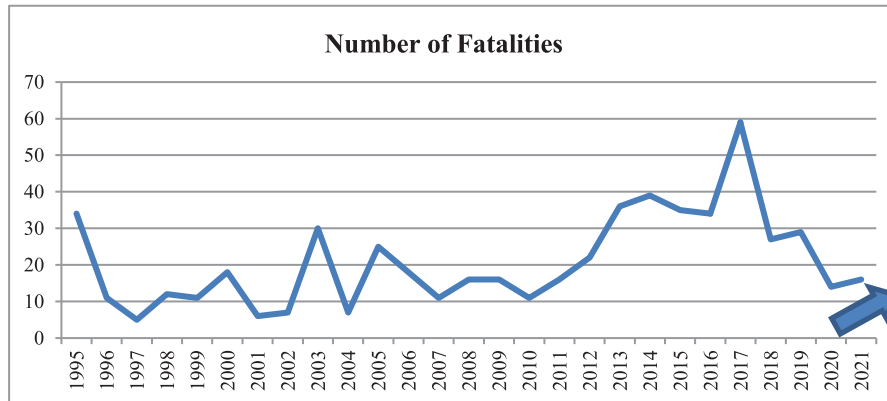


significantly. In the age of globalization, they remain connected with trans-border terrorist and armed groups to prepare themselves against the national armies and the UN peacekeepers. Therefore, Bangladesh as leading T/PCCs should always embrace the latest technology, innovation and be digitized while participating in the UNPKOs. This will enhance capability of the peacekeepers of Bangladesh to execute the mandated tasks more effectively. In this regard, the comprehensive 'Report of the expert panel on technology and innovation in UN peacekeeping' published by DPKO and DFS should be consulted thoroughly.<sup>15</sup> The technological and advancement should be incorporated in the peacekeeping and it should be from different dimensions like: for protection of peacekeepers, for conduct of operations, for enhancing safety and security of the camps and for accepting innovations for better management of the UN peacekeeping effort.

**For Safety and Security of the Peacekeepers at Accommodation Areas and Bases:** The entire encampment, accommodations, duty posts and office complexes should have proper perimeter fence to protect from unauthorized entry and trace passing. It should also have sufficient perimeter lighting and latest motion detecting technologies to avoid being aerial and ground attack by the adversaries. It should also have the close circuit camera and other remotely operated photographic facilities to get early warning. There should be duplicated means of power supply to operate all these latest facilities of advanced technologies. However, it should be remembered that, all these passive measures are not enough to ensure full security, therefore physical security measures would be required and there should be quick evacuation shelter in all the encampment for emergency situation. It may not be possible to incorporate all the facilities at the accord of T/PCCs only, but in most cases the UN assists them by providing equipment or by reimbursement. Therefore, Bangladesh has to utilize properly technological advancement to ensure safety and security of the camps. Side by side, pure water supply, proper health care are other wellbeing should be ensured. While staying in camp, a gender-based accommodation should be made to allow the stay more comfortable. While on duty, the UN personnel should have individual suites of operational and protective equipment.<sup>16</sup> It should include the modern and effective body armour and helmets, fire blankets, individual field first-aid kits etc. In all cases, Bangladeshi peacekeepers should have mobile communications and internet access devices and power backup to activate them whenever any emergency arises. It should have periodical check also.

**Individual Protection of the Peacekeepers:** The increased asymmetric threats have severely affected the security of the UN personnel as well as the Bangladeshi peacekeepers. The casualty rate of peacekeepers has increased significantly in the recent years due to terrorist activities as shown in Figure 1 below:-

**Figure 1: Fatalities by Terrorist Activities in UNPSOs**



Source: Evaluated by the author with the data from UN Peacekeeping Fatalities, 2021

The figure 1 above shows that a significant number of peacekeepers are risking their lives for peace and stability of the world. To enhance security and safety of the peacekeepers a panel was convened to evaluate the cause and suggest remedies/measures to overcome the problem. After the evaluation based on the interview and consultation of T/PCCs the Cruz Report, 2017 was published in 2017. The Cruz Report, 2017 has recommended to train the peacekeepers and a suggested to modernize the contingents and the individual peacekeepers.<sup>17</sup> To cope up with the security environment the UN requires to digitise the UN personnel: military, police and civilians with modern gadgets and equipment. The military peacekeepers require to remain updated with the latest real-time situation and early warning information. Side by side, it needs to pass information as soon as possible to able other elements of the mission to ensure security and in implementation of mandates. They should have the ability to access any incident quickly along automated location. Similarly, the UN police should have access to the security related information, analysis and early warning mechanism of the UN mission. Such access will assist them to be more complementary to the national law enforcing agencies in building their capacities. Therefore, the UN Police should be more digitalized with the modern sophisticated gadgets and equipment. The civilian staffs perform their responsibilities to manage the mission support activities and support the military and police peacekeepers to perform their responsibilities. Therefore, technology and innovations and digitalisation enhance their ability significantly in planning and supporting the different stakeholders whom they provide support.

**Addressing the Operational Needs:** The UN missions is a difficult undertaking and inevitably UNPKOs are increasingly facing multifaceted challenges including regional political complexities, drying political support, hostile working environment, growing terrorist attacks against peacekeepers.



Therefore, the casualty rate is also high as shown earlier in Figure 1. To be more specific, the number of casualties of the leading T/PPCs including Bangladesh is shown in table 1. The supreme sacrifice made by Bangladeshi peacekeepers in just 34 years is comparatively more than the other leading T/PCCs who had been contributing troops for last 60 years as shown in table 1 below:-

**Table 1: Supreme Sacrifice Made by Bangladesh in 34 Years during UN Deployment**

| <b>Name of Country with Duration</b> | <b>Number of Deceased</b> | <b>Started Contributing in UNPKOs</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Bangladesh (in 34 years)</b>      | <b>161</b>                | <b>1988</b>                           |
| India (in 62 years )                 | 175                       | 1960                                  |
| Nigeria (in 62 years )               | 157                       | 1960                                  |
| Pakistan (in 62 years )              | 150                       | 1960                                  |

Source: Data collected from DPO Website: United NationsPeacekeeping, 2022

For conducting effective UNPKOs, mobility is one of the most important desirable capabilities of the peacekeepers for deploying and redeploying rapidly in different trouble spots with minimum delay. This movement may take place within the mission areas and sometime outside the mission area to the other UN missions under the arrangement of Inter Mission Cooperation (ICM). However, the movement ability of the peacekeepers is constrained by a number of factors like terrain condition, climate, lack of road network, the presence of unfriendly elements, etc. Side-by-side, the terrorist attacks, organized crime and IEDs also severely restrict movement of the peacekeepers. Therefore, peacekeepers (individuals and contingents) should have the ability to move at any weather condition, in day and night to any designated areas. Therefore, for the safety and security of the peacekeepers possession of counter IED technologies are of paramount importance. The contingents therefore, must be deployed with high mobility operational vehicle and Mine Resistance Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs), wherever possible. But to utilise these capabilities appropriately and effectively, the UN should have intelligence gathering capabilities for conduct of effective operations.

Collection and analysis of data about terrorism, crime and conflict, the UN needs to utilize warning and response system for peacekeepers on the ground. For these, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) can significantly contribute to improve the operational capability. The UAVs can be utilized for aerial reconnaissance of hostile actors and spoiler of the peace, thereby helping them to operate in difficult asymmetric threat environments.<sup>18</sup> It allows the peacekeepers to maintain enhanced situational awareness by tracking the

movement and activities. Recently, the use of drones in the UN peacekeeping has increased as useful cost effective equipment. The unarmed drones are essential for fulfilling the UN mandate, as they can perform several non-lethal functions (i.e. monitoring, information gathering, surveillance and reconnaissance) for peacekeeping operations. The uniformed and civilian components of the UN missions have the scopes to gather information separately, but it may not be translated into knowledge because, in most of the time there is some missing information. However, recently, the UN has taken several steps to collect and collate information and to share them with all stakeholders as mentioned by Hansen and Miyasita. According to them “The UN has made some progress with tools like the Situational Awareness Geospatial Enterprise (SAGE)-a web-based database system that allows UN military, police, and civilians in UN peace operations to log incidents, events, and activities to obtain dynamic dashboards visualizing hotspots-and the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS)-a tool to link the context of a country with peacekeeping planning, data, results, and reporting to assess performance and inform future plans.<sup>20</sup> Success of these legendary initiatives will only be possible when the T/PCCs capacities, peacekeepers’ working cultures including mindset and management of the mission will be integrated. Bangladesh started utilizing the drones in the UN missions and is highly benefitted by gathering information regarding movement of the adversaries. The rate of fatalities of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Mali has been reduced significantly. For example, in MINUSMA, Mali seven peacekeepers died due to IEDs and other malicious action in 2017, but it has been reduced to two and three in 2018 and 2019 respectively.<sup>21</sup> The UN should also be more people centric and utilize the locals for collection of information and involve them in conflict management with the concept of ‘participatory peacekeeping.’<sup>22</sup> However, to reduce the reliance only on advanced technology and digitisation, the dialogues and diplomatic efforts amongst the local leadership and the UN leadership should remain as one of the most important steps.

### **Conclusion**

On the basis of UN, Monthly Strength Report, 2022 Bangladesh is the topmost T/PCCs with deployed 6389 peacekeepers in nine different UN missions. In last 34 years, Bangladesh has contributed 1,83,378 peacekeepers in 55 UN missions where 161 peacekeepers have made supreme sacrifice of their lives and 252 has sustained injury for world peace and stability. Therefore, being leading T/PCCs of UN missions Bangladesh should be forthcoming to incorporate technological advancement, innovations and digitisation to remain at par with the UN peacekeeping. Otherwise it would be very difficult for Bangladesh to maintain its leading position and role in UNPKOs. Bangladeshi peacekeepers should set up their mind to utilise the advanced technology and digitisation alongside acquiring sufficient knowledge and proficiency to use the

modern equipment and gadgets. The requirement should be aptly addressed during pre-deployment training and also in the orientation training after deployment, under UN umbrella. In this regard, Bangladesh should coordinate with Integrated Training Service (ITS) of the UN Secretariat and specific missions to formulate the required training package for the individuals and the contingents to make the peacekeepers of Bangladesh technology savvy. It will assist them to utilize the modern equipment easily and can have easy access to the latest innovations in the UN system. They should be able to know the basic operation and maintenance of the technology and their operating systems deployed in the mission area. The United Nations Military Observer (UNMO), Staff Officer (SO), leadership should be trained about the rules by which information, especially sensitive information, can be shared with other parties. It is very important that, the senior mission leaders are trained to understand and employ the tools at their disposal. The proper utilisation of the advanced technology, innovations and digitisation of UN provided facilities and contingent owned equipment can significantly improve the security of the peacekeepers while conducting operations, implementing the mission mandates and staying in the encampment. Bangladesh, being the topmost T/PCCs and having acquired positive images around the world for world in the field of UN peacekeeping should embrace the technological advancement, innovations and digitalisation for safety and security of the peacekeepers. It will enhance the international profile of Bangladesh and will be able to fulfil the constitutional commitment of Bangladesh at the best.

**Recommendations:**

In light of the above discussion following are recommended:-

- a. Bangladeshi contingents and peacekeepers should be modernised with equipment of latest technology and all peacekeepers should have sufficient knowledge to incorporate the digitisation process of UNPKOs.
- b. Bangladesh may choose for the strategy of 'Smart pledges' under which more than one T/PCCs can combine together to form contingents/elements for deployment under UN umbrella. The positive image of Bangladesh in the field of UNPKOs may act as a catalyst for such arrangement.
- c. Bangladesh should maintain positive bilateral and multilateral relations with the UN, regional organisations, host countries and other stakeholders to be technologically advanced and to incorporate digitisation in support of implementing the strategy for the digital transformation of UNPKOs under UN umbrella.
- d. The use of advanced technologies, innovations and digitalisation works as a force multiplier in the UNPKOs. These are sophisticated and continuously evolving which need to be upgraded periodically and as and when required to keep at par with the UN and other T/PCCs.

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### Brief Biography



**Brigadier General Md Aftab Hossain, BSP, ndc, afwc, psc, M Phil**, is serving in Bangladesh Army for 29 years. He is a graduate from Defence Service Command and Staff College and National Defence College. He served in different infantry regiments and served as Staff Officer of Brigade Headquarters, Division Headquarters and Army Headquarters. He has commanded 1st Bangladesh Infantry Regiment and 72 Infantry Brigade. In the field of peacekeeping, he has served as Planning Officer of DPKO in UN Secretariat, New York, and as Adjutant in UNAMSIL, Sierra Leone and Colonel Staff of Overseas Operations Directorate, AHQ. He has to his credit a number of publications in *Armed Forces Journal*, *National Defence College Journal*, and *Bangladesh Army Journal*. He was a contributor to *The Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2013* published by Center on International Cooperation, Lynne Rienner Publisher. He has completed M Phil from Bangladesh University of Professionals and now is pursuing PhD on the subject 'The Evolving Nature of United Nations Peace Support Operations: Opportunities and Challenges for Bangladesh' in the same university. At present he is serving as Deputy Commandant of Bangladesh Military Academy.

## **Sailor for Peace: Ensuring Maritime Security at the Mediterranean Sea in Blue Helmet**

Captain Mirza Mamun-ur-Rashid, (G), afwc, psc, BN

### **Introduction**

Blue Helmet – A symbol of pride, honour and dedication which enables a person to perform enthusiastically for ensuring peace and stability in some part of this planet. It is quite obvious that this challenging issue is being experienced by a little amount of personnel out of the various armed forces of different nations. In the case of maritime involvement the probabilities are further decreased. This author had the opportunity to be a peacekeepers as a sailor due to the deployment of maiden and only Maritime Task Force (MTF) in the Mediterranean. The ships of the MTF are carrying out their mandated task under the auspices of United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Though UNIFIL MTF is the maiden initiative to deploy man of war for UN peace keeping operation yet there were considerable number of Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) conducted which were duly approved by UN. Those operations include the Beira Patrol (UNSC resolution 217, 1966-1975), Operation Unified Protector by NATO in Libya (2011), Haiti sanction (1993-1994), the MIOs in both the Adriatic Sea (1992-1996) and in the Gulf-Middle-East (1990-2003). The UNIFIL MTF was deployed in 2006 to support the Lebanese Navy in monitoring their territorial waters, securing the Lebanese coastline and preventing the unauthorized entry of arms or related material by sea into Lebanon. The observance of various United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) articles are pretty significant apart from the UNIFIL mandated tasks by all the MTF units. Since this deployment, total 15 countries have participated in the MTF where Bangladesh is a proud contributor of this unique task force. Bangladesh Navy established its foothold in UNIFIL MTF since 06 May 2010 as BANCON-1. The author participated in BANCON -7 in 2016 as contingent commander and commanding officer of BNS ALI HAIDER. Thus this article will be an endeavour to share the experiences gained within that period and discussing the salient aspects related to MTF.

### **Operational Concept of MTF in UN Peace Keeping Operation**

The MTF complements towards Force Commander's integrated efforts to implement UNPKO mandates as an interpretative third dimension in addition to the land and aerial military capabilities. The MTF is capable to discharge the responsibility comprehensively by ensuring interoperability with all the stakeholders. The seamless cooperation between the MTF and all the military and civilian counterparts including regional, international, non-governmental



and governmental organizations is the key to ensure the desired achievement for UNPKO. The MTF also abides by the international law, relevant applicable treaties, customary law and any related United Nations Security Council resolutions while operating in the area of maritime operations. The presence of a UN MTF is a key enabler of regional stability, providing credible maritime power to meet Force objectives and supporting peace and security activities on land.<sup>1</sup> Thus the key roles of MTF include sea control, dominance presence, power projection, deterrence, gunboat diplomacy, maritime security as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Additionally MTF may be tasked to conduct maritime security operations to assist in establishing the conditions for security and protection. The implied tasks while involve in any maritime security operations include missions to counter piracy, vigilant against sea-mining, illegal trafficking of arms/drug/human, combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing.

**Basic Parameters of UN MIO:** It is to be noted that MIOs are not only restricted to the projection of sanctions and that they do not essentially indicate the denial of the use of the sea by a nation. In other words, MIOs are not a necessarily coercive measure, with its use being either imposed or requested.<sup>2</sup> The fundamental characteristic regardless of the category in which MIO fits are enumerated below:-

- a. Contribution towards maintaining international peace and security.
- b. Restriction in selective sea areas in the case of safe passage for navigation.
- c. Maintaining sustained and reasonable posture in the case of use of force.
- d. Observing non-state, combined and agreed character and its constrain to the maritime environment.
- e. The naval means, equipment, material, goods or people and extraction of sea resources activities as targets of interdiction.
- f. The ability to impose military force without undermining state sovereignty.

**Basic Tasks of UN MIO Units:** Generally, the task units deployed for MIO duties are given following responsibilities in order to perform their task :-

- a. Conduct interrogation of vessels with a special attention of the contact infringing the safe navigation.
- b. Dispatch armed boarding parties to conduct 'Visit, Board, search and seizure' (VBSS) operation to a vessel bound to, through or out of a defined area.

- c. Carry out search for contraband, illicit and prohibited items.
- d. Rerouting of vessels not complying hailing instruction by the competent authority.
- e. Seizure of vessel including the cargo for non-compliance in regard to diversion order.

**Capabilities of the UN Maritime Task Force:** Any Maritime Task Force in UNPKO normally provides the following basic capabilities.<sup>3</sup>

**a. Command, Control and Communications (C3) for Operations at Sea (and Land):** This will enable exercise effective command and control of all MTF components (including Ground Forces) using reliable, vibrant and user friendly conventional C3 equipment adapted to UNPKO. This capability is pertinent to ensure better performance of the command platforms including the flag ships.

**b. Firepower in Support of Operations on Land and Sea:** The platforms are equipped with adequate armaments, sensors and gadgets to defend, neutralize, deter or destroy potential threats at sea and on shore within the area of maritime operations.

**c. Maneuverability and Area Dominance:** The ships should be capable of conducting MIO, maritime and air surveillance to dominate the area of maritime operations, monitor and verify peace arrangements, maintain visible presence in areas of potential threat and support the Mission security framework by providing a Recognized Maritime Picture. The MTF should be capable to exercise unimpeded, safe, and secure freedom of movement by day and night, 24/7 in the area of maritime operations.

**d. Tactical Information:** The units are capable to maintain both general and local operational plot by integrating and optimizing technological support to gain tactical and operational advantage. This will in turn support timely and coherent decision-making to further Mission objectives. Furthermore, it will ensure 24/7 situational awareness for planning and executing peacekeeping tasks, force protection, and protection of civilians.

**e. Sustainment:** Ships at sea must be capable of self-sustainment in basic life support needs such as food, fuel, water and shelter. Additionally in order to undertake operations by day and night, 24/7 in a designated area of maritime operations to perform mission essential tasks the ships are to ensure hygiene and sanitation, mobility resources, repair and recovery, preventive maintenance, onboard medical support, welfare and waste management. The Maritime Troop Contributing Countries are to adopt adequate measure to support and accomplish MTF operations through timely, effective, and enduring provisioning, stocking and replenishment.

### **Journey of UNIFIL MTF**

The tension along the Israel-Lebanon border increased in the early 1970 which resulted in the invasion of Lebanon on the night 14/15 March 1978 by the Israeli forces. In retaliation the Lebanese Government submitted a strong protest to the Security Council against the Israeli invasion on 15 March 1978. The UNSC adopted resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) on 19 March where it called upon Israel immediately to cease its military action and withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory. It also decided on the immediate establishment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the first UNIFIL troops arrived in the area on 23 March 1978. During the hostilities in July 2006, Israel declared Naval Blockade around Lebanese coast. The impact of the blockade was not only over the Maritime Security of the region but also observed in the overall geo-political and economic environment of Lebanon. As such the country experienced a considerable reduction of international shipping, her economy was crippled and there was a significant price hike of all imported goods. The MTF was deployed under the mandate of the UNSC resolution 1701 (2006) upon the request of the Government of Lebanon as an initial response against the Naval Blockade. The deployment of MTF was a landmark move that prompted Israel to withdraw its Naval Blockade. The task elements within a MTF are not a separate independent force operating in parallel rather those are an integral part of the UNPKO force. This characteristic is quite phenomenon in the case of naval power only which represents as a 'groundbreaking innovation for the UN system.'<sup>4</sup>

However, with the resolution being enforced, an Interim Maritime Task Force was deployed until 15 October 2006, when Germany took over as Commander Task Force (CTF) of TF 448 in the UNIFIL MTF. The European Maritime Force (EUROMARFOR) led by Italy took over the command of the UNIFIL MTF from Germany on 29 February 2008. This Maritime Multinational Force comprised of Italy, France, Portugal and Spain was formed in 1995 and deployed for the first time with UN mandate to conduct naval, air and amphibious operations. For next one year the EUROMARFOR was on the helm of UNIFIL MTF. Mentionable that a total of 15 countries have contributed to the MTF which include Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. The present composition of UNIFIL MTF includes naval units from Bangladesh (1 ship), Germany (1 ship), Greece (1 ship), Indonesia (1 ship with 1 helicopter - Dauphin AS 365) and Turkey (1 ship). Since the start of its operations on 15 October 2006, MTF has hailed about 109,250 ships and referred about 15,500 of those vessels to the Lebanese authorities for further inspections, at sea or land (UNIFIL website). The detail of MTF composition since the inception of MTF are appended below: -

**Table 1: MTF Composition of TF 448 – UNIFIL MTF**

| Ser | Duration  |           | MTF Commander | MTF – Task Unit  | Remarks                              |
|-----|-----------|-----------|---------------|--|--------------------------------------|
|     | From      | To        |               |  |                                      |
| 1.  | July 2006 | 14 Oct 06 |               |  | Interim MTF                          |
| 2.  | 15 Oct 06 | 28 Feb 08 | Germany       | Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey | UNIFIL MTF TF 448                    |
| 3.  | 29 Feb 08 | 31 Aug 08 | Italy         | Same as above  | EUROMARFOR                           |
| 4.  | 01 Sep 09 | 28 Feb 09 | France        | Same as above  | EUROMARFOR                           |
| 5.  | 01 Mar 09 | 30 May 09 | Belgium       | Same as above  | TF 448                               |
| 6.  | 31 May 09 | 30 Aug 09 | Italy         | Same as above  |                                      |
| 7.  | 31 Aug 09 | 30 Nov 09 | Germany       | Same as above  |                                      |
| 8.  | 01 Dec 09 | 23 Feb 11 | Italy         | Bangladesh, Brazil, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Turkey   | 2 X BN ships deployed on 17 May 2010 |
| 9.  | 24 Feb 11 | 14 Jan 21 | Brazil        | Bangladesh, Brazil, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Turkey   |                                      |
| 10. | 15 Jan 21 | Till date | Germany       | Bangladesh, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Turkey   |                                      |

Source: UNIFIL website

### **Sacred Tasks of Sailor for Peace in UNIFIL MTF**

There are multifaceted assignment in order to ensure peace in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea by the various navies deployed under the auspices of UNIFIL MTF. The various engagements are enumerated below:-

#### **Primary Mission:**

These are as follows:-

- a. To assist Lebanon Naval Force in regards to monitor territorial waters of Lebanon.
- b. To safeguard the coastline of Lebanon.
- c. To thwart the smuggling of illegal arms or related material by sea into Lebanon.
- d. To assist Lebanon Naval Force for capacity building to patrol effectively over the 110 nautical miles Lebanese coast. Furthermore, support the Lebanese Naval and security force to conduct maritime security tasks exclusively by themselves.

#### **Secondary Mission:**

These are as below:-

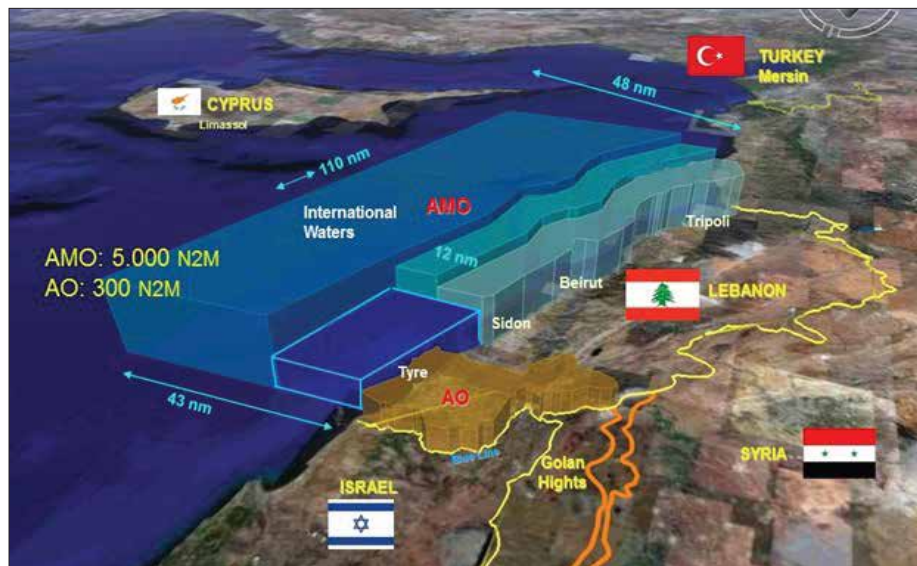
- a. Conduct air surveillance over area of maritime operations and land territories in support of the Lebanese authorities.
- b. Carry out search and rescue operations in close coordination with Lebanese Navy.

c. Humanitarian assistance within or adjacent to AMO.

### Concept of UNIFIL MTF Operation

The Area of Maritime Operation (AMO) is about 5000 square nautical mile (nm) which is almost 16 times larger than the Area of Operation (AO) of ground forces in UNIFIL. The length of the AMO stretches 110 nm in N-S and 46 nm in E-W direction. There are four zones to conduct the MIO smoothly. The outer most area within the international water is called Zone 1. The territorial water (TTW) of Lebanon is divided into three parts to demarcate Zone 2 (Southern part of TTW with a length of 30 nm), Zone 3 (Outer Portion of TTW other than zone 2 with an area of 6X80nm<sup>2</sup>) and zone 4 (Inner portion of TTW other than zone 2 and 3). The deployment of task elements at sea are done along the main sea lanes approaching towards major ports namely Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli. The seamless deployment within the AMO is ensured 24/7 where designated ships are performing the duties of MIO commander and Anti Air Warfare Coordinator (AAWC). The principal task of AAWC is to co-ordinate all-out measures to enforce Fleet Air Defence (AD) capabilities and Shore AD efforts.

**Figure 1: Maritime Zones of UNIFIL MTF**



Source: HQ MTF, UNIFIL

As a part of MIO each of the TE displays their dominance presence by conducting area patrol, monitoring the respective zone through surveillance, hailing and forwarding inspection request, AAW duties, maneuvering and various exercises. The ships of MTF are carrying out various exercises amongst them such as Replenishment at Sea (RAS), Gun Firing Exercises (GUNEX), Asymmetric warfare exercise and Intruder exercise. As part of

the capacity building of Lebanese Navy, the MTF units impart regular training to Lebanese Coastal Radar Stations through Intruder Exercise. The Lebanese Navy personnel regularly board ships of MTF as a part of 'Stages at Sea' program to receive various on board training. The array of imparting training include Fire Fighting drill, Gun drill, Helmsmanship, Communication drill, boarding exercise, boat handling, Seamanship evolutions, Engine room and electrical branch trouble shooting exercise.

### **Dedicating BN Ensign to UN Flag for Peace in the Mediterranean**

Bangladesh Navy is the third Asian and only sub continental navy to serve in the volatile region in order to ensure peace and security (BN website). Operating ship 5449 nm from the home port certainly need professional excellence, great working experience, adequate training, courage, both physical and moral strength and above all patriotism. The greatest inspiration to remain floating for a considerable amount of time which is also far away from the home port is love and affection of all the sailors for their motherland. All the members always remain vigilant to place the flag of Bangladesh higher and higher by their attitude, activities and actions. The call of duty for the sake of maintaining peace and stability in that region under UN umbrella is another important factor to discharge commendable service in the AMO under UNIFIL MTF. All BN personnel deployed for this noble cause are extremely proud and honoured. The maiden footprint in the UNIFIL MTF from BN was sketched by BNS OSMAN (Frigate) and BNS MADHUMATI (Offshore Patrol Vessel) on May 2010. Later BNS ALI HAIDER and BNS NIRMUL replaced those ships after four years that is in June 2014. These two men of war also successfully completed their tour of duty and replaced by BNS BIJOY in December 2017. Presently BNS SHADHINOTA is on task at the Mediterranean Sea who took over the duties from her predecessor on September 2020. The following table shows the names of officers which has the helm of the Bangladesh Navy Contingent (BANCON) in UNIFIL MTF:-



**Table 2: BN Contingent in UNIFIL MTF**

| Ser | Contingent in Mission Area                     | Contingent Commander                                    | Composition with total peacekeepers     |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 1.  | BANCON-1 (17 May 2010-18 June 2011)            | Capt Mozammel Haque, (G), psc (now Rear Admiral)        | BNS OSMAN (250)<br>BNS MADHUMATI (70)   |
| 2.  | BANCON-2 (19 June 2011-16 June 2012)           | Capt S M Hakim, (ND), ncc, psc (Retd as Commodore)      | Same as above                           |
| 3.  | BANCON-3 (17 June 2012-25 June 2013)           | Capt Abu Ashraf, (TAS), psc (Retd as Rear Admiral)      | Same as above                           |
| 4.  | BANCON-4 (26 June 2013-07 June 2014)           | Capt SMAK Azad, (G), psc (now Rear Admiral)             | Same as above                           |
| 5.  | BANCON-5 (08 June 2014-14 June 2015)           | Capt Anwar Hossain, (ND), afwc, psc (now Rear Admiral)  | BNS ALI HAIDER (250)<br>BNS NIRMUL (70) |
| 6.  | BANCON – 6 ( 15 June 2015-16 June 2016)        | Capt M K Nasser, (ND), psc                              | BNS ALI HAIDER (210)<br>BNS NIRMUL (70) |
| 7.  | BANCON – 7 ( 17 June 2016-13 June 2017)        | Capt Mirza M amun -ur- Rashid, (G), afwc, psc           | BNS ALI HAIDER (200)<br>BNS NIRMUL (70) |
| 8.  | BANCON – 8 ( 14 June 2017-31 December 2017)    | Capt Afzalul Haque, (TAS), NPP, psc (now Commodore)     | Same as above                           |
| 9.  | BANCON – 8 ( 01 January 2018- 23 June 2018)    | Capt Fazlar Rahman, (C), psc                            | BNS BIJOY (110)                         |
| 10. | BANCON – 9 ( 24 June 2018 -15 July 2019)       | Capt Nazrul Islam, (N), psc                             | Same as above                           |
| 11. | BANCON – 10 (16 July 2019 – 23 September 2020) | Capt Joynal Abedin, (ND), afwc, psc (now Commodore)     | Same as above                           |
| 12. | BANCON- 11(24 Sep 2020 – 03 October 2021)      | Capt Arifur Rahman, (G), PPM, afwc, psc (now Commodore) | BNS SANGRAM (110)                       |
| 13. | BANCON- 12(04 October – till date)             | Capt Zahid Hossain, (TAS), NGP, psc                     | Same as above                           |

Source: Directorate of Overseas Naval Operations, NHQ

**Chronicles of BANCON -7 by a Maritime Peacekeeper**

BANCON-7 was formed with 270 personnel, one Frigate BNS ALI HAIDER and a Large Patrol Craft BNS NIRMUL. The contingent was led by the author and took over the duties from BANCON-6 on 20 June 2016 at Beirut port in the mission area. Prior to deployment all the members of BANCON-7 participated in 'pre deployment training' in Bangladesh to prepare themselves for showcasing their abilities in the multinational navy environment. The peacekeepers received an extensive training to fulfill the international responsibilities towards securing peace and stability in the East Mediterranean region. The training package included generic UN Peacekeeping training, mission specific curriculum and professional naval training. The 'in mission training' was the continuous training to remain abreast with the latest situation in the mission area. Soon after joining the MTF (TF 448) both the Ship was included in the Task Organization as Task Element (TE) of Task Group (TG 448.01). The commanding officer of BNS ALI HAIDER was nominated as Task Group (TG) Commander of CTG 448.01 and there were four ships under him from Bangladesh, Indonesia and Turkey.

BNS ALI HAIDER while deployed in the Mediterranean as an integral part of BANCON-7 remained out at sea for 218 days within the stipulated one year service in UNIFIL MTF. During that period the ship has successfully hailed 1111 ships. Apart from engaging in MIO the ship performed the duties of MIO commander for 33 times while integrated with BANCON-7. The man of war carried out Replenishment At Sea (RAS) with German Navy Frigate. Her participation in intruder exercise with Lebanese Coastal Radar Stations and Asymmetric warfare with MTF units certainly contributes towards improving professional excellence of BN personnel. The crews of BNS ALI HAIDER in BANCON-7 enthusiastically imparted on board training to 62 Lebanese Navy personnel. As the great maritime strategist Admiral Mahan mentioned about the success of maritime operations depend on exceptional training, esprit-de-corps and patriotism<sup>5</sup> which were truly evident on the successful tenure of BANCON-7. Apart from carrying out UN mandated task BANCON-7 has the opportunity to exercise number of maritime affairs which are enumerated in the subsequent paragraphs.

### **Gunboat Diplomacy**

Gunboat Diplomacy refers to the pursuit of foreign policy objectives with the aid of conspicuous displays of naval power. As such Bangladesh Navy Ships participation in MTF has significantly contributed towards creating opportunities to be involved in Gunboat Diplomacy. These opportunities include visiting ports like Limassol in Cyprus, Mersin in Turkey and calling upon high ranking civil/military officials. These ports are strategically located in close proximity of Maritime Area of Operations of UNIFIL MTF. The interaction with International Navies specially the NATO member states certainly a forward looking element to observe Gunboat Diplomacy. All these countries are the active contributors of UNIFIL and acquired substantial expertise on the local context including the dynamics related to fulfil the mission objective. The avenue of opportunities for Gunboat Diplomacy with Lebanon has further widen with the deployment of BN Ships at Beirut port. The scenarios extended with the high level delegation visit to Beirut and imparting professional training to Lebanese Naval personnel in Bangladesh. In fact the event of Gunboat Diplomacy takes place from the commencement of the travel by the individual ship for the deployment in the mission area which is about 5449 nm away from home port. The entire passage needs to receive logistic support such as refueling and provisioning from the number of ports within Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea. So there is no doubt that Bangladesh's involvement in MTF has positioned Bangladesh Navy well affiliated with the strategic environment through engaging in Gunboat Diplomacy.

### **Active Role in Air Defence (AD)**

The importance of AD role in the history of any warfare is often considered to be one of the decisive factor. As such existing navies are also

accommodating this viable instrument as Anti Air Warfare (AAW) to guard against any aerial intrusion. Ships deployed at Lebanese water under UNIFIL MTF gained practical and real time experiences since they have all the measures designed to nullify or reduce the effectiveness of hostile air action. The challenges to conduct air surveillance, detection, use of IFF in order to formulate Air Compilation Picture were colossal yet attainable. The multi-level and multi-layer coordination amongst various navies, shore air authorities needed additional efforts for successful conduct of AD. The sky over both area of Maritime and Land operation in UNIFIL warrant a judicious AD plan since the area is often infiltrated by unknown/hostile/friendly fighter or rotor wing aircraft and drones. Thus the ships deployed in UNIFIL MTF has the practical on ground experience to perform various duties for effective AD. There is no doubt BN Ships with a considerable number of personnel has the working experience in AD role which will certainly provide dividend towards AD role for the ships at Bay of Bengal.

### **Operational Logistic**

Operating man of wars away from home port warrant a sound logistic system. Mentionable that apart from the consumer logistic, the navy logistic include fuelling, running spares, dockyard and repair facilities and many more. Since the ships were operating approximately 5449 nm away from Bangladesh, all the BN contingents has masterly acquired the art of operational logistic to keep the ships floating ensuring combat readiness. The concept of operational logistic intelligence<sup>6</sup> reckoned vividly for ensuring smooth supply chain management and repairing facilities from all the three ports that is Beirut, Mersin and Limassol.

### **Blue Helmets towards Blue Economy**

The domain of Blue Economy is vast and recognized as a great influential factor towards overall economy generated from sea. Thus deploying Blue Helmets for maritime peacekeeping operations become an automatic choice for the contribution towards Blue Economy irrespective of level and stakeholders. Mentionable that the mere presence of Naval Ship influences to combat any irregularities out at sea. For instance, Illegal- Unreported-Unregulated Fishing (IUU Fishing) is considered to be one of the significant maritime security threats now a days (Safety 4 Sea website): Also marine pollution and insecure maritime tourism is a point of concern for a sustainable Blue Economy. These types of irregularities can be prosecuted concurrently during the deployment as a unit of any MTF. The deployed ships has to guard against human trafficking which is rampant in the area. Piloting through internal water and navigable channels of various nations including observing activities of state of art ports like Beirut, Limassol and Mersin certainly extends the horizon of the peacekeepers in terms of Blue economy. So sailors of BN deployed in the Mediterranean Sea has ample opportunity to gain experiences on the multiple issues contributing towards Blue Economy.

### **BN Peacekeepers in Benign Role**

It is true that there is no bindings to conduct humanitarian activities irrespective of the deployment, command and authority. As such Bangladesh Navy Ships deployed in Lebanon under UNIFIL MTF has number of instances where they contributed towards benign role. The medical team from the deployed ships in UNIFIL MTF conducts medical camp at Beirut for the Bangladeshi expatriates at Lebanon regularly.

The BN ship at the Mediterranean rescued personnel from capsized vessel. BNS BIJOY conducted search and rescue operation after the Beirut Blast at Port Beirut in 2020. They also provided food and water to the distressed people adjacent to Port Beirut in Lebanon. It is relevant to mention here that the ship herself inflicted heavy damage and some of the crew member were also seriously injured out of the explosion. Operations of this sort can merge into capacity-building activities intended to other countries.<sup>7</sup>

### **Implication of MTF in Future**

The recognition of the success stories of the UNIFIL MTF is phenomenon since the TF secured the Area of Maritime Operation professionally. The UN is able to acquire valuable insight to maintain a Maritime Task Force for similar peace keeping operation in future. The outcome of these successes will enable all the stakeholders to conduct Maritime Peacekeeping operations with confidence. In addition, the maritime contributing countries displayed a proven willingness by providing their resources specially the man of wars with their full compliments for the betterment of mankind. The Navies deployed in Lebanese water to secure peace has substantially gain professional excellence, international standing and shared best practices amongst fellow alliances. Apart from the ongoing operations of UNIFIL MTF the other conflicting maritime zones may also need to be taken care of for ensuring peace and stability of certain region. It is obvious and proved that a UN led MTF is a viable option for local actors and the alliances to ensure orderly maritime scenario and manage certain security concern effectively.

### **Conclusion**

The ships of MTF of UNIFIL are working relentlessly to ensure peace and stability over eastern Mediterranean off Lebanon coast. The interoperability between the ships of different navies in order to ensure specific UN mandate demands exclusive synchronization. Moreover, the peacekeepers as crews on board are being changed periodically, hence, the dedication to work for world peace remains as a prime mover to all the sailors. The UNIFIL MTF is successfully discharging their duties since 2006. Bangladesh Navy can always take the pride out of this unique maritime operation since they are committed to ensure peace and stability in the Mediterranean Sea since 2010.

Sailors of Bangladesh Navy wearing Blue Helmet as peacekeeper are flying the BN ensign with the Man of War at a distance of about 5449 nautical mile from their beloved country. All the BN personnel are exceptionally committed to uphold the image of the country and the Navy. The crews are working relentlessly in order to keep the ship operation despite all the challenges. Apart from carrying out UN mandated task the BN peacekeepers are gaining professional excellence as they are operating with the various developed Navies. All the BN contingents accomplishes their tasks very successfully which bring lots of laurel for BN. The BN peacekeepers in UNIFIL MTF accomplished widespread recognition of Bangladesh amongst all the stakeholders and cemented a very high image and position in UNIFIL. The sailors of BN need to keep the momentum going and quest for further excellence for future maritime deployment under UN in order to ensure global peace and stability.

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### **Brief Biography**



**Captain Mirza Mamun-ur-Rashid, (G), afwc, psc, BN** was commissioned on 01 July 1990 as 'Best All Round Midshipman.' He did professional courses in India, USA, Turkey and Thailand. He has completed MDS, MBA and M Phil. He commanded number of BN ships and shore establishments. He served in NHQ, BNA, BN Special Force and SSF. He has number of exposure in UNPKO. He participated in UNPKO contingent commander course in BIPSOT under Global Peace Operations Initiative. He was deployed in UNMIS as Staff Officer (Protocol). The Captain proudly streamed through the Mediterranean as Commanding Officer of BN Frigate and Contingent Commander of UNIFIL MTF. Presently he is working as Colonel GS in NDC.



## **UN Peacekeeping and Bangladesh: Fostering the Foundation of Better Peacekeeping**

Colonel A N M Foyezur Rahman, psc

### **Introduction**

Deployment of soldiers and trained professionals to participate in the UN peacekeeping missions has been a chapter of glory for Bangladesh, endorsing a signature of mutual trust and reliability both from the United Nations and from the conflicting and warring parties. In fact, Bangladesh is one of the few countries that are 'bearing the burden of an international responsibility.'<sup>1</sup> It was, therefore, well deserving when the US President, acknowledging the 'ardent', 'pro-active' and 'substantial' roles of Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) in the UN's calls for the preservation and promotion of international peace and security, said, "Bangladesh not only enhanced its own prestige but also the prestige of the United Nations through the policing of peace."

Over the past three decades, the number of soldiers participating in the UN Missions from Bangladesh has increased exponentially, from only 15 in 1988 to 6359 in 2022, helping dozens of countries to hold free and fair elections and restore democracy and disarming over 400,000 ex-combatants in the last decade alone. Being an active member of the United Nations since its inclusion in 1974, Bangladesh's unswerving commitment in 'Blue Helmet' validates her genuine willingness to contribute to defuse the conflicts among the warring parties and restore peace and security of the world. Bangladesh government prioritizes high quality training for the participants in the UN peacekeeping missions so that they are equipped with necessary important skills and efficiencies. The efforts aim at capacity building covering areas such as 'customised constructive simulation training',<sup>2</sup> 'sexual abuse and exploitation', negotiation, conflict management, communication skills, use of new technologies and sustainment of the contributions of the nation in better peacekeeping.

The impacts of better training are reflected in the performances in the global frontier, enhancing on the one hand, the capabilities of the United Nations as better peacekeepers in the restoration and sustainment of peace and security<sup>3</sup> and the mandates of the Security Council<sup>4</sup> and on the other hand, strengthening the national economy of Bangladesh and the efficiency and agility of the Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Focusing briefly on the context and the background of the UN peacekeeping missions, the paper tries to unfold the contributions of

Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police in fostering the foundation of better peacekeeping, to evaluate the importance of high quality trainings, and to narrate the impacts of the contributions not only upon the overall effectiveness of the PKOs of the UN missions, but also upon the national economy, organizational growth, security promotion and political landscape of Bangladesh. The study also tries to justify that better training helps produce better peacekeepers, and evaluates how the technological upbringing and upskilling of the soldiers in digital literacy enables them to perform better in the peacekeeping operations of the UN missions.

### **The Concept of Peacekeeping – Context and Background**

The concept of UN Peacekeeping refers to enabling the countries to navigate the onerous map 'from conflict to peace', sharing burden, giving legitimacy and supporting with unique strength. It allows the UN to deploy troops and police from around the world and integrate them with the civilian peacekeepers in the conflicting countries to address a 'range of mandates set by the UN Security Council and General Assembly.'

Over the past eight decades, especially after the Cold War, the number of troops deployed by the UN has increased dramatically. Many deeply-rooted age old conflicts have been left unresolved, even though the East-West conflict came to an end. The world had undergone new kind of challenges requiring not only peaceful intervention of external forces to demilitarize the warring parties but also supply of humanitarian aids. Within the span of four years from 1991 to 1995, nineteen new missions were established in areas where people were engaged in bitter inter ethnic strife and where the peacekeepers of UN had to face hostile ground conditions and complex cultural and communication challenges, and had to perform a wider range of tasks which included the protection of civilians in the conflicts, the protection of humanitarian relief, the monitoring of human rights, and the supervision of democratic election.

The history of Bangladesh in Blue Helmet starts with United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG).<sup>5</sup> Bangladesh Army first sent only 15 uniformed personnel as observers to serve with the organisation in 1988. The team of peacekeepers, coordinating with the peacekeepers from other countries, successfully verified, confirmed and supervised the ceasefire and ensured the withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries. This was the beginning of a glorious history to unfold in the next four decades, as today Bangladesh ranks on the top of the list as the largest Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) in the United Nations. Bangladesh Army first joined in the peacekeeping mission in 1988 followed by Bangladesh Police in 1989, and Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Air Force in 1993.

The objectives of the peacekeeping missions of the UN are subject to mandates set by the UN Security Council and General Assembly, covering

areas such as maintenance of peace and security and protecting the civilian lives. The responsibilities of the peacekeepers today include, mainly but not exclusively, policing, nation-building, mediation, monitoring, investigation, documentation of evidence of massacres or war crimes for use in international tribunals,<sup>6</sup> halting the activities of criminal gangs and drug cartels, thwarting spoilers, protecting civilians, holding elections for restoring democracy and protection and distribution of humanitarian aids.

### **Prelude to Better Peacekeeping**

Some evaluations of PKO's performance are superficial lacking not only in critical dictions but also perspectives. Any analysis based on a single case-study may fail to reflect the diversified nature of operations of UN peacekeeping forces. Peacekeeping is more than such all-or-nothing simplistic form of assessments. Peacekeeping is about sustainable decrease in hostilities and peaceful enforcement of the mandates of the United Nations. The UN peacekeepers, comprised of the participating member countries, have contributed significantly in the conflicting states to promote security. They have enabled the national governments to set up 'disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes.' Fostering the foundation of better peacekeeping is about building sustainable capabilities of the peacekeeping forces to dedicatedly give efforts to achieve the UN mandates for peace. To building sustainable capabilities of the peacekeeping forces, the organization must retain the already achieved organizational gains and 'maintain a core capacity to plan, launch, and manage operations quickly, effectively, and with flexibility.'

Bangladesh Armed Forces, supported by the firmly determined initiatives of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman back in 1972 just immediately after the independence of the country, were empowered with basic infrastructure and logistics to begin a journey of growth and prosperity. Despite the economic constraints of the war-torn country, the courageous and visionary leadership of the Father of the Nation was prompt to recognize the importance of establishing a 'strong' Army who would 'set an example before the world by their deeds and behaviour as true soldier.' Again, much of the credit goes to his prudential judgment as he recognized the value of discipline for the soldiers in Army and placed it upfront to let the organization excel in international frontier. Accordingly, he directed the responsible leadership to enforce 'strict discipline' upon its soldiers. As policies play a crucial part for the healthy growth of any public organizations, he also framed inclusive 'Defence Policies' in 1974 that has facilitated 'the modernization, restructuring and expansion of Bangladesh Army' over the past decades.

The foundation of a unique force can never be strong unless it is deeply rooted in ideological values. Again, it was Bangabandhu who embedded in the mind of the young soldiers to remain loyal to the people of the country, by sharing 'the miseries of common people and perform their responsibilities with

utmost sincerity of soldiers.’ Interestingly the qualities that distinguish the soldiers of Bangladesh in the PKOs are the qualities Bangabandhu strived to embed among the soldiers. So today when the peacekeepers from Bangladesh are recognized and appreciated in the international frontier for their ‘strength’ ‘discipline’, ‘courage’, ‘loyalty’ and ‘ideological values’, it, eventually in one way, reflects the legacy of the phenomenal leadership of Bangabandhu.

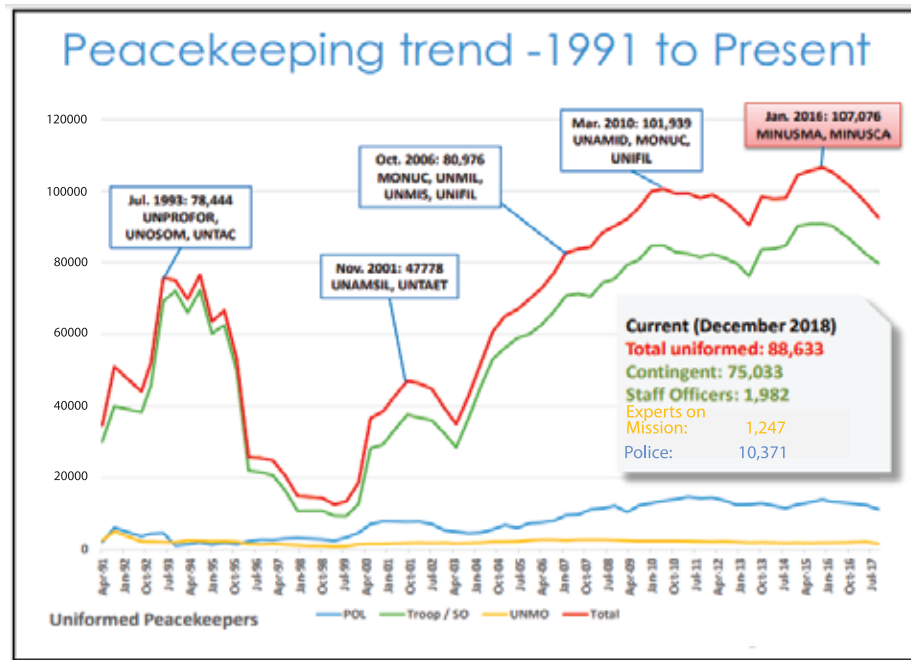
Further to that, the Preamble to Constitution affirms how insightful Bangabandhu was as a leader, as it is mentioned as a clear direction to the nation to “make our full contribution towards international peace and co-operation in keeping with the progressive aspirations of mankind.”<sup>7</sup> Further to that, Article 25 of the Constitution, outlining the guiding principles of the foreign policy of Bangladesh, advocates for the promotion of international peace, security and solidarity and states that the state shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes, and respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter. It also ‘strives for the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament.’<sup>8</sup>

It is obvious that when a nation is guided and inspired by such strong ideologies, values, courage, insightfulness, and visionary leadership, it will make its mark in its journey ahead. Hence, the substantial achievements of Bangladeshi Peacekeeping Forces in the PKOs are not mere chances of luck, rather they have been raised and trained to follow this story of success by the architect and Father of the Nation since the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation.

### **Formation, Monitoring and System**

As shown in Figure 1, the number of peacekeeping operations has increased significantly compared to the past. Hence the UN Secretariat has brought changes with the management of the operations. With its current set up, the UN has greater military expertise because of the participations and contributions of the soldiers and officers coming from different countries around the globe. The UN has appointed a number of military officers and a military advisor to the secretary-general of the organization. Currently it also runs a 24-hour situation centre with a view to tracking and monitoring the time-to-time developments in PKOs. It has also introduced a system of standby planning. Under this system, the participating countries identify the resources they could make available to the United Nations for peacekeeping. The resources extend from arms, ammunitions, tanks, helicopters, naval ships, drones, vehicles and other logistics to civilian police. Many countries including Bangladesh, UK, the USA, Canada, etc. are contributing to these arrangements.

**Figure 1: The Increasing Trend of Number of Peacekeeping Missions from 1991 to 2019**



Source: UNDP, 2019

The UN has also set up discrete units for demining and training civil police in the conflicting areas. It also extends technical assistance for providing high quality training to the troops before they are deployed for missions. In Bangladesh it has set up an institution, namely Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training to provide high quality training. Finally, a rapidly deployable headquarters unit is being established which consists of military secondees who will work on the planning of a mission and deploy the core headquarters of the operation for the first months before its members are replaced by personnel from other troop contributors.

### Contemporary Peacekeeping Operations

Modern peacekeeping, characterized by its complexity and insecurity, implies not only brokering and sustaining a cease-fire and politically neutral environment but also contributing to delivering additional tasks for peace building and peacemaking. The success always depends on the efficiency, creativity and improvisational skills of the practitioners.

Since early 1988, out of the twenty-one operations carried out only eight were related to interstate wars, whereas the remaining thirteen were related to civil war. There is no fixed area of operation in civil war because of the absence of an effective cease-fire deal and clear front lines. In Civil Wars, the troops are



scattered thinly over a wide geographical area, requiring a big number of well-equipped soldiers to launch effective and efficient enforcement actions. The challenges and difficulties have proportionately increased as they frequently involve large and heavily armed troops in conflict resolution and humanitarian duties. In short, the contemporary world has observed three types of international force mobilization – (i) UN peacekeeping operation, (ii) coalition with no mandate from UN Security Council (e.g. Iraq, Afghanistan) and (iii) coalition with multinational forces with mandate from UN Security Council but without mandate of the UN (e.g. AU Force in Somalia and Darfur, EU Force in Chad & CAR, etc).

### **New Technologies and Abridging the Knowledge Gaps of the Peacekeepers**

‘Technology has changed not only the ways wars are fought but the ways peace is kept.’<sup>9</sup> Technologically advanced military forces of the world today use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to train up their soldiers. Adaptation of disruptive technologies including Machine Learning, Big Data, Internet of Things (IoT), AI-based Cloud, AI-based drones and surveillance has the ‘catalytic potential’ to enhance capabilities of the Armed Forces of a country.<sup>10</sup>

As the peacekeeping forces are composed of soldiers from all over the world, there is a risk of knowledge and skill gap among the soldiers of TCC in terms of applications of modern and disruptive technologies in the battlefield scenario. Overcoming this knowledge and skill gaps among the soldiers is possible by upskilling the soldiers of TCC. With the acquired knowledge and skills of using the advanced technologies, the soldiers are able to better understand ‘surveillance technologies, ground and airborne sensors and other technical sources of data, and advanced data analytics and information fusion to assist in data integration.’

What is very significant here is that the peacekeepers from Bangladesh are learning to cope up with the new technologies. Bangladesh Army’s efforts to upskill their soldiers in simulation-based software MASA SWORD<sup>11</sup> has played a major role in making them ‘moderately friendly’ in using digital technologies in the peacekeeping missions. It is a complete war-gaming solution. Bangladesh Army is using it extensively to plan, execute and analyze a wide variety of training missions as part of its efforts to make the soldiers digitally literate.<sup>12</sup>

### **Contributions of Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police in the UN Peacekeeping Missions**

Most of the Bangladeshi soldiers’ hail from humble family background, carrying submissive attitude and undeterred loyalty to their profession and appreciations for the freedom fighters of the Liberation War in 1971. In joining the service life, they receive high quality trainings that prepares them to be



disciplined and strong and better professionals in the battle field scenario. Acting with courage, remaining loyal and uncompromising to professional ethics and values are inherent in them and these are very qualities that sustain the legacy of this heroic nation and freedom fighters in 1971. When they participate in multi-cultural environments in the PKOs, they get the experiences of dealing with different communities, values, cultures and ways of life. Added to this is the roughness of harsh terrains, and hostile climate. All these contribute to inculcate in them a comprehensive psychological landscape, accommodating a clearer and insightful understanding of the business they are assigned to do, and enabling them to endure harder, deliver and coordinate better, think wiser, organize and plan nicer. As a result, they naturally create a difference by their service quality and level of proficiency to the satisfaction of all. Figure 2 shows their participation in different missions. Out of total 71 PKOs since 1948, Bangladesh Armed Forces and the police have participated in 55 UN missions. Details are shown below:-

**Figure 2: Participation of Bangladeshi Peacekeeper in different UN Missions**

| Ser         | Services  | Number of Soldiers Completed | Number of Soldiers Serving in the Ongoing Mission | Total  |
|-------------|-----------|------------------------------|---|--------|
| 1.          | Army      | 144846                       | 5166  | 150012 |
| 2.          | Navy      | 5989                         | 343   | 6332   |
| 3.          | Air Force | 7115                         | 583   | 7698   |
| 4.          | Police    | 19862                        | 651   | 20513  |
| Grand Total |           | 177812                       | 6743  | 184555 |

Source: UNPK Mission of Bangladesh

Participation of the Bangladesh Armed Forces in 'OP Desert Shield,' the US led multinational operation in 1991, was a great exposure to international community and immensely contributed to the subsequent selection in the PKOs worldwide. Immediately after the liberation of Kuwait the Engineer Contingent of Bangladesh Army was deployed to undertake reconstruction work of the war-devastated Kuwait; under "Operation Kuwait Punargathan (OKP)." Details of the participation are given in Figure 3 below :-

**Figure 3: Record of Bilateral Arrangements  
between Bangladesh and Kuwait Governments**

| Ser | Type of Deployment              | Participation |             |              |
|-----|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
|     |                                 | Completed     | Ongoing     | Total        |
| 1.  | OKP                             | 11953         | 1989        | 13942        |
| 2.  | OP DESERT SHIELD/OP MORUPRANTAR | 2232          | -           | 2,232        |
|     | <b>Total</b>                    | <b>14185</b>  | <b>1989</b> | <b>16174</b> |

Source: Website of Bangladesh-Kuwait bilateral arrangements

For Bangladesh, the UN presents the universal body enjoying global legitimacy. Bangladesh has an agreement with UN under the 'UN Standby Arrangement System' (UNSAS) for provision of a Brigade Group. Bangladesh's contribution to the UN "Enhanced Rapidly Deployable Capabilities (ERDC)" is under active consideration. Bangladesh had been an active member of PBC since its inception in 2005. The commission addresses the source of hostility and build local capacities for conflict resolution, strengthen state institutions, increase political participation and engage in land reform, strengthen civil societies.

In a typical mission, the Infantry Contingents work for maintaining peace and security and law and order situations. Engineer Contingents look after the mobility aspect like construction of roads and tracks, houses and shelters and accommodations. They also engage in clearing mines and explosive. Besides, the ordnance disposal is carried by the Engineers. Again, the signal contingent looks after the communication within the Mission area. Logistics contingents look after logistics part of other contingents. Medical contingents look after the health of other contingent members. It also provides medical services to the host community personnel.

To maintain the already deployed forces and to prepare for future missions, Bangladesh has established dedicated branches at all Service Headquarters, Police HQ and Armed Forces Division (AFD). Defence Wing in PMBNY maintains an excellent operational link with all concerned branches of the UN Secretariat.

### **Better Peacekeepers and Better Peacekeeping**

The aim of the training program is to make the armed forces members, senior officers, civilian officers and participants in the PKOs knowledgeable about the UN administrative and technical procedures. The training focuses on the negotiation, planning, preparation, deployment, sustainment, and termination

process of national contingents deploying to UN Peacekeeping Operations. In Bangladesh, BIPSOT runs programs and training modules and upskill the soldiers for PKOs. The training is divided into eight modules, multiple number of interactive training activities and three Scenario Based Exercises (SBE) on the negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between a T/PCC and the UN, Reimbursement of Contingent Owned Equipment and Transport of Contingents.

Learning outcomes of these materials, aligned with the program outcomes, equip the participants with insightful understanding and professional commitment to follow the three basic principles or values of traditional peacekeeping; namely (i) consent of the parties to the dispute (ii) impartiality and (iii) non-use of force except in self-defence. It also enables them to recognize the decisive importance of legitimacy, credibility, and local and national ownership behind the success of peacekeeping operations. This process of intellectual capacity building is further aided by trainings on new technologies, enhancing their digital literacy to be user friendly with drones, aerial and geospatial data, digital devices, surveillance system, body cameras, visual data, thermal sensors, fuel cells, mine sweeping, media streaming, solar power pack, fuel cells, smart devices, sensors, IoT, processed and unprocessed data and chemical sensors, etc.

Using Machine Learning simulation software (MASA\_SWORD), the soldiers are trained to identify gaps and challenges in disaster preparedness and response planning. They enhance their knowledge on laid down procedures, improve their ability to act and respond quickly on emergency, build up cohesive and coordinated team work, execute efficient perception management.

For each of the 'digital peacekeeper', being able to receive, understand and interpret data in the real time is crucially important. Upskilling with the use of the new technologies means that the peacekeepers understand the data collected from different sources and that they have gained situational awareness. And when the peacekeepers have situational information awareness in the real time in the PKOs, their performance improves with their enhanced abilities to be agile and resilient. Not surprising, the people and the leaders of the conflicting regions take the contributions of Bangladesh peacekeepers 'positively.' And Bangladesh is capable of sustaining the capacity building not only for retaining the position of the top Troop Contributing Countries in the UN missions in ten-year time from now, but also for leading the collation forces in the PKOs as 'strategic leadership partner.'<sup>13</sup>

### **Organizational, Economic and Political Impacts of PKOs**

Impacts of the participation and the contributions of Bangladeshi peacekeepers have facilitated the peacekeeping diplomacy to flourish and become complementary to national diplomacy. It has helped Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police to evolve as strong organizations of efficient combatants who are technologically configured to serve the need of international missions. The national economy is also boosted up as the peacekeepers add a good amount of remittance to the national reserve. Besides, the political landscape of the country is also shaped by the number of soldiers who take part in UN missions every year. The bigger the number, the stronger the voice of the political leadership.

### **Enhanced Operational Efficiency**

Peacekeeping Operation site provides opportunities for Bangladeshi contingents to exercise Battlefield Operating Systems involving demining, communication assistance, logistic support including medicine. Bangladesh Air Force helicopter pilots sometimes need to fly in hostile environments requiring regular risk assessment and self-protection against offensive elements. Operating in hostile terrains surely has strengthened the efficiency, agility and resilience of the entire force. As many as 130 BAR pilots have gained valuable operational experiences from peacekeeping missions.

### **Coordination Integrity**

Coordination efficiency of the soldiers has increased many folds in mission operations, as the parties involved need to do many things including attending training, pre-deployment of logistic planning (financial and material), deployment of personnel, ships and boats, and lastly continual coordination for smooth operation in mission areas. Maintenance, POL, provisions, and other administrative support are critical to long-term operating deployment away from home port. Lebanon and Sudan experiences for Bangladesh Navy are worth mentioning as it had to create a reliable supply line to those countries. It required constant communication with BD foreign missions, dealers, and local suppliers. This improved BN's logistic system's resilience and robustness.

### **Security, Interoperability and Scalability**

As a significant number of soldiers has actively taken part in different missions over the last four decades, they have achieved practical experiences in monitoring and building advanced surveillance capabilities, making the entire

organization more robust, resilient and secured. The officers are now more capable and specialized in threat detections, and part of better management system. As they have carried out operations of many units using the internet and satellite communication etc., the soldiers have become compatible with the idea that all the Armed Forces of Bangladesh (Army, Navy and Air Force) can virtually be connected on a single platform with a view to enhancing interoperability of the organizations. Again, as the number of contingents varies from mission to mission, commandants have to handle large number of soldiers, officers and civil officers under their sleeve in the operations. As they are given necessary training on conflict management, mediation, communicative skills, leadership skills, etc. the scalability of the commandant has increased significantly.

#### **Automation, Precision, Accuracy and Low Latency**

As often they run missions where the system is automated, and as they receive high quality trainings from time to time on digital technologies, a significant number of soldiers has become familiar with automation. Further to that, four decades of peacekeeping operations have given the soldiers adequate opportunities to be precise and accurate in target detection, target chasing and target shooting. Nonetheless, since thousands of soldiers and officers have gathered plenty of battle-field experiences in the peacekeeping operations, they now take less time to detect hostile elements. Therefore, they are expected to take less time to retaliate or mend or make the enemy compromise or surrender.

#### **Resilience**

The operating system must be supported by a backup system and should be supportive to fault tolerance. Sudden failure from any wing, or unit or soldier may not result in complete halt of the mission operation. When everyone in the operation, though joined from different divisions, has adequate professional efficiency, wider perspective, expertise in operating weapons and equipment, doable inter-personal skill, good knowledge of soft skills, and inspirational leadership qualities, the system becomes resilient and invulnerable. Besides, ability to handle stress (Rwanda case, Congo case), to remain motivated, and to adopt to harsh terrains, hostile operational modalities, and unknown socio-cultural environment (Bosnia, Sahara, Cambodia, Haiti and the DRC cases) has enhanced the psychological strength of the participating troops, making them more invincible and resilient further.

### **Impact on Socio-Economy**

After twenty years of stagnation, the UN budget climbed to \$7.83 billion in 2010-2011 from \$3.5 billion in 1994. The UN allowance does not suffice for the peacekeepers. It is small when compared to the rising cost of living and falling purchasing power of the peacekeepers from the affluent countries. Despite the small sum compared to the ultimate sacrifice and risk, the remittance gives some financial stability and morale boost for the soldiers. It also empowers the individual socially and financially. PKOs have raised soldiers' understanding of health care, social responsibility, and the importance of decent standard of living.

### **Conclusion**

The underlying uncertainties and doubts in public mind surrounding the motifs and objectives of UN missions can be defused significantly by increasing the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, which is only possible if they are carried out by better peacekeepers. However, having troops of better peacekeepers is a not mere chance of luck, rather it is a result of successful completion of well-designed professional trainings to be conducted by professionally excellent personnel of the Armed Forces and Civil services. On the one hand, the peacekeepers need to build the capabilities to deal with the intricacies and challenges while trying to reduce violence and achieve sustainable peaceful cohabitation of the conflicting parties; on the other hand, the mandates for the missions set by the Security Council of the United Nations need to be strategically achievable by peaceful means. The contributions of Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police in the PKOs over the last three decades across the world have generated an image of reliability, branding Bangladesh and the United Nations as the ardent promoter of world peace and unfolding a charter of qualities of the soldiers to foster the foundation of better peacekeeping. Surprisingly, many of these qualities upheld by Bangladeshi peacekeepers in the global frontier carry the legacy of phenomenal leadership impacts of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The success story of Bangladesh reveals the dynamics of better peacekeeping, entailing the need for high quality training, leadership skill development, conflict management skill, peace negotiation skill and digital literacy in addition to their trademarks as being 'loyal, sincere, dedicated, self-respectful, and answerable to the seniors and to the organization.'<sup>14</sup> The residuals of peacekeeping are equally impressive, significantly contributing to image building of the United Nations as a true peacekeeper on the one hand and helping to evolve the Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police as stronger organizations on the other hand.



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### **Brief Biography**



**Colonel ANM Foyezur Rahman, psc** was commissioned in 1995 with 32 BMA Long Course. A graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, he obtained his Masters in Defence Studies and MBA from BUP. He also obtained his BSc in Civil Engg and MSc in Environmental Engg from MIST and pursuing PhD in the same field in BUET. He served as a Commanding Officer, Instructor and in Staff appointments. He was the Head of Environment, Water Resources, and Coastal Engineering Department of MIST. He participated as a peacekeeper in Liberia and DR Congo. He has publications in NDC, AFD, AHQ and Environmental Challenges (ELSIVIER) Journals. Presently he is serving as Additional Director General of 34 Construction Brigade.

## **Dynamicity of Conflict Environment: Preparation for Future UN Peace Operations**

Lt Cdr M Mehedi Hasan (E), BN

### **Introduction**

In response to the dynamicity of threats to international peace and security, United Nations peacekeeping operations have been proven significantly robust and adaptive for the past 70 years. But perennial changes in the conflict environment have generated challenges to peace operations for the last 20 years.<sup>1</sup> The peace operation was originally conceptualized to support inter-states ceasefires and peace agreements. However, the paradigm of modern peace operation has shifted to address intra-states conflicts, failed or fragile states, violent extremist groups, etc.

In the modern era, crimes or conflicts are also globalizing. Especially, the growth of non-state actors including transnational illicit networks, globally-connected violent extremist groups, and private actors are growing and mobilizing fast. Moreover, they are rapidly growing expertise to take the advantage of emerging technologies. The growing impact of climate change on security, the influence of new technologies, rapid urbanization, and mass migration are also contributing to dynamic risk characteristics across the globe. The stable states of today may encounter new civil strife in the future because of changing conflict environment.<sup>2</sup> The war of tomorrow is going to be fought in virtual space than the physical ground where the firing of bullets may play a mere role. The UN needs to address these current trends of conflict and also consider their future impact to remain relevant and effective in its international peace and security roles.

This paper is going to explore the current conflict trends which are going to challenge the UN peace operations in upcoming years. Then it will suggest a few recommendations for the UN to address those arising challenges.

### **Conflict Trends and Challenges**

The UN was established seventy-five years ago as a global institution with a charter of duties based on three founding pillars: peace and security, human rights, and development. Counterterrorism has added a new dimension to the charter of duty of the UN. This poses a great impact on peacekeeping operations. The rise of interstate conflict and civil war are projecting incremental statistics of the human cost of war. The significant trends which are contributing to influencing the peacekeeping operations are discussed below:-

- a. Climate Change:** Climate change is posing as a threat multiplier to violent conflict among the affected bodies. Changing pattern of rainfall

and extreme weather is adversely affecting agriculture and destroying livelihoods. This is again driving the affected community to illicit networks or armed groups. Destruction of cultivable land by a flash flood or rise of sea level is also causing displacement of population from one region to another. The rise of sea level will shrink the amount of arable land in low-lying countries, especially in South Asia. This will result from large-scale population displacements. In the next 10 years, this displacement of mass people will create a severe impact on the stability in those affected areas.<sup>3</sup> The migration of mass people will be creating instability in the overpopulated areas.

**b. Demographic Growth:** Because of demographic growth, the younger populations are preferring to look for better opportunities and lifestyles in cities abandoning rural agrarian routines. This demographic growth is also contributing to large-scale urbanization. From the historical data, it is evident that more people are living within urban settlements than outside them. This is resulting in a rise in city vulnerabilities. This indicates that city fragility will play a far more direct role in conflict risks than ever before. Already, some peace operations are conducted based on urban conflicts.

**c. Emerging Technology:** Technology has already become an influential contributor to violent conflict. The use of social media as recruitment platforms for armed groups, dark webs, and weaponization of technologies are the epitomes of the impact of technological involvement. Already, cyber-security tensions between the US and both Russia and China have been reported. In addition to this cyber-security tension, technological up-gradation of military weapons may act as a potential factor for further escalation. Technological prowess will surely play a vigorous role in future violent conflicts, particularly those involving international interference by powerful states. Artificial Intelligence (AI) with other forms of technology may pose serious threats globally by manipulating societies through sophisticated algorithms.<sup>4</sup>

**d. Crimes beyond Border:** The superpowers used proxy forces in the Third World civil wars to establish their interests. Such acts of the superpowers mostly caused the growth of transboundary organized crimes. In the present scenario, the non-state actors are playing a vital role in spreading the conflict across the world. They have roped in a large number of populations under their coverage to build huge networks. It has become a grisly threat to the stability of global politics and the economy. Prolonged wars in places like Angola, Liberia, the DRC, CAR, Afghanistan, and Colombia have mostly been instigated because of the exploitation of natural resources. The same reason is also fuelling the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Libya, and the Sahel. Life of civilians is at stake

due to the proliferation of armed groups. They are even engaging children to gain their interest which is adding further challenges to peacekeepers. This is creating immense challenges for those seeking peace agreements.<sup>5</sup> The expansion of illicit markets has also made organized violence easily accessible to non-state actors.

**e. Networks of Fundamentalists:** Among the various forms of violent conflicts, militant acts in the name of religion have added a new dimension. The last decade has experienced a sharp rise of militants named 'Jihadists'. They have caused significant fatalities to life and livelihood of people. They are strengthening their network and expanding their reach significantly. Persistence of poor governance & political exclusion and lack of social security are undermining many state authorities which is tremendously disrupting the law and order of those states. The extremist groups are smartly taking this advantage to scale up their reach. The insidious expansion of their networks has become a matter of great concern for the peacekeepers as well as the global peace process.

**f. International Interference in Internal Affairs:** In the present era many civil wars are watered by international bodies. Some of the most prominent civil wars today are dominated by external actors such as the involvement of Russian, US, and Iranian forces in the war in Syria. Though foreign forces are deployed to manage national conflicts it poses complex challenges to peace operations. As an epitome, African Union peacekeepers have struggled to address the multiple risks in Somalia as militias were backed by foreign actors.<sup>6</sup>

**g. Global Pandemic:** The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic is causing a severe economic downturn globally. The economically fragile states are at stake to be the brutal victims of the pandemic. They are going to face social unrest due to a lack of economic safeguards for the population. This may trigger violent conflict globally. The impact of the pandemic is yet to be completely unveiled. But from the experience gained so far, it can be assumed that it will contribute to higher risks of instability in the coming years. This will generate higher demand for peacekeeping.

**h. Urbanization:** People from rural areas across the world are migrating to the city areas to seek better employment and to improve their living standards. Again, the touch of infrastructural development is also reaching the rural perimeter. This will cause city fragility which will impact the conflict risk than before. Some peace operations have already been involved with the urban conflicts. The challenges experienced regarding urban conflict are also unique. Deployment of forces in urban areas is more challenging and complex.<sup>7</sup>

### How to Prepare for Future Peace Operations

In the upcoming days, the localized conflicts may have escalated into confrontations. Thereby, international peace and security will fall mostly outside the realm of UN peace operations. It will be even more challenging if the members of the Security Council actively take part in those confrontations. UN will need to rely even more heavily than today on partnerships with regional/international actors on. Considering this, the UN may look into the following to prepare for future operations in impending conflict scenarios:-

**a. Avoid Wilful Blindness:** The involvement of powerful foreign actors in the civil war of strategically important vulnerable states projects the wilful blindness of the UN. But the UN has to take the blame for the failure to establish peace. If current trends continue, the UN will be even more side-lined in major conflicts. Therefore, the UN has to firmly stand on its founding pillars to establish peace and development for all nations.

**b. Build Partnership beyond UN:** To strengthen the establishment of peace, the UN may grow the innovative partnership with regional bodies. In some cases, the UN has built up partnerships with regional organizations to increase the effectiveness of operations on the ground (e.g. the African Union troops in Somalia). The partnership building should not only be restricted to the regional bodies but also the current trend of conflicts has to be catered to. To tackle the impact of climate change, the partnership may be built up with international financial bodies to get a response during a disaster. Linking anti-trafficking organizations with a peace operation may be deemed necessary in the case of conflicts involving transnational drug or human trafficking. To resolve the conflict regarding cyber tension, international regulation of cybersecurity may be enforced with the assistance of the appropriate regulatory body.<sup>8</sup>

**c. Reconfiguration of Peace Operations:** The above trends and predictions indicate that some of the current settings will have the most serious risks to regional stability. The proliferation of transnational criminal networks or emerging fundamentalists groups strongly influences regional stability by posing serious risks to it. The current configurations of UN peace operations are not sufficient to perform these tasks. Especially for those which require analysis and engagement with the political economy of conflict. Risks of asymmetric security threats also deserve reconfiguration of future peace operations. The current trend of urbanization is also adding a new dimension to future conflict scenarios. Therefore, a future conflict environment will rope in the city streets in addition to the traditional jungle of desert terrain. The configuration of deployment of large battalions of soldiers for protection work in jungle or desert environments will be deemed ineffective for conducting the operation in urban areas. This will require reconfiguration of the present deployment structure.



**d. Understanding the Change of Conflict Environment:** From the current trend of conflict, it may be anticipated that socio-economic factors will immensely dictate the future conflict environment. It may include loss of livelihood by climate change, deepening inequalities because of economic downfalls, domination of technology by few hands, etc. UN peace operations will only be relevant to the extent they can understand and respond to these dynamics.

**e. Involvement of Subject Experts:** Factors like climate change, demographic shifts, and technological advancement are putting more challenges to UN peace operations. In the future, the UN is going to embrace the interrelated nature of conflicts more than it does today. As the conflict environment is changing, several factors will need to be considered outside of a traditional mission's purview to conduct future peace operations. To understand the profile of the violent conflict, the employment of subject experts may be deemed necessary to carry out future peace operations. That may include climate change scientists, economists, urban planners, social media experts, etc.<sup>9</sup>

## **Conclusion**

From its very inception, human civilization has been encountering threats that are either man-made or natural. Due to the persistence of the threat, conflicts arise. The dynamic behaviour of threat also shapes the conflict environment. United Nations, a global body was formed to resolve conflicts within or beyond borders across the world. To resolve conflicts around the corners the UN conducts peace operations across the globe. Since the beginning, the UN has gained the long-recognized value of partnerships to reinforce the effectiveness of peace operations.

In the past, peacekeeping operation was primarily associated with post-conflict peacebuilding. With time, the conflict environment is changing which demands reshaping the preparation for tackling the conflict in the upcoming days. Many more factors are affecting the conflict environment than past. Technological advancement, climate change, demographic shift, and proliferation of non-state actors' networks will be playing an influential role in determining future conflict scenarios. The impact of the ongoing global pandemic for COVID 19 will also be significant. The global financial downturn, as well as inequalities among the communities, will cause social unrest which will have a tremendous impact on the global peace process.

From the current trend of conflict environment, it can be anticipated that future conflict will significantly be determined by socioeconomic factors. To conduct peace operations in the future, the UN has to prepare considering the current trend of conflict environment. The UN has to stand firmly to implement

its charter of duties going beyond the influence of powerful bodies. To strengthen and boost the efficacy of the future peace operation, the UN may think to build innovative networking with other international organizations. Understanding the conflict environment and the involvement of subject experts will be deemed necessary for conducting future peace operations. The dynamicity of the conflict environment deserves deemed preparations for sustainable global peace. Preparing from now, according to the dynamicity of the conflict environment will credit the UN's efficacy to serve its fundamental purpose "to save a succeeding generation from the scourge of war" as outlined in its Charter.<sup>10</sup>

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### **Brief Biography**



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## **United Nations Peacekeeping: A Magnificent Participation of Bangladesh in International Peace and Security**

Mohammad Tarequl Islam, Superintendent of Police

### **Introduction**

United Nations Peacekeeping is the core function of the United Nations and the flagship activity of the organization which built the global partnership among the member states. UN peacekeeping has emerged as one of the key instruments to maintain contemporary global peace and security.<sup>1</sup> Since independence, Bangladesh remains committed to upholding the value of international peace and security at the global and regional levels. Bangladesh believes in the peaceful and legitimate resolution of international conflicts. Therefore, since the admission of Bangladesh in United Nations (UN) in 1974; it considers the UN norms of security and peace initiatives to maintain global peace and security in conflicted zones.<sup>2</sup> On 25 September 1974, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman first time boldly addressed the commitment of Bangladesh in the UN General Assembly to build a new world free from inequalities, hunger, military aggression and threats of nuclear weapons and to call for social justice towards global peace.<sup>3</sup> Till today Bangladesh continues to show respect for the vision of Bangabandhu towards international peace and security measures under the umbrella of UN initiatives.

Over the past 72 years, United Nations peacekeeping operated 71 peacekeeping missions in different parts of the world and about one million peacekeepers from 125 countries participated in this action which has significant contributions in countries to navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Further peacekeeping supports countries' political process with infrastructure development and enduring peace. UN peacekeeping is one of the brightest chapters for Bangladesh in the international arena. Presently Bangladesh is the largest peacekeeper contributing country under the umbrella of UN peace initiatives. Bangladesh first joined in peacekeeping journey to United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observers Group (UNIMOG) in 1988. Out of the total of 69 peace missions since 1948, Bangladesh has participated in 54 peacekeeping missions in 40 different countries over 5 continents with more than 175,000 uniformed personnel, including over 1,800 female peacekeepers. Currently, there are over 7,000 armed forces and police personnel deployed in 10 peace missions.<sup>4</sup> Therefore peacekeeping mission is one of the important benchmarks of Bangladesh's relationships with the UN. UN recognizes the immense contribution of Bangladeshi peacekeepers over the last three decades for global peace and security.<sup>5</sup>

However, the paper attempts to discourse the partnership between the UN and Bangladesh through peacekeeping initiatives and explore the glorious

contribution of Bangladeshi uniformed peacekeepers in international peace and security. The research also highlights the contribution of Bangladeshi uniformed women peacekeepers to minimize conflict and the challenges of Bangladesh in changing the nature of conflict and the peacekeeping mandate for sustaining peace. The research is based on national and international qualitative literature review, official documents from international agencies, and newspapers. The study seeks information from the UN website and other trustworthy websites.

### **Legal Basis of International Peacekeeping**

The perception of peace was first introduced into academic text by the Norwegian researcher Johan Galtung, who defined “peace is the absence of violence and should be used as the social goal”.<sup>6</sup> Further, he explained two categories of peace viz; positive and negative. Negative peace is the absence of violence, war, conflict, hostility, agitation, disturbance, disagreement or quarrel, struggle, etc; positive peace is an absence of structural violence and the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies.<sup>7</sup> According to Albert Einstein’s “Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order-in short, of government”.<sup>8</sup> Besides Martin Luther King viewed- “True peace is not merely the absence of tension: It is the presence of justice.”<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, peacekeeping defines the actions of preventing hostilities and violence and protecting civilians in conflict situations through the use of military or police force. And peacekeepers are uninformed or civil personnel who are engaged in maintaining peace. According to the United Nations “peacekeeping is the deployment of international military, police and civilians from around the globe to provide security and political and peacebuilding support to assist countries from conflict to peace. UN peacekeeping follows the three principles: consents of the host countries, non-biasness and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mission mandate.” UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his Agenda for Peace defines peacekeeping as the “deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Peacekeeping is a technique that expands the possibilities for both the prevention of conflict and the making of peace.”<sup>10</sup>

The Charter of the United Nations provides the basis of peacekeeping and the primary responsibility to the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. In satisfying this accountability, the Council can institute a UN peace operation. The UN Charter is an instrument of international law which codifies the major principles of international relations and the UN Member States are bound by it. The Chapter VII of the UN charter: “Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts

of Aggression (Articles 39-51)” demonstrates the power and authority of the United Nations to maintain and enforce global peace and security.<sup>11</sup> Article 39 clearly mentioned, “the Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken following Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security.” Article 43(1) and 45 addressed “All Members of the United Nations, to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for maintaining international peace and security; If United Nations needs to take urgent military measures, Members shall hold immediately available national air-force contingents for combined international enforcement action.”<sup>12</sup> Besides the UN Charter Article 2 (paragraph 7) and Chapter VII (Article 42) of both declares the exceptional powers of the UN Security Council to undertake enforcement action, which has led to, on occasions, peacekeepers being provided more coercive mandates. Moreover, General Assembly is able to institute peace-operations with the uniting for peace resolution but has hardly ever done so. Therefore, the UN enforces international peacekeeping operations according to the basis of the UN charter and commences using forces under Article 43 of the Charter as per the endorsement by the UN Security Council.<sup>13</sup>

#### **UN Peacekeeping Dynamics:**

UN peacekeeping was born during the Cold War which had divided the world into two blocs and caused disruptions in the multilateral system due to hostility among the superpowers. At that time peacekeeping was mostly limited to being security observer, maintaining cease-fire and providing some political support to solve the conflict in peaceful means. However, International peacekeeping has undergone some dramatic changes after the cold war in terms of mandate and operations. Over the years the nature and geography of conflict have changed. Some conflicts escalated beyond the countries’ borders and took on serious international attention like conflict in Bosnia, Kosovo, Burundi, Rwanda and Congo. Moreover, conflict dynamics over the past three decades have produced an array of challenges to UN peace missions that have demanded considerable change from the conventional missions during the 60s or 70s.<sup>14</sup> To cope with the new challenges the milestone Brahimi Report of 2000 charted a transformed vision for UN peacekeeping that forced peacekeeping stronger, more effective and reasonably cost-efficient. These changes allowed a five times growth in peace operations over the past decade. UN Peacekeepers were nowadays increasingly requested to instigate a broad range of composite tasks, from helping to construct institutions of governance, protection of civilians, security sector reform (SSR), disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, to



face the burning challenges and changes, number of peacekeeping operations has been boosted with robust mandates to protect the civilians, reform security sector police and army, arrange political dialogue, organize the election, institution building to sustain peace.

During 1948 to 1989 UN operated a total of 18 peace missions, besides since 1990 UN activated 54 peace operations over the world. As of 31 December 2021, 121 countries have contributed around 86021 peacekeepers in 12 peace missions around the world which were just 11000 peacekeepers in 9 peace missions in 1989.<sup>16</sup> The present peace missions aim to strengthen capacity building and to effectively manage the field operations. Due to international demand UN has extended its peace machinery from peacekeeping to peacemaking and peacebuilding. Further, the mission has expanded to support political process/negotiation, humanitarian support, implement DDR and SSR, protect and promote human rights and institution building for democratisation in conflicted countries. The new changes have modified the notion of international peace and security as well as expanded the horizons of UN peace initiatives. Besides, UN peacekeepers come from varying backgrounds, with diverse cultures and social fabrics from all over the world. When they are under the umbrella of the United Nations they are committed to keeping up with or reinstating the peace and security in conflict zones. They are the symbol of hope for vulnerable people in conflict prone countries. They enjoy and share common international values and goals to secure vulnerable people and offer help to nations experiencing significant change from conflict to peace. Therefore Peacekeeping has always been highly dynamic.<sup>17</sup>

### **Bangladesh and United Nations Partnership Through Peacekeeping**

UN peace operations are a unique international partnership venture. Moreover, it is a powerful demonstration of multilateral cooperation and effective enterprise. The partnership in the UN peacekeeping programme provides its legitimacy, transparency, accountability, sustainability and its global reach. Presently about 86,000 civilian and uniformed personnel from 121 countries are in partnership within 12 peacekeeping missions. The principal purpose of the UN is “to maintain international peace and security, and to that end, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace (United Nations Charter, Article-1)”. In 1971 during the liberation war, the informal partnership between Bangladesh and the UN has started through humanitarian support to Bengalee refugees in India. After the formal entrance of Bangladesh (in 1974) to the UN, it has been showing full respect and following obligations of UN norms and values for international peace and security.

### **Bangladesh's Inspiration for Participation in UN Peace Mission**

Over time the partnership of Bangladesh with the UN has reached an immense level and the participation in UN peacekeeping operation is one of the vital benchmarks of this engagement. Bangladesh has been extending its hand when the UN demands peacekeepers in any international crisis. Moreover, the constitution and foreign policy of Bangladesh encourage support in international peace and stability.

Article 25 of the Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, declares "state base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes shall respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter, and on the basis of those principles shall-(a) strive for the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament; (b) uphold the right of every people freely to determine and build up its own social, economic and political system by ways and means of its own free choice; and (c) support oppressed peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism."<sup>18</sup>

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is also a source of inspiration for Bangladesh Police and Bangladesh Armed Forces to join in international peace missions. In 2011, she proposed a six-point 'multi-faceted peace model' at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) for championing democracy and people's empowerment, coinciding with the UNGA theme "Mediation in the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes." The model demonstrates six vital issues which are the root causes of today's global conflict. The six-point model includes eradication of poverty and hunger; reduction of inequality; mitigation of deprivation; inclusion of excluding people; acceleration of human development and abolition of terrorism.<sup>19</sup> Her peace model was highly acknowledged by the global leaders and in the international peace forum which also motivates Bangladesh to participate in international peace initiatives.

### **Bangladesh Contribution in UN Peacekeeping for Global Peace and Security**

Bangladesh has started its journey to UN peace operation in 1988 with only 15 military observers in United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observers Group (UNIMOG). Starting from 15, Bangladesh has sent about 175,000 military, police and civilian peacekeepers attired in the Blue Helmet to UN peace operation for maintaining international peace and security around the world.<sup>20</sup> Since 1998 Bangladesh participated in at least 33 countries in the world namely Cyprus, Somalia, Syria, Kenya, West Africa, Sudan (Darfur), Central African Republic, Chad, Yugoslavia (Former), Uganda, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Sudan, Serra Leone, Haiti, Namibia, Mozambique, Macedonia, Liberia, Kuwait,

Kosovo, Ivory Coast, Iran, Iraq, Georgia, Ethiopia, Congo, Mali, Cambodia, Bosnia, Burundi, Angola and Afghanistan under the UN multidimensional peace initiatives. The information unveils that Bangladeshi peacekeepers have immense contribution and commitment to international peace and security under the umbrella of the UN.<sup>21</sup>

In the international peacekeeping operation context, Bangladesh is considered one of the central players and the top peacekeeper contributor country in the last decade. In January 2022, Bangladesh has provided 6358 uniformed personnel, who are serving in 8 different peace operations including UN headquarters. Presently Bangladesh Armed Forces (mostly from the army) serving in the hostile environment of Congo (MONUSCO), Sudan (UNAMID-Darfur), South Sudan (UNMIS), Mali (MINUSMA) and Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for peace and security-building. Over the three decades of peacekeeping, about 148 Bangladeshi brave-hearts, 126 from Armed Forces and 22 from Bangladesh Police made supreme sacrifice for the noble cause of peace process under the umbrella of UN peacekeeping mission.<sup>22</sup> This high level of devotion bears ample testimony to the the solid commitment of Bangladesh to ensuring peace and security around the world.

### **Bangladeshi Uniformed Women in UN Peacekeeping**

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), 'Women in Peace and Security (WPS)', is a milestone for gender equality in peace and security. This is the international legal framework that first time recognizes women's contribution in conflict. Simultaneously the resolution has opened a new window for women to contribute to UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>23</sup> Since 2000, Bangladesh shows apposite respect to the UN policy document on WPS and the country has opened the door for women in security sectors to the UN peacekeeping operations as shown in Table 1. Both Bangladesh Armed Forces and Police have a considerable role in gender mainstreaming by employing women as peacekeepers in volatile security situations in the international arena. So far Bangladesh Armed Forces deployed a total of 521 uniformed peacekeepers in different UN missions. Presently 139 uniformed women from Bangladesh Armed Forces are serving as international peacekeepers in different field missions.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the participation of women in different peace missions in comparison with men is insignificant (only 2% in 2021). Bangladesh Armed Forces are committed to continuing deploying the female members in all subsequent major contingents in UN peace operations.

Table 1: Participation of uniformed women of Bangladesh Armed Forces and Police in UN Peace Operation

| Year | Bangladesh Armed Forces | Bangladesh Police |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------|
|      | Female Members          | Female Members    |
| 2009 | 32                      | 22                |
| 2010 | 26                      | 139               |
| 2011 | 32                      | 216               |
| 2012 | 24                      | 191               |
| 2013 | 22                      | 288               |
| 2014 | 50                      | 165               |
| 2015 | 30                      | 167               |
| 2016 | 38                      | 161               |
| 2017 | 35                      | 161               |
| 2018 | 40                      | 123               |
| 2019 | 83                      | 156               |
| 2020 | 89                      | 181               |
| 2021 | 121                     | 177               |

Source: Global Peacekeeping Data.<sup>25</sup>

Besides, Bangladesh Police has been contributing to UN peace & security building operations in the international arena since 1989 by participating in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. Since then about 20,332 Bangladesh police members have participated in 23 UN Missions to date. First ever 5 Bangladesh women police officers joined the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET) in 2000, which has opened a new platform for the women police officers. After that, Bangladesh Police has deployed women police officers in different peace missions on a regular basis. Till August 2021, about 1326 women police officers served in various international peace missions.<sup>26</sup> Presently (2022) 147 female police officers from Bangladesh Police are operational in the volatile security environment of Mali, DR Congo and South Sudan. The number of female police is more than 28% of the total uniformed police participants in missions.<sup>27</sup> On 17 May 2010, a milestone day for women police, Bangladesh Police sent

all women formed police unit (FFPU) in MINUSTAH, Haiti. Later on, Bangladesh Police deployed another all women FPU contingent in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).<sup>28</sup> The study considers these FPU role in showcasing the Bangladesh commitments towards women empowerment and the international symbols in gender mainstreaming in peace and security which strongly support the UN policy of WPS.

### **UN Peacekeeping Challenges and Readiness of Bangladesh**

UN peacekeeping entered a new dimension in the last two decades with regards to conflict geography, nature of conflict and mission mandate. UN mission has to do peacekeeping, peacemaking and finally peacebuilding. Therefore UN Security Council proposes robust mandates including DDR, SSR, organizing political dialogues, organising the election, democratic institution-building and finally sustainability of the peace process. Last decade UN had a mixture of success in the implementation and enforcement of robust mandates for global peacekeeping especially in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo and Sudan.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, since 1948 United Nations has assisted in ending conflicts and foster reconciliation by accomplishing successful peacekeeping operations in many countries, like Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique, Namibia, Tajikistan and so on.

The changing character of the global peace process has created further expectations from the force contributing countries concerning the protection of the civilians, gathering intelligence in conflict zones, minimization of risk and use of high tech in controlling casualties. Additionally, the 'UN New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for United Nations Peacekeeping Report' recommends a motivated agenda to enhance the capacities of the troops in strengthening the effectiveness of managing peacekeeping.<sup>30</sup> So the study highlights that Bangladesh requires to formulate a National Peacekeeping Policy for enlargement of internal and external partnerships with the UN and enhance the capacity of AFD and Police to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. The study observes since 1988, the Government of Bangladesh is yet to formulate any National Peacekeeping Policy. So many force contributing countries namely South Africa, Brazil, Kenya, Serbia, Sweden, Japan, Ethiopia, etc formulated and mainstreamed their peacekeeping policies according to the international agenda to sustain peace and advocate solidarity. National peacekeeping policy enhances the cooperation and integration within internal and international actors of peacekeeping operations. Moreover, the policy will coordinate among the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other stakeholders at the national level. Another important agenda is the capacity building of Bangladesh Peacekeeper which should be emphasized in national policy. Peacekeepers should be selected based on

prescribed qualifications, properly trained and enhanced capacity regarding self-defence and counter-attack in a hostile environment. All peacekeepers should have optimum knowledge about their peacekeeping mandate, conflict environment, political instability, and natural weather and geography of the host country. Because, the, UN mandate, nature of conflict and operational environment are dissimilar in different conflict zones. For example, the conflicting issues and political crises in Port-au-Prince (Haiti), Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire), Darfur (Sudan) or Mali are totally different from one another. This awareness will reduce the risk in the peace mission.

Members of AFD are specially trained in the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) before going to the mission. However, still now Bangladesh Police has no special training centre for police peacekeepers. Police Members are trained from time to time in Bangladesh Police Academy, Sardah or Police Training Centre, Tangail. The study believes a fixed and specialized training centre is essential for the capacity building of police peacekeepers. Moreover, the government should take the initiatives to send potential executive peacekeepers abroad for their skill development. Furthermore wider participation of women in peacekeeping troops is also a great challenge. The last challenge is budgeting. Sustainable peace and security are not possible without a sufficient budget. So many logistics especially vehicles, Arms Personal Carrier (APC) military types of equipment and instruments are backdated and non-operational now. Many of these logistics were collected two decades ago. Since Bangladesh has consistently been earning lots of foreign currency each year from the UN peace operations, the government can prioritize allocating increased budget from the national exchequer for providing updated logistics and state of the art equipment for the Bangladeshi Peace operations.

### **Conclusion**

Indeed the participation of UN peacekeeping is a magnificent chapter for Bangladesh. Through participating in peace operations Bangladesh gained a huge name and fame and international exposure at the global level. Starting from 15, Bangladesh has sent about 175,000 military, police and civilian peacekeepers attiring the Blue Helmet to UN peace operation for maintaining international peace and security in 33 countries around the world. Now Bangladesh is one of the UN's major trusted partners and the top peacekeepers contributing country in international peace initiatives. Due to continuous participation in UN peacekeeping Bangladesh demonstrated its capacity and power at the regional and global levels. Nevertheless, in changing nature of conflict, shifting security landscape and robust peacekeeping mandate Bangladeshi peacekeepers have been facing huge challenges. Moreover, the present mandate of UN peacekeeping missions during transitional regime integrates different political, security and civilian



components for peacebuilding. Therefore the study recommends enhancing the capacity and efficiency building of the peacekeepers from Bangladesh Armed Forces Division and Police to respond to conflicts. The study also suggests formulating a national peacekeeping policy for Bangladesh for proper coordination with national and international actors and efficient management of the peace missions. The study believes UN peacekeeping is the international legal instrument for maintaining global peace and security in which Bangladesh is committed so as to contribute to global peace and security.

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### Brief Biography



**Mohammad Tarequl Islam** has joined Bangladesh Civil Service (Police Cadre) as Assistant Superintendent of Police in 2006. He served Bangladesh Police for 16 years in different capacities including Metropolitan Police, District Police, PBI and Police Academy. On a journey to international peace and security, he served United Nations Stabilizing Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for one year from 2012-to 2013 and achieved practical experience in international humanitarian assistance, UN policing, Security Sector Reform and conflict management. He has obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degree from Bangladesh Agricultural University with first-class in both cases. Further, he achieved an MA in Conflict, Security and Development from the University of Bradford, United Kingdom in 2018. He participated in different prestigious training at home and abroad on security, conflict, crime, policing and human rights issues. Additionally, he conducts some classes for ASP, BCS officers and other officials at the national level training centres. He has seven publications in national and international journals including the *Journal of International Peacekeeping*. He is a keen interest in national and international SSR, peacekeeping, gender and policing matters.

## The Success Story of BAF Air Transport Operation in UN

Group Captain Mohammad Saifuddin, GUP, psc

### Introduction

Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) started sending its' air assets for UN mission in 1993. Which became the National Flag carrier in different countries around the globe. In this process, the first Bangladesh Aviation Transport Unit or BANATU was deployed in Democratic Republic of Congo in support of MONUSCO on 25 June 2010 with one C-130 aircraft. Now, BAF C-130 ac is the only military strategic air asset for MONUSCO. Only BAF C-130 ac can transport bulk number of troops and Dangerous Goods (DGs). For the sustenance of military operation in Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), this aircraft became the main option for MONUSCO. This unit has been performing operation professionally and safely in DRC for last 12 years.

From the beginning BAF C-130 aircraft was utilized for mammoth task of troops rotation and bulk transportation of cargo/ration items helping the sustenance of MONUSCO. Some of the operational data (given below) have been analyzed to assess performance of air transport of BAF and found that the lone C-130 aircraft achieved approximately 9000 hours without any significant incident while maintaining almost cent percent availability.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1: Performance of BAF C-130 Aircraft Operation for MONUSCO**

|           | Hours Flown | Sorties | No of Occurrences | Ac Svc Rate | Troops Carried | Load (Kg) | DG (Kg) |
|-----------|-------------|---------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| BANATU-1  | 672:15      | 508     | 03                | 95.25%      | 9725           | 1485304   | 185190  |
| BANATU-2  | 889:35      | 644     | 06                | 85.22%      | 12218          | 1737950   | 394660  |
| BANATU-3  | 599:50      | 442     | 02                | 89.83%      | 12878          | 931791    | 103010  |
| BANATU-4  | 1083:25     | 638     | 01                | 92.08%      | 14397          | 1571390   | 352190  |
| BANATU-5  | 713:05      | 472     | 02                | 90.08%      | 14196          | 1055190   | 179190  |
| BANATU-6  | 877:10      | 507     | 01                | 91.30%      | 14184          | 1296898   | 282718  |
| BANATU-7  | 979:35      | 720     | 07                | 100.0%      | 14197          | 1783121   | 308394  |
| BANATU-8  | 693:00      | 473     | 03                | 81.14%      | 11120          | 1255091   | 267761  |
| BANATU-9  | 905:35      | 594     | 04                | 100.0%      | 13733          | 1423089   | 554450  |
| BANATU-10 | 653:55      | 479     | 02                | 100.0%      | 10533          | 1302911   | 394101  |
| BANATU-11 | 738:45      | 578     | 04                | 100.0%      | 14160          | 1508272   | 179388  |

Source: Directorate of Overseas Air Operations and BANATU-12 Authority

## The Success Story of BAF...

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Conducting air transportation safely in mission areas is not an easy task. Balancing out between safety of the flight and humanitarian need is the key factors in deciding the conduct of the mission. Thereby, undertaking task depends on the allowance of the LOA (agreement with UN) while balancing between humanitarian necessity and safety of the flight. Other flight operators in DR Congo and around had similar experiences. BAF had four things, i.e. accommodative and considerate leadership, close supervision, professional maintenance environment, and aircrew with sound knowledge.<sup>2</sup> However, we identified few factors were identified that allowed to conduct safe air transport operation for more than a decade. In subsequent paragraphs this will be discussed briefly with few examples under the following headings:-

- a. Decision Making.
- b. Ensuring Quality Maintenance.
- c. Minimizing Communication Gap.
- d. Minimizing Operational Hazards.

**Photo 1: Loading of one APC**



Source: BANATU-1 photo collection

### Decision Making

'Decision making' was vital to undertake an air transportation task in UN mission area as that involves the engagement of a multi-million-dollar machine, its precious crew while trading-off humanitarian necessity. Many of the tasks could be avoided which were justifiable due to weather limitations or limitations set by regulations. But it was considered the necessity of UN where there were no options other than involving BAF C-130 aircraft. Tasks were undertaken by assessing the safety issues and humanitarian needs.

Decision making process mainly depends on operating condition, security situation, type of passenger/cargo and above all weather condition. Following steps were helpful for taking decision.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 2: Steps Helpful for Taking Decision**

| Steps | Tasks  |
|-------|--|
| 1.    | Considering Limitations (aircraft, airfield, pax/cargo, LOA/manuals, etc). |
| 2.    | Balancing between UN humanitarian requirement vs Operational safety.       |
| 3.    | Assessing probable outcome.  |
| 4.    | Decision.  |
| 5.    | Post-action assessment.  |

Source: Author's self-construct

It may be mentioned that weather was another contributing factor in decision making process. The weather of DR Congo and around is somehow unpredictable. The weather deteriorates suddenly; at times very fast and lasting for long. So, to keep ops safe, It was essential to always double check the weather forecast before the flight. In fact, in aviation double check pays the dividend.

Following examples would display how the crew carried out one of the demanding air transport operations while taking calculated risk.

Burundi is one of the bordering countries of DR Congo. There was a military coup that took place on 13 May 2015. During that time UN requested BANATU authority to carry out an emergency evacuation mission for its staff from Burundi capital Bujumbura. Few issues like, availability of UN support (which was limited), and security situation (following the coup) were needed to trade off to conduct the operation. More so, it was found that all international flights were suspended from Bujumbura.

Considering the humanitarian necessity, BAF higher command gave special clearance for this operation. BAF C-130 ac was first to land in Bujumbura after the coup. A total of 76 MENUUB personnel were evacuated. This operation earned international media coverage and reputation. This was one of the most courageous missions that ever carried out by any of the UN aviation operators. Though the mission was carried out under marginal security situation but security and safety of the crew and the aircraft were not compromised. The crew were given full authority to discontinue of the flight depending on latest security situation (that was given in-flight by ATC tower).<sup>4</sup>

Next example would exhibit how risky missions could be carried out by reviewing procedural limitations.



## The Success Story of BAF...

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Due to internal conflict, South Sudanese refugees gathered near the bordering town of Dungu in DR Congo. On 27 August 2016, UN requested for the emergency transportation of South Sudanese refugees from Dungu to a remote place named Buta (Ops DRAGON). The task was notified to us at around 1200 hours. Total mission duration was 4 hours. Due to sunset timing limitation, there was only 5 hours in hand to complete the task, which includes planning and readiness of the aircraft. There were some other limiting factors, like Buta was not visited during last couple of years by any UN aircraft. Thereby, MONUSCO Aviation did not have updated information about Buta airfield. So, a recce flight was a necessity. MONUSCO authority wanted to arrange a recce flight. But they could not do so. Then they enquired if whether this mission was feasible without any recce flight. Finally, the refugees were recovered in a miserable condition, most of them were sick. On humanitarian ground it was decided to take them to Buta. The crew decided to land at Buta following few low-go. The mission was carried by finding out safer solution while the humanitarian cause was the primary consideration.<sup>5</sup>

Here another example is given briefly exhibiting all out support to carry out a mission by relaxing the procedural limits. BANATU-11 carried out the staff recovery mission from Bukavu after the Volcanic Eruption (in Goma) in June 2021. They carried out total 23 sorties and transported total 863 persons from 08 June to 11 June 2021 crossing the LOA limitation. The unit went all out in keeping the aircraft serviceable more than the requirements laid out in the LOA which was appreciated at all corners of MONUSCO. In recognition of such kind of unconditional dedication and respect in ensuring peace and stability in the region BANATU-11 received Force Commander's Appreciation.<sup>6</sup>

**Photo 2: Emergency Evacuation of MONUSCO Civil Staffs from Goma by BAF C-130 Aircraft due to Volcanic Eruption**



Source: BANATU-12 photo collection

In January 2022, UN requested BANATU-12 to check the feasibility of transporting Bell-212 helicopter of Uruguay Aviation Unit from Goma to Bukavu by BAF C-130 aircraft. The mission was critical in nature considering safety issues related to loading, transportation and off-loading of such cargo. More so, considering the approach and landing at Bukavu, the mission demanded high level of flying performance. BANATU-12 authority calculated the associated risk factor and informed the issue to higher Command. BAF Higher Command provided approval for the said mission considering its importance. On 10 February 2022, they completed this demanding task successfully which earned immense appreciation of MONUSCO Aviation.<sup>7</sup>

**Photo 3: Bell-212 Helicopter of Uruguay Aviation Unit being Loaded inside BAF C-130 Aircraft, First ever Mission of such kind**



Source: BANATU-12 photo collection

### **Ensuring Quality Maintenance**

Quality Maintenance is a necessity for safe operation. Like any other air operations, from the beginning were concentrated to keep the aircraft serviceable, as far as possible, by ensuring quality maintenance. As the aircraft was decades old, so, mainly the experienced ground crew were considered. More so, availability of spares well in time were ensured. Planning for the spares was on throughout the entire period of the mission. However, there were limited number of crew. For this reason, supervisors of this unit had to take extra caution during ops and maintenance. In demanding situation getting the quality and safe maintenance service became one of the major worries for the management. However, introduction of maintenance flight paid dividend to keep the different aircraft equipment more reliable and efficient.<sup>8</sup> At times un-serviceability of some aircraft equipment put the crew in difficult situations during ops. However, such situations were overcome with knowledge and innovative ideas.

**Photo 4: Loading of Refueler**



Source: BANATU-1 photo collection

On 17 April 2016, number 3 engine became unserviceable in Kisangani while performing very demanding task of transporting Brigade sized FARDC troops from remote Gbadolite to Goma. It was decided to recover the aircraft with a 3-engine takeoff. The mission was demanding considering the difficulties of a 3-engine takeoff requirements. The crew had to perform defueling in an innovative way to reduce the weight of the aircraft to facilitate a safe 3-engine takeoff. With the kindness of Almighty ALLAH the mission could be achieved safely. It was realized that knowledge guides innovation.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Minimizing Communication Gap**

Another major difficulty was communication gap in interpretation of the LOA. It was difficult to balance out between the provisions of LOA, other aviation regulations and requirements of the tasks. Generally different UN agencies have a tendency to gain their goal by avoiding the most restricting policies of LOA and other aviation manuals. However, all the issues were solved professionally by communicating in a right perspective.<sup>10</sup>

In June 2016, JMCC asked us to transport some Danger Goods (DG) that included 2 tons of 38 years old High Explosives (HE) from Kisangani to Kinshasa. Such request needs country's approval. Mentionable that with the guidance of Air HQs, the process of authorizing transportation of DGs which were beyond the allowance of LOA was taken. Now, such authorization is given case to case basis by the country through Air HQs. The assessment is mainly done by the unit leadership. This has eliminated misunderstanding with the UN tasking agencies. As the DGs were HE and quite old, the process of

authorization was taking time. So, the UN had to be convinced regarding the reason why those DGs would not be feasible to be air transported. Though there was authorization for these DGs, however, JMCC transported those DGs by barge using Congo River channel. They were finally convinced that those 50 years old High Explosives should be transported through riverine means.<sup>11</sup>

### **Minimizing Operational Hazards**

One of the difficult assignments was to fly from non-standard runways made of limonite. Uneven runways cause bumps and jerks during takeoff and landing. Aircraft 'g' limit used to reach the extreme value. In several occasions the concerns were expressed to MONUSCO Aviation Authority. On the other hand, the sustenance of UN military ops was depended on mainly transportation of ammunitions. So, re-calculation was done and found safer gross weight for non-standard runways. Thus operations could be continued.<sup>12</sup>

During the early days of Covid-19 breakout lockdown was imposed amongst the UN units; all passengers and cargo flights were postponed. The aviation activities in MONUSCO literally stopped. However, BAF C-130B aircraft continued flying operations while most of the MONUSCO aircraft remained grounded during that time. BANATU had to operate from sunrise to sunset to avoid night stay outside the contingent which could limit exposure of the crew to the virus. At that situation, the first cargo of PPE reached at Kinshasa and those were to be carried to Goma for onward dispatch.<sup>13</sup> Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there had been maintenance of strict protocol in daily activities as well and there had been a dilemma whether the operation could be continued. But it was an earnest request from the Force Commander and the Mission Command to carry out the mission in any way possible. At the beginning we did not have PPE. So, all the Loadmasters and groundcrew used to put on the Rain Coat including the headgear over their usual coveralls. The aircraft had to be sanitized with disinfectant after the offloading. These became usual in all other missions during the pandemic breakout. In such similar situation, a number of prisoner transportation mission were carried out. Bangladeshi C-130 Unit displayed the level of commitment to UN taskings. It was also acknowledged by CAVO and Force Commander by awarding of Force Commander's appreciation for the Unit.<sup>14</sup>

**Photo 5: Loading of Ambulance with COVID-19 Treatment Material**



Source: BANATU-11 Photo collection

The achievement of BANATU in last 11 years were indeed remarkable. All the tasks were accepted and performed more than the expectations of UN stakeholders while maintaining the safety. However, many difficulties had be faced and overcome. One of the engines had to be repaired overnight to keep the aircraft available for the demanding task. It is merely impossible even for any civil airliner to keep a single aircraft available for maximum tasking.

Almighty ALLAH was kind to the BAF crew for which it was possible for conducting operations successfully and thus earned the appreciation from the UN planners.

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#### **Brief Biography**



**Group Captain Mohammad Saifuddin, GUP, psc, GD(P)** was commissioned in Bangladesh Air Force on 31 May 1994. He is one of the most experienced transport pilots having instructional experience in different types of aircraft. He has served in various staff and command appointments in BAF and BN. He was the pioneer Commander of 314 Maritime Patrol Aircraft Squadron of Bangladesh Navy. He participated in three United Nations Peacekeeping Missions, in 2007/08 for UNMIS, twice for MONUSCO in 2010/11 and in 2015/16 respectively. He was awarded with Force Commander's Commendation in Sudan for developing *Air Operation Planners' Handbook*. Presently he is commanding BAF Station Shamshernagar.



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## 2. Example:

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#### টীকা ও তথ্য নির্দেশ

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